

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER, 1950.

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

PRESENT

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

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. 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. Dr. J. A. Nicholson (Georgetown North).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River)

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Carter (Georgetown South).

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

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

The Clerk read prayers.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mr. Lionel A. Luckhoo took the Oath of Allegiance and his seat as a Nominated Member of the Council.

The PRESIDENT: I welcome you, Mr. Luckhoo, as a Nominated Member of this Honourable Council.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 15th of September, 1950, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

STRIKE SITUATION.

The PRESIDENT addressed the Council as follows:

Honourable Members. It is my duty before we proceed further, to draw your attention to the very serious stoppages of work which have taken place, and are continuing, firstly on certain sugar estates and secondly in certain departments of Government. As to the sugar estates you are no doubt aware that the leaders of the Guiana Industrial Workers Union called a strike of sugar estate workers in the Colony on Monday last, and in the result there has been almost complete cessation of work on three estates on the East Coast, and a partial stoppage on others. The declared grounds for this strike are the refusal of the Sugar Producers' Association to recognise this particular Union and to accede to other requests of the Union, including implementation of certain long-term recommendations made by the Venn Commission. This strike, you will agree, is most regrettable, particularly at the present time when, as I pointed out at the opening of the present Session, it

was vitally important to the sugar industry and the Colony as a whole that we should bring our sugar production to a maximum during the next two years. I then stated that it would surely be a lasting reproach to the Colony as well as a great loss if we were unable to produce enough sugar to take full advantage of the guarantee which we have obtained from His Majesty's Government, and I appealed to all concerned in the sugar industry, and who depended on it for their livelihood, to spare no efforts to raise our production or exports by 50,000 tons, so that we may take full advantage of the quota which is likely to be allotted to us in 1953. If these interruptions of work continue there is no respect whatever of reaching our target figure, and it is the Colony which will suffer. Government is keeping in close touch with the situation, and as far as the Venn Commission report is concerned I have already addressed to you a Message in regard to their recommendations which will be the subject of debate in this Council at an early date. As to recognition by the sugar producers of the Guiana Industrial Workers Union, I would refer hon. Members to pages 99 and 100 of the Report.

The other most serious matter is the stoppage of work which has taken place since yesterday among certain employees of the Government, including principally, the Transport and Harbours Department, the Post Office, the Public Works Department, and the Public Hospitals. This strike action, which renders all the strikers liable to dismissal, has been taken despite the appointment of a Committee under Section 6 of the Labour Ordinance, 1942. The Executives of the Departmental Trades Unions were informed on the 18th October that this Committee would be appointed, and as late as 1 a.m. on Tuesday morning I informed them that I should be glad to grant their request then made to me for an immediate interview to discuss the dispute, but the opportunity was not taken. In so far as the Transport and Harbours Department and the Hospitals are concerned, these are essential public services and the strike is illegal, rendering the strikers liable to prosecution and to the severe penalties which the law

provides. I have felt bound to warn them in their own interests of the consequences of their precipitate and ill advised action which can only do them harm and aggravate the very difficulties of which they complain, and I am indeed astonished to learn that some 50% of our nurses in the Georgetown Public Hospital should have been so misguided as to leave the bedsides of the sick and the suffering.

The Committee to which I have referred had been required by me to submit its report by the end of the current month. They were due to sit yesterday morning to take evidence of representatives of the Departmental Trades Unions. Unless there is an immediate resumption of work it will be impossible for the Committee to carry out its task or to complete its report within the stipulated time. The case might be different had nothing been done to alleviate conditions arising from the admitted increase in the cost of living which has taken place during the past three or four years. The fact is that, despite the limited resources of the Colony, there has, as you know, been added to the expenditure side of the budget to meet the increased cost of living a *permanent* recurrent charge of no less than \$3,000,000 for payment of increased salaries and wages to all Government employees. The magnitude of this *additional* burden on the budget will be apparent to you when it is remembered that our total revenue is approximately \$20,000,000 per annum only. When the recommendations of the Salaries Commission were debated I was at pains to point out, and so did a number of Members in this Council, that these increases would impose a serious strain on the Colony's financial resources. Your attention was also drawn to the fact that 90% of the \$3,000,000 I have referred to went in increases to employees whose earnings were less than \$200 a month. These are plain facts. The difficulties which confront the Government and this Council in granting any further increases to Government employees will be apparent to you, and any such increases must be confined to cases of sheer and proved necessity.

Nevertheless there can be no gainsaying the fact that there has been, during

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the past year, a serious rise in the cost of living and affecting the whole community. As an indication of this, a year ago the cost of living index stood at 212, and is now 226, or four points above the limit for which the Salaries Commission endeavoured to make provision. There is, I think, room therefore for re-examination of the position in so far as it affects the lowest paid workers, and it is for this reason that I have appointed the Advisory Committee with the terms of reference already announced. I can assure the Council that there will be no avoidable delay in bringing before it whatever recommendations the Committee may make, and the Government's decisions upon them. But I must add this, that Government cannot countenance illegal action of the kind resorted to by some of its employees who are at present on strike, action which is already causing great inconvenience and hardship to the general public, and, in the medical institutions, unnecessary suffering. I must also emphasize that all necessary steps are being taken to preserve law and order and to minimise the inconvenience to the public.

I need hardly say with what grave concern I view this unhappy situation, as I am sure you do, and I trust that wiser counsels will prevail, and that there will be an immediate resumption of work so that the enquiry which I have instituted may be carried out with all possible speed.

VENN COMMISSION REPORT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY communicated the following Message:-

MESSAGE No. 4

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

As foreshadowed in my Address at the opening of the present Session, I now address you on the subject of the Report of the Venn Commission which was appointed to enquire into and report on the organisation of the sugar industry in British Guiana with particular reference to means of production, wages and working conditions, and any other matters, and to make recommendations. The Report has now been in your hands for some time and you are fully aware of its main recommendations which at the opening of the

Session I summarised in the following words:-

- (a) that the Government should assume entire responsibility, financial and otherwise, for education, for hospitals and medical attention on sugar estates and for the housing of sugar workers, excepting nuclear employees;
- (b) that the industry should be relieved of all taxation except income tax;
- (c) that the industry should be subsidised by His Majesty's Government to the extent of 20/- per ton of sugar — a recommendation which has not been accepted. On the other hand we are receiving from His Majesty's Government this year, and in common with all other commonwealth producing countries, an additional £3 per ton for our sugar;
- (d) payment of special rates of pay or an incentive bonus for cane cutters working more than three days a week;
- (e) a contributory pension scheme for sugar workers;
- (f) setting up of a Sugar Industry Wages Board.

I added that there were several other recommendations, perhaps smaller in themselves, but equally important in the aggregate. I referred to the consultations which were then taking place by the Government with the industry and the Trade Unions, and said that as soon as those consultations were complete I would address a Message to the Council stating what action had been taken and what further action it was proposed to take. This I now do and I think that it will be most convenient if we take the recommendations one by one and in the order set out in the summary on pages 158 — 164 of the Report.

1. *Draglines, or grabs, should exclusively be used for the dredging and cleaning of all canals and other waterways (which, upon the combined estates, extend to a length of more than 5,000 miles). Evidence, derived both from the Colony and from home, shows that, as compared with human (and frequently female) labour, costs can thus be cut to about one-sixth. (Chapter II, para. 25—Page 9 of Report).*

The Sugar Producers' Association have agreed to implement this recommendation as finances permit and as suitable equipment becomes available.

2. *Women and Girls should, as soon as possible, be prevented, by Ordinance, from working in water (Chapter II, para. 26—Page 9 of Report).*

Agreement was reached some years ago between the Sugar Producers' Association and representatives of the Trades Unions recognised by them to the effect that female workers should not be employed to work in water. This agreement is generally observed and in no case are women now employed by sugar estates to work in water. It is not considered necessary therefore to introduce legislation, which would of course have to be of general application and not confined to the sugar industry. Moreover, to define in such legislation the term "working in water" would present practical difficulties as would the enforcement of such legislation, particularly in a country such as British Guiana.

With a view to obviating the necessity for women to wade through the canals, the Sugar Producers' Association have provided boats in order to transport women gangs across canals to get to certain fields. It is reported however that, despite this, women often prefer to wade through the canals to get to their work rather than wait for a boat.

3. *Particular care should be exercised in the selection and training of Drivers, all of whom should be recruited from the workers' ranks. All of them should be educationally capable of controlling and instructing a force of labour, and an increasing proportion ought eventually to qualify for higher positions. Their title is nowadays a misnomer and should be changed to "Headman". (Chapter II, paras. 36 and 39 — Page 12 of Report).*

The Sugar Producers' Association have accepted this recommendation in principle for gradual implementation but both the Association and the Unions recognised by them are agreed that it will be necessary to recruit headmen from workers with a higher standard of education than at present. Drivers are now universally referred to as headmen and the former Drivers' Association has been renamed: "The Headmen's Union".

4. *So long as a considerable number of women are employed in field work their gang should be placed in charge of women. (Chapter II, para. 38 — Page 12 of Report).*

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accept this recommendation but both the Association and the recognised Unions agree that implementation would have to be gradual as care will have to be taken in the selection of suitable women who will also have to be specially trained.

5. *The great increase in population (which is likely to be accelerated in future) brought about by a combination of a falling death-rate and rising birth-rate (due in turn almost entirely to the introduction of D.D.T. and a consequent decline in Malaria), leads us to question the overall feasibility of the recommendation contained in the Report of the Evans Commission which advocates the transference to British Guiana of some 50,000 inhabitants of the over-populated islands. The increasing pace of mechanization will inevitably cause a decline in the numbers of this Colony's (Indian) field-workers, the resultant surplus of whom it may be difficult to absorb in fresh industries. On the other hand, certain inland areas, at present undeveloped, could no doubt provide some employment for immigrant islanders (Chapter II, paras. 48 and 49 — Page 16 of Report).*

It is agreed that Government should not permit the immigration of workers likely to be competitive with unemployed labour in the Colony.

6. *The introduction of new varieties of cane should be accelerated and encouraged in every possible manner, since increases in per acre yield have relatively far more importance than has an expansion in area. (Chapter III, para. 32—Page 29 of Report).*

This recommendation is already being implemented by the sugar industry.

7. *The Department of Agriculture should be re-organised into separate and more autonomous divisions, which would free the Director from his at present far too numerous routine duties. Its personnel should be strengthened by the creation of new posts, e.g., that of Agricultural Engineer: we note that the very important post of Entomologist has been for some time vacant. (Chapter III, para. 33 — Page 29 of Report).*

This recommendation is accepted in principle and proposals to implement it have been submitted by the Director of Agriculture. Its implementation must,

however, be affected by financial considerations and the Director's proposals will be considered in connection with the 1951 Draft Estimates.

A qualified Entomologist, Mr. J. F. Bates, has been appointed and has recently arrived in the Colony.

8. *To encourage the further mechanization of field work and of internal transport every possible opportunity should continue to be taken to secure the importation of American and British machines, including those of the heaviest type, e.g., U.S.A. creeper tractors. (Chapter V, para. 81 (i)—Page 42 of Report).*

This recommendation is being implemented by the sugar industry as fast as suitable equipment becomes available and finances permit.

9. *Technical instruction in the principles of elementary mechanics, engineering, electricity, book-keeping, etc., should be made available for younger employees (especially the apprentices), either upon the estates or at centres convenient thereto. These courses should be free of cost and provided in the employer's time. The Adviser on Technical Education should supply Instructors and possibly also mobile vans. We hope that the estates would be prepared to afford a generous measure of financial support to this project. (Chapter V, para. 81 (ii)—Page 42 of Report).*

The Sugar Producers' Association has expressed its agreement with these proposals and the Principal of the Technical Institute is drawing up detailed proposals.

10. *Steps should be taken stringently to enforce the existing regulations which prohibit the employment of children under the age of 14 years. (Chapter VIII, para. 15—Page 54 of Report).*

There is no evidence that children under the age of 14 are in fact employed in the sugar industry, but the Departments concerned have been directed to take all possible steps to prevent contravention of the law, namely section 17 of the Education Ordinance, as amended by the Education (Amendment) Ordinance, 1947.

11. *Light shelters and a supply of potable (but not piped) water should be provided at convenient points for field workers. (Chap-*

ter VIII, para. 39—Page 59 of Report).

The Sugar Producers' Association has agreed to provide light shelters where practicable. As regards the supply of water to field workers, all estates supply their cane cutting gangs with water. Many estates supply several other gangs, both male and female, while two supply all their gangs with water while at work. The water supply is either taken from the middle-walks (which are filled from the creeks), or well water is sent back in punts. One estate supplies filtered water, and two others supply well water exclusively.

12. *As soon as possible every estate, cum annexis, should be required to provide shower baths, a changing (or drying) room and a canteen with cooking facilities. (Chapter IX, paras. 50 and 52—Page 61 of Report).*

The Sugar Producers' Association claims that the provision of shower baths in the past has been abused but they are prepared to accept the recommendation and to provide shower baths and drying rooms in a few factories as soon as practicable, with a view to giving them another trial. Canteens have already been provided at most factories and the recommendation will be implemented at all other factories as soon as practicable.

13. *The Ordinances relating to compensation for accidents should be strengthened, e.g., by specifically according recognition to the claims of unmarried wives and of illegitimate children. (Chapter X, para. 64—Page 64 of Report).*

This recommendation has been referred to the Committee recently appointed by me to consider the working of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.

14. *The Department of Labour should take steps to make known to all employees their legal rights, the means of effecting claims for compensation, and, if necessary, how to proceed to arbitration. (Chapter X, para. 65—Page 64 of Report).*

This recommendation is accepted and the Labour Department is taking steps accordingly, though the Department cannot be expected to accept the responsibility of interpreting the law.

15. *The initial degree of compensation in the case of workers in the sugar*

industry earning up to \$50 a month should be reduced from 100 per cent. to 75 per cent. In most other parts of the Caribbean the rate is 50 per cent., and we believe that nowhere else in the world are full wages taken as the initial basis for compensation. (Chapter X, para. 67—Page 65 of Report).

This recommendation has also been referred to the Workmen's Compensation Committee.

16. *Factory Inspectors should be appointed, whose duties would be to make reports upon all accidents occurring on plantations and in factories. Although an enabling Ordinance makes this provision it has not generally been put into effect but, we understand, is likely to be proclaimed in the near future. We hope that one of H.M.'s Factory Inspectors may be seconded to lay the foundations for this policy in the Colony.* (Chapter X, para. 69—Page 65 of Report).

This recommendation is accepted but it has not so far been possible to fill the existing vacancy for a Factory Inspector. Efforts to obtain a fully qualified officer are continuing.

17. *Regulations, on lines customary in Great Britain, should be made adequately to guard moving machinery.*

The introduction of such Regulations await the appointment of a Factory Inspector, without whom they could not be enforced.

18. *Although we do not propose any interference with "cut and load", which, as a form of piecework, leads both to a steady output and to relatively good earnings, elderly workers or those below average physique should not be employed upon these or similar operations. Planks, which should be of adequate width, ought to be freely available at the site and should not have to be carried by the workers to and from their homes.* (Chapter XI, paras. 99—101, page 72 of Report).

Both the Sugar Producers' Association and the recognised Unions are in agreement with this recommendation. Planks are now being provided on all estates and are being conveyed aback in punts.

19. *Whenever seasonal or other conditions require more continuity of*

effort rosters of male fieldworkers should be formed, whereby approximately half the total number employed would undertake to commence work on a Monday and the rest on a Thursday. For each fourth and fifth full consecutive week-day's employment (whether at piece, task or time rates) extra payment at the rate of 20 per cent. of the average of the first three days' earnings should be made. The two groups could, if desired, interchange their commencing days once a month or even fortnightly. This plan would eliminate the "traditional Monday" (when only a small proportion, sometimes as low as 20 per cent. of workers normally present themselves), would provide an additional monetary incentive, and would reduce fluctuations in e.g., cane-cutting operations, and therefore also in factory intake. (Chapter XII, para. 135—Pages 83 and 84 of Report).

The Sugar Producers' Association were not able to accept this recommendation but as an alternative have introduced two bonus incentive systems, one providing for holidays with pay, and one for extra payment for cane cut and loaded on additional days worked during the week. These schemes have been accepted by the recognised Unions and are reported to be working satisfactorily.

20. *A single Wages Board (or Council) should be formed for the whole sugar industry (field and factory). It should consist of six (or eight) representatives of the employers, a similar number of the workers, to be nominated by the Trade Unions, and of two neutral members appointed by Government. Its Chairman should in the first instance ex officio the Commissioner of Labour. Its duties would comprise the fixation of all weekly and piece-work rates of remuneration (with powers of delegation, if suitable, to sub-committees), the granting, in special cases, of permits of exemption; and consideration of such matters as holidays with pay and of general conditions of labour. Apart from fixed quarterly meetings, the Board should be convened specially whenever a request to this effect is made by either side. Government should provide the necessary funds to cover its expenditure, including travelling and subsistence allowances and grants to meet workers' loss of time. Immediately after its*

formation the Board should review all then existing wage-rates. We note that Ordinance No. 2 of 1942 already provides for ad hoc committees to be set up in any local industry. We would take this opportunity of expressing our appreciation of the excellent work being performed by the Department of Labour and wish in particular to refer to the personal activities, often conducted in extremely difficult circumstances, of its Director, Mr. W. M. Bissell. (Chapter XII, paras. 142 and 144—Page 86 of Report).

The purpose of Wages Boards where they have been established is normally to provide for the regulation of wages, etc., in industries where there is no adequate existing machinery for the effective regulation of remuneration and conditions of employment by negotiation between employers and employees. Adequate arrangements already exist in the sugar industry in British Guiana for the settlement of such matters by collective bargaining and an agreement between the employers and employees provides for the negotiation of wages from time to time. Neither the Sugar Producers' Association nor the Unions recognised by them consider the establishment of a Wages Board necessary, and in the existing circumstances Government accepts this view.

21. A contributory pension scheme should be introduced within a year of the establishment of the Wages Board.

- (a) It should, after the lapse of one year's initial employment, cover all adult (viz. over 18 years old) male workers.
- (b) Contributions to be 5 per cent. of the weekly earnings (time, task or piece-work) by the employer and 2½ per cent. by the worker.
- (c) Benefits (either in the form of a lump sum payment or annuity) to be secured on attaining the age of 50, provided that a minimum of 10 years' service has been rendered. Workers withdrawing or being discharged before 10 years have elapsed would receive back their own contributions (with accumulated interest) together with 10 per cent. of the employer's contributions, plus interest, for each year of completed service. Representatives of workers dying during the 10-year period to

to receive the full benefits (contributions plus interest) derivable from the two sides' contributions.

- (d) No contributions to be payable by either side in respect of any week in which a minimum of 40 hours, or three days' piece work, task work or daily work has not been performed.
- (e) A Committee constituted of two representatives of the employers and of two workers should administer the trust funds involved.

N.B.—This scheme would, at the current wage-level and rate of employment, cost the employers about \$400,000 per annum, whilst the workers' contributions would be about \$200,000 or some \$9 for field-workers and \$12 for factory-workers. We expect that as a result of the setting up of the Wages Board there would be an increase in cash (and real wages) more than sufficient to offset the workers' share in this scheme. Although since 1939 wage-rates have more than doubled and real earnings have risen, nevertheless in 1947 the average year's remuneration of a male field-worker was just under \$300 and of a factory-hand \$390-\$400. We also hope that if the earnings of the men are augmented a considerable reduction in the number of women workers will take place. Indeed, we look forward to a time not too far distant when it may be possible entirely to prohibit the employment of women on plantations. (Chapter XII, para. 150—Page 88 of Report).

The Sugar Producers' Association state that, in view of the fact that His Majesty's Government have already indicated that it is not proposed to implement the recommendation for a special subsidy of £1 per ton (vide recommendation 43 below), the sugar estates would not be able to afford to introduce a contributory pension scheme of the type proposed. It is hoped that the Sugar Producers' Association will reconsider this matter when circumstances permit. Ex-sugar estate workers receive benefits, like others, under the Government Old Age Pension Scheme and at the present time about 2,600 or approximately 30% of the total number of old age pensioners are ex-sugar estate workers.

22. Estate Joint Committees, constituted upon existing lines but with representatives also of the

three Unions referred to in Recommendation 23 below should, by Ordinance, be set up for each estate. cum annexis. The Chairman should, in the first instance, be ex officio the Manager who will, we hope, normally be succeeded in due course by a workers' representative. If, after a reasonable period of time this system does not prove satisfactory, then a neutral should be appointed to the position. Only members of a registered and recognised Trade Union should be eligible for election as workers' representatives upon these committees. (Chapter XIII, paras. 173 and 176 — Pages 95 and 96 of Report).

This recommendation is generally accepted by both the Sugar Producers' Association and the recognised Unions but Government does not consider that it would be practicable to introduce legislation which purported to make the appointment of Estate Joint Committees compulsory; it is considered that the appointment of such Committees should be a matter for collective agreement between the employers and the employees.

23. Full recognition should be accorded by all the operating Companies and the individual estates to the Drivers' Association, the Sugar Boilers' Union and the Sugar Estate Clerks' Association. (Chapter XIII, para. 182—Page 99 of Report).

The Sugar Producers' Association has already accorded full recognition to the Drivers' Association (now renamed the British Guiana Headmen's Union), the Sugar Boilers' Union and the Sugar Estate Clerks' Association.

24. A Trades Union Advisory Council should be formed of the two already recognised Unions and the three mentioned above to co-ordinate all Trade Union activity in the sugar industry. We deprecate any further increase in the number of Unions catering for the industry. (Chapter XIII, para. 191—Page 101 of Report).

A Sugar Industry Joint Trade Union Committee, comprising representatives of the five Unions recognised by employers, has now been formed.

25. None but those whose livelihood depends on their work on sugar estates, in field or in factory, should be eligible for membership of, or ought to hold office in, a Trade Union concerned with

their industry. A qualification of three years' employment in the industry should further be required of all candidates for Union office. We hope that this principle, which should not apply to a full-time paid secretary or organiser, may also be made applicable to all other industries in the Colony. We suggest in addition that the Governor in Council might grant at his discretion exemption from the provisions of our recommendation in respect of those who, though not employed in the industry, have deserved well of their Union and are necessary to its well-being and efficiency. In this we follow the example of Hong Kong Ordinance No. 8 of 1948 and Federation of Malaya Ordinance No. 15 of 1948. (Chapter XIII — paras. 194 and 195 — Pages 101 and 102 of Report).

While Government agrees that it is desirable that, wherever possible, Trade Union officers should be recruited from the ranks of workers or persons directly connected with the industry concerned, it is not felt that, in local conditions, the workers should be denied freedom of choice in the selection of their own union officers; and it is not proposed to introduce legislation to implement this recommendation.

26. Some expansion in the number of small cane-farmers, organised, if possible, on co-operative lines, should be encouraged. The banks of the Berbice River and certain other areas upon abandoned estates could provide ample land for this purpose. (Chapter XIV, para. 233—Page 109 of Report).

Government views this recommendation sympathetically where land can be made available and where the capacity of the factory is not already fully taxed. It is understood that the Blairmont factory is already working at full capacity and could not therefore take additional cane from land on the Berbice river.

27. Regular inspections, with occasional special surveys of the estates and their factories should be undertaken by the Medical Department. That body's Inspectors should frequently investigate and report upon all matters affecting housing, water-supply and sanitation. This is provided for by an existing Ordinance, but the duties in question have not been carried out. (Chapter XV, para. 10 — Page 116 of Report).

This is accepted in principle and the Director of Medical Services will submit proposals to implement this recommendation in connection with the draft Estimates of the Medical Department for 1951.

28. *Government should make provision for the erection and maintenance of at least four (and preferably six) State Hospitals at centres conveniently accessible both to the estates and villages. Each of the estates should then be required to provide for their resident nuclear population in lieu of their existing hospitals —*

- (1) *A fully equipped dispensary (with qualified attendants) for cases of accident and sudden illness.*
- (2) *An ambulance for the conveyance of patients to the nearest State Hospital.* (Chapter XV, para. 27—Page 120 of Report).

The Director of Medical Services has drawn up plans for the establishment of six Government hospitals of between 50 and 60 beds each in the rural areas. Of these three would be new hospitals to be constructed and three would be existing hospitals to be taken over from the sugar estates on terms to be mutually agreed. A committee consisting of representatives of Government and the Sugar Producers' Association has been set up under the Chairmanship of the Commissioner of Local Government to consider the terms on which the three estate hospitals might be taken over. The total estimated cost of the three hospitals to be constructed is \$366,000 with recurrent expenditure of \$78,000. The possibility of implementing these plans will have to be considered within the allocation of funds for health services proposed under the revised Development Plan. It should be noted that the Venn Commission itself envisaged that implementation of its recommendation should be gradual and should depend on an assessment of the hospital requirements of the rural population over the next few years (para. 26 of Section IV).

The Sugar Producers' Association have accepted the recommendation for the provision of fully equipped dispensaries and ambulances for resident nuclear workers as and when the plans for the establishment of Government hospitals are implemented.

29. *An Ordinance should be passed to provide for the clearance of all*

"ranges" and the re-housing of their occupants by the end of 1953. Pending demolition, defective ranges should forthwith be rendered weatherproof to the satisfaction of the Medical Department. (Chapter XVI, para. 38—Page 124 of Report).

While fully sympathising with the desire to improve housing conditions on sugar estates and in rural areas generally, Government does not feel that it would be practicable to legislate for the clearance of all ranges and the rehousing of their occupants by the end of 1953. Full powers already exist, under the Building By-Laws, 1911, and the Public Health Ordinance, No. 15 of 1934, to close any range or building which is insanitary or otherwise unfit for human habitation, and these provisions will be enforced to the fullest practicable extent.

Under sections 78 to 81 of the Public By-Laws, where a building is certified to be unfit for human habitation, the Local Authority may, unless cause is shown otherwise, declare the building unfit for human habitation and direct that it shall not be inhabited.

Under sections 78 to 81 of the Public Health Ordinance, where a building has been inspected by the local sanitary authority and is found to be in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious to health, a notice may be served on the occupier or owner requiring him to do what is necessary to abate the nuisance. If he fails to comply, he may be summoned before a Magistrate who may make an order for dealing with the nuisance or prohibiting the use of the building if he adjudges it unfit for human habitation.

Under section 138 of the Public Health Ordinance, where a building is in a ruinous state or dangerous to persons, the local sanitary authority may serve a notice on the owner calling on him to take down, secure or repair the building, within a specified period. If the owner does not comply within such period, the local sanitary authority has power to perform the necessary work itself and recover the expenses incurred by execution against the lot or land with the building thereon.

Many "nuclear" workers are already provided with reasonably satisfactory accommodation, while the re-housing of the "extra nuclear" workers must be considered in relation to housing conditions in the rural areas in general. Conditions are far worse on many of the abandoned sugar estates than on the estates still in operation. Housing

schemes for "extra nuclear" workers will be financed from the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund and schemes to this end have been under consideration by the Welfare Fund Committee. One new housing scheme has already, been approved, and several other schemes were started in anticipation of approval after it had been agreed in the Committee that claims could be submitted for any such work performed subsequent to the 1st January, 1947, when the Fund was first created. A notice has been issued informing workers of their rights under the Sugar Industry Special Funds Ordinance (No. 20 of 1949) and setting out the conditions on which they may borrow money, free of interest, to build houses on approved housing areas either (a) on sugar estates or (b) elsewhere. Provision is made for the payment of a grant on the final repayment of a loan.

The sugar estates companies have been carrying out a policy of re-housing workers for some time past and up to the 30th June, 1950, they had spent some \$1,476,000 on building houses for a total of 1,382 families of nuclear workers. In addition they have been making loans free of interest to workers to assist them to build their own houses on lots in housing areas approved by the Central Board of Health. The total amount outstanding on these loans at the 30th June, 1950, was \$219,750 and at the same date approximately 1,300 houses had been built by workers with this assistance.

30. *With an exception to be made in the case of nuclear schemes for certain types of worker now being adopted upon estates, Government should accept responsibility for the provision, either upon, or adjacent to, the estates of all housing for the workers. Both schemes should be subject to Town Planning regulations, the principles of which we observe with satisfaction have recently been recognised in the Colony.* (Chapter XVI, para. 54 — Page 127 of Report).

As indicated above, housing schemes for "extra nuclear" workers are being prepared by the individual sugar estates and, subject to approval by the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund Committee and by the Central Board of Health, will be financed from the Sugar Labour Welfare Fund.

31. *Government should, as quickly as possible, become responsible for the provision and maintenance of all schools on estates. We understand that such a policy has*

been approved by Government and we have ascertained that the religious bodies concerned would co-operate. As a temporary measure the estates might be looked to for the provision of certain building materials now in very short supply. (Chapter XVII, para. 61—Page 130 of Report).

Government is in fact already responsible for the maintenance of all schools on sugar estates and the school population is well provided for in comparison with other districts.

As to the present position, the following statistics will be of interest to Honourable Members as indicating the progress which is being made. In round figures the number of pupils enrolled in schools on sugar estates in 1949 (figures for 1950 are not yet available) was 13,500 with an average attendance of 10,500. The actual school accommodation provided in 1950 was adequate for 10,500 without overcrowding. Since 1945 nine schools have been built on sugar estates at a cost of \$113,227 providing a total of 2,818 additional places, whilst six schools have been extended at a cost of \$25,150 providing 1,191 additional places. The present programme is expected to provide a further 1,350 places by the end of December, 1951.

32. *Every estate, cum annexis, should be required to provide a community centre, a creche, and a sports ground provided with suitable facilities.* (Chapter XVIII, paras. 77, 82 and 84—Pages 134—136 of Report).

The Sugar Producers' Association have accepted this recommendation for the large estates.

33. *A Welfare Officer should be appointed for each estate.* (Chapter XVIII, para. 80 — Page 135 of Report).

The Sugar Producers' Association have accepted this recommendation in respect of each large estate, but were unable to agree to contribute towards the cost of training Welfare Officers. As you are aware, the Finance Committee of Council has now approved provision for training 12 Welfare Officers (whom the sugar estates have agreed to employ) in the United Kingdom at a cost of \$30,000, to be borne equally by Government and the Labour Welfare Fund. Two candidates have already been selected and have left to attend a Y.M.C.A. course on welfare work in England starting at the beginning of October.

34. *All rum-shops upon estates should, by means of the existing licensing regulations, be closed.* (Chapter XVIII, para. 88 — Page 136 of Report).

It is considered that the implementation of this recommendation would merely lead to an increase in the illicit trade of spirits and neither the Sugar Producers' Association nor Government have felt able to accept it.

The question, however, of reducing the hours during which retail spirit shops on sugar estates may remain open is receiving consideration.

35. *A general store, shop or small covered market should be provided on each estate.* (Chapter XVIII, para. 92 — Page 138 of Report).

The Sugar Producers' Association have stated that they will consider the provision of a general store on certain estates but feel that Government should encourage the establishment of shops on co-operative lines on estates and especially on "extra nuclear" settlements. This is being given consideration.

36. *Estates should be encouraged to extend the practice of providing plots of land to regular workers for —*
- (1) *ground provision, and*
 - (2) *rice-growing.*

The latter plots should be of at least one acre in extent, whilst the former, on grounds of health and sanitation, should not be allowed in close proximity to houses. (Chapter XVIII, para. 98 — Page 140 of Report).

Government is in sympathy with this recommendation provided that it can be implemented without prejudice to the need for increasing sugar production up to the target of 230,000 tons.

37. *The Welfare Fund should in part contribute to the cost of implementing our Recommendations 9, 11, 12, 32 and 35 above.* (Chapter XVIII, para. 110 — Page 143 of Report).

This is accepted.

38. *Whether treated as a de novo capital expenditure or as a replacement, all expenditure by the estates on the substitution of "ranges" by other forms of housing should be free from liability to income tax.* (Chapter XIX, para. 4—Page 148 of Report).

The revision of the local income tax law is being considered with a view to the provision of, inter alia, more generous allowances for the replacement of capital, on the lines of the United Kingdom Finance Acts, 1945; the question of making welfare expenditure on approved schemes, including housing schemes, eligible for relief will be considered in this connection but it is felt that it would be unfair to provide a special privilege, such as that recommended by the Venn Commission, for one industry alone.

39. *In our provisional recommendations we suggested the abolition of:*
- (I) *The Sugar Production Tax, instituted in 1942 and bringing in about \$180,000.*
 - (II) *The Distilling Tax of \$15,000.*
 - (III) *The (ancient) Cane-acreage Tax of \$19,000.*

In the aggregate these charges represent scarcely more than 1 per cent. of the total revenue of the Colony, and we were glad to hear, shortly after our return to England, that a decision on these lines had already been taken in regard to the two minor charges. We again urge that the temporary Sugar Production Tax should be abrogated as soon as possible. (Chapter XIX, para. 4 — Page 148 of Report).

This will be considered in connection with the 1951 Budget proposals.

40. *We would express the hope that no new charges will, with a possible exception of any land-tax on abandoned or unused portions of estates, be imposed on the sugar-producing Companies.* (Chapter XIX, para. 5 — Page 148 of Report).

Government does not at present contemplate the imposition of any new form of taxation specifically on the sugar industry.

41. *The internal, or local, price of sugar, due allowance being made for divergence in quality, should be raised to, and indefinitely retained at, the export price level. In Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica producers and retail prices are still well above those in British Guiana.* (Chapter XIX, para. 10 — Page 151 of Report).

In view of the present need to restrict as far as possible the rise in the cost of living, and bearing in mind the financial and other relief being afforded

to the industry, it is not proposed to increase the local price of sugar at present.

42. *Although during recent years the profits from rum have been of vital assistance to the industry, upon occasion, indeed, converting an overall working loss into a small profit, we make no recommendation for a reduction in the heavy duty of \$6.25 per gallon on this commodity which produced no less than \$1,900,000 last year, since it is in effect passed on to the consumer.* (Chapter XIX, para. 16 — Pages 153 and 154 cf Report).

It is not proposed to reduce the duty on rum.

43. *For the last available three years (1945-47) the average profit per ton of sugar produced was in British Guiana \$8.11 and in Barbados \$15.43. These, and fully authenticated data demonstrating the much higher cost of production prevailing in this Colony as compared with the rest of the Caribbean (attributable to physical circumstances such as the large areas of land below sea-level and the abnormal amount of water handled), so resulting in lower returns, lead us most strongly to press for a subsidy from the Imperial Government of £1 (\$4.80) on each ton of sugar produced. This grant-in-aid, representing a price increase of about four per cent., should be guaranteed for a period of 15 years subject to quinquennial cost of production reviews.* (Chapter XIX, paras. 26 and 27 — Page 157 of Report).

It was stated in the House of Commons on the 7th December, 1949, that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, after carefully studying the arguments contained in the Report, considered that it would not be appropriate to single out the sugar industry in one particular territory for special assistance of this kind.

A Motion will shortly be introduced seeking Council's approval of the action which has been taken and which it is proposed to take on the Report of the Venn Commission.

C. C. WOOLLEY,
Governor.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
British Guiana.
26th September, 1950.

GRATUITY TO MR. D. MOSES.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER communicated the following Message :—

Message No. 5.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to invite reference to Resolution No. XXV dated the 21st of August, 1940, whereby this Council approved of the payment of superannuation benefits to non-pensionable employees of this Government and of the conditions on which such payments should be made. One condition which precludes an employee from being eligible for a gratuity is the termination of his services by voluntary resignation.

2. Mr. Moses, ex-Charge Operator of the Mosquito Control Service, Medical Department, resigned from that Service with effect from the 1st of November, 1949, on the ground of ill-health, submitting a medical certificate dated 29th October, 1949, by Dr. A. W. H. Smith, former Medical Superintendent of the Mental Hospital, Berbice, which stated that Mr. Moses had been a patient of the Mental Hospital for three months during 1947 "suffering from confusion and excitement" and that his mental condition was "not too good".

3. Mr. Moses' voluntary resignation, which followed closely his reduction in rank on the ground of dereliction of duty [would normally have precluded him from receiving a gratuity of \$373.84, for which he would have been eligible in respect of his 9 years and 5 months service if his services had been terminated on account of staff retrenchment, or if he had been pronounced physically unfit by a Medical Board. Nevertheless, having regard to his medical history, Mr. Moses' case appears to merit special consideration, and I invite Honourable Members to approve of the grant of a gratuity of \$373.84 to him as though he had not resigned voluntarily, but had been retired on medical grounds.

C. C. WOOLLEY,
Governor.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
British Guiana,
19th October, 1950.

CONCESSIONS TO INDUSTRIES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY communicated the following Message :—

Message No. 6.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council.

I wish to refer to the statement which I made in this Council on the 4th of January last, when dealing with the proposals by the Colonial Development Corporation for establishing their timber development project, that I considered that it would be reasonable to assure the Corporation of exemption from Customs duty and Bill of Entry Tax for a period of three years on new capital equipment imported for establishing the milling, extraction or manufacturing processes of the project, and that the Government would be prepared, as a matter of policy, to make similar concessions for any other new undertakings of a risk-bearing and development character provided that an approved programme of development was submitted and satisfactory evidence of ability to carry it out was produced by the undertaking.

2. The general policy on this question has now received the Government's consideration and the conclusion has been reached that the present practice based on the discretionary right given in the law to the Governor in Council to grant remissions of the whole (but not the part) of any Customs duty and/or Bill of Entry Tax should be discontinued, and that specific provision should be made in the law to cover the conditions under which remissions of duty and tax would be granted, so that the rates of duty and tax to be paid in every case would be certain and not arbitrary, and that the time and manner of payment would be defined.

3. It is considered that both Customs duty and Bill of Entry Tax should be waived on the items described in the next paragraph, when imported by any industrial undertaking or any predominantly mechanised undertaking in Agriculture, Mining or Forestry in respect of a new and clearly defined project which is of a risk-bearing or developmental character, or for a Tourist hotel. For these purposes, the term "new project" would include any entirely new undertaking or a clear and distinct branching out or major expansion of an existing undertaking, but would not include replacements, renewals, rehabilitation or modernisation of plant or equipment.

4. The items in respect of which it is proposed that Customs duty and Bill of Entry tax would be waived for

the purposes described in the preceding paragraph are as follows :—

Forest, Field, Mine, Mill and Factory equipment; building material therefor; cultivation, extraction and haulage equipment for directly productive use on private lands or concessions; river craft of a freight carrying character; but not including any item competing with anything made in the Colony, or any item in respect of housing, domestic or office requirements, except in the case of a Tourist hotel project.

5. The concessions would apply only for a stated period (say, not more than 10 years for mining ventures and 5 years for other types, as each case requires) in respect of each project and, subject to the general consent of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, would apply without regard to the country of origin of the equipment, provided that where foreign equipment might be concerned, the applicant could show reasonable grounds at the time of application for not obtaining the equipment from British sources.

6. To achieve these purposes, it is proposed that a special item should be inserted in the Fourth Schedule to the Customs Duties Ordinance and in the list of exemptions under the Bill of Entry Tax Ordinance, providing, subject to conditions to be prescribed by the Comptroller of Customs, for the free entry of items imported in respect of development projects which might be approved by the Governor in Council from time to time and publicly notified in the Official Gazette.

7. Undertakings wishing to take advantage of the concessions would be required to apply to the Government in writing on a standard form which would not merely give the relevant particulars regarding the nature of the undertaking and the items in respect of which the duty concession was being sought, but would also link the application with a specific developmental project, however small.

8. The application would then be considered by the Governor in Council and a decision taken as to acceptance or rejection in whole or in part. If a concession is granted, the decision would be given executive effect by the Comptroller of Customs.

9. These proposals, which are designed to provide an incentive for the establishment of new enterprises and for the expansion of existing industries, will, I hope, be acceptable to Honourable Members, and the necessary amending legislation to give them effect will

be introduced in this Council at an early date.

C. C. WOOLLEY,
Governor.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
British Guiana,
19th October, 1950.

PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following :—

Parcel Post (Amendment) Regulations, 1950.

Memorandum on the Report by Messrs. Coode, Vaughan-Lee, Frank and Gwyther, Consulting Engineers, on the Possibilities of Improving the Depth at the Bar and in the Channel of the Essequibo River; and the action taken locally on the Consulting Engineer's Report

Memorandum by Economic Adviser and Development Commissioner on Development Planning.
(Legislative Council Paper No. 6/1950).

Report of the Directors of the New Widows' and Orphans Fund for the year 1949.

Post Office Telegraph (Amendment) Regulations, 1950.

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

The Final Report of the Public Services Salaries and Wages Commission, 1948.
(Legislative Council Paper No. 7/1950).

Minutes of the Meeting of Finance Committee of the Legislative Council held on the 24th of August and the 28th of September, 1950.

Supplementary Estimate for the quarter ended 30th June, 1950.

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 to render the owners of dogs liable for injuries done to cattle by dogs; to provide better protection from dogs; and for purposes connected therewith."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Matrimonial Causes Ordinance with respect to the dissolution of marriage and for purposes connected therewith."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Constabulary Ordinance by requiring officers to take the oath of office; by making provision for taking the measurements, photographs and finger print impressions of persons in lawful custody; by extending the provisions of the Principal Ordinance relating to the discipline of the force; by establishing a Police Federation; by establishing a Special Reserve Police Force; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Coconut Products (Control) Ordinance, 1935, by the repeal of those provisions relating to Copra Brokers and by the abolition of the Copra Brokers Board."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Post and Telegraph Ordinance, Chapter 185, with respect to the grant of licences to instal, use or work amateur wireless stations."

GRATUITY TO MR. D. MOSES.

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

"That, with reference to His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 5 of the 19th of October, this Council approves of the grant of a gratuity of \$373.84 to Mr. D. Moses, ex-Charge Operator of the Mosquito Control Service, Medical Department, who resigned from that Service with effect from the 1st of November, 1949, on the ground of ill-health."

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE APRIL— JUNE, 1950.

"That, this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimate for the quarter ended 30th June, 1950, which has been laid on the table."

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

INTRODUCTION OF PRIVATE BILL.

Mr. PETERS gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill :—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to incorporate the Christian Catholic Church."

ABOLITION OF GOVT. RAILWAYS.

Mr. FERREIRA gave notice of the following motion:—

“WHEREAS the Railways of the Transport and Harbours Department are being run at a substantial loss;

AND WHEREAS there is little, if any, likelihood of an improvement in the financial position;

AND WHEREAS the progress and development of the Colony is being severely retarded because of this heavy annual drain on Colony Funds;

AND WHEREAS the traffic carried on the railways could be conveyed by road and water transport;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommends to Government the abolition of the Government Railway system, over as short a period as possible;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that steps be taken to construct suitable highways between Georgetown and Rosignol, and Vreed-en-Hoop and Parika.”

TRIBUTES TO THE LATE MR. C. A. McDOOM.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir, before we proceed with the ordinary business of the day I would like to move the suspension of the Standing Rules to enable the Council to pay tribute to the late Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. C. A. McDoom, who died on the 2nd of October.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hon. Members, none of us would have thought when we adjourned for the short recess from which we have just re-assembled, that one of our number would never take his seat in this Council again. Mr. McDoom had not been in good health since early in this year, and when I arrived in this Colony he was on prolonged sick leave and he sought permission to return from that leave earlier, with the public spirit which I believe to have been typical of him, in order to take part in the debate on the Rice Marketing (Amendment) Bill. At that time he seemed to be on the road

to restoration of health. His sudden collapse and death therefore came with a great sense of shock and loss to us in this Council.

I have risen to pay tribute to his memory with much diffidence. As a new-comer, I am probably the least qualified in this Council to perform this task. Nevertheless, others will follow me who, I feel sure, will make up for my shortcomings by speaking with more intimate experience of the late Member. His career testifies to his particular interest in the welfare of the East Indian community of which he was such a distinguished member. It testifies also to his great interest in the rice industry. He was, as you are aware, a past President of the Rice Producers' Association and up to the time of his death he was a member of the Rice Marketing Board and of its executive committee. He himself had extensive rice interests. His loss, I feel, will be most keenly felt at this time when the expansion of the rice industry is taking an increasingly important part in the economy of this country.

Nevertheless, Sir, I believe it was on account of his general qualities as a man that you selected him for nomination as a Member of this Council, and he has most fully justified the confidence placed in him. I myself only had the opportunity of talking with him on two occasions, but my impression of him — and first impressions are often right — was of an upright, conscientious and energetic man, the type of man, in fact, whom this Council can ill-afford to lose. Your Excellency, I beg to move the following motion:—

“That this Council records its deep regret at the death of the Hon. Cramat Ally McDoom and its tribute to the devoted service which he rendered to the Colony and this Council, and directs that an expression of sympathy be conveyed to his relatives.”

Mr. RAATGEVER: Seconding the motion of condolence, which has been so very ably moved by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, I should like, as a brother Nominated Member and as Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, to pay tribute to the late Mr. McDoom. As is well known, he was a pioneer of the rice in-

dustry in this Colony and gave very valuable services to the Rice Marketing Board, the Rice Producers' Association and in other ways in connection with rice. He was also interested in the members of the East Indian community and gave very able services to them also. He was of a very pleasing disposition, very affable and, in attending meetings of committees with which I was associated with him, I always looked forward to his very pleasing smile and affable way in which he greeted members. I shall miss him as a colleague. I shall miss him as a citizen. Alas! There are very few of the older brigade left in the Colony today who are pioneers. They are all passing on, and it seems to me, Sir, that the younger generation are not taking their place in the affairs of the Colony as they should.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Sir, I rise to support the motion which has been moved by the hon. the Colonial Secretary. I feel, Sir, that words are inadequate to pay tribute to one who held such an important and esteemed position in the entire Colony of British Guiana and, equally so, in the particular community to which he had belonged. I have had for a great number of years close association with the late Mr. C. A. McDoom. I remember, my first contact with him was when he embarked upon the very scheme which today is playing an important part in the economy of this Colony. I refer to the rice scheme between the Mahaicony and Abary rivers. At that time nothing could have stopped his enthusiasm and his foresight in seeing within the area between those rivers an opportunity for development in rice and cattle; but one particular barrier was in his way—ingress and egress into that area. I remember well how he fought and that was how I came in — in order to get prescriptive rights for some people in respect of some strip of land which would have given him that right. I mention that, Sir, to show that the characteristic of the late Mr. C. A. McDoom was an ambition, a vision, for progress and development which fitted in so well in the order of things in British Guiana.

As a man, he was an excellent and noble family man. A respected son of the soil, he was esteemed by all who came

in contact with him. He has been referred to as being affable. That is very true, for in my years of association with him I have never known him to be in any way abusive or in any way inviting controversy with any individual, but rather to resort to cold reason in order to win his point. Moreover, in so far as his particular religious persuasion is concerned, I must take this opportunity to say that he stands out as a great pillar for the integration and welfare of his own. On occasions when the tendency was towards chaos, I can say with honesty and a great amount of satisfaction to myself, that he by his influence and his personality and by his sober-thinking was able to pull together the particular small section of the community to which he belonged — the Muslim community of this Colony. For that I pay special tribute to him. It was one of the things which marked him as a true leader of the Muslim community, and his spirit and ideas can well be emulated by every member of that community.

So far as his interest in rice is concerned, sufficient has been mentioned and we know with what gusto he always took up any problem which related to rice. There is much that can be said of a great man who has passed out. The Grim Reaper seems to have gained a little over us in that he has taken away some very brilliant men in our midst. I refer particularly to the late Mr. J. A. Luckhoo, Mr. Abdool Rayman and now Mr. McDoom, all of whom made a name and carved a niche for themselves in the history of British Guiana. I am sure there will always be a place in the records of this Colony for the late Hon. C. A. McDoom.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: As the Official Member of this Council who was, perhaps, more closely associated with the late hon. Nominated Member, Mr. McDoom, than any other, I would like to add my humble tribute to his memory. He was a man of great personal charm and dignity. He was, I am sure, an ornament to the particular community to which he had belonged and to the whole of the inhabitants of British Guiana. It is quite true to say that he was the pioneer in the large scale

cultivation of rice in this Colony. There is now still standing in the area of land between the Mahaicony and Abary rivers a piece of equipment — a dredge — which was put there by Mr. McDoom when he made the first effort to prepare that area for the large scale cultivation of rice which he lived to see brought into effect by Government.

His interests, of course, embraced other fields of industry. For example, I believe he was also very deeply concerned in the timber industry of this Colony. In so far as his work in this Council is concerned, I always like to recall the pleasant way in which he dealt with any subject that came before him, the restrained manner in which he spoke, which always led to a pleasant debate. Sir, I shall particularly miss Mr. McDoom and his memory, I am sure, will be ever green amongst us.

The PRESIDENT: I am pleased to associate myself most warmly with the remarks that have been made by Members and to put the motion.

Motion put, and adopted unanimously, the Members standing.

ORDER OF THE DAY

HOURS OF SITTING OF COUNCIL.

Dr. JAGAN: On the Order Paper of today there are two motions in my name. I shall deal with the first one, but I do not know whether Your Excellency wants me to deal with both at the same time.

The PRESIDENT: No. One at a time!

Dr. JAGAN: Thank you. The first motion seeks to amend the Rules of this Council to provide for the hours of sitting from 2 to 5 p.m. to be changed to 5 to 10.30 p.m. It reads:

“WHEREAS the Rules provide that the sittings of this honourable Council shall be from 2 to 5 p.m. ;

AND WHEREAS many Members of this Council being professional and businessmen find great difficulty in attending all meetings of this Council ;

AND WHEREAS it has been often said that in a functioning democracy the people must be informed and vigilant;

AND WHEREAS the public is desirous of attending meetings of this honourable Council, as was indicated by full attendance at evening sessions in 1948, but is unable to attend during working hours ;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Rules of this honourable Council be amended to provide for the sittings of this Council between the hours of 5 to 10.30 p.m.”

My reason for bringing this motion to this Council is the fact that many hon. Members here have to attend, aside from the meetings of this Council, many Committee meetings. Some hon. Members are attached to Boards and much of their time is taken up by this kind of duty. It is true, Sir, that when we took our seats in this Council we undertook to give service to the people of this Colony, but I feel that no harm would be done if this service is given at a time which is convenient to the Members of this Council. It may be said that hon. Members are also being paid for this service, but others feel that they have to carry on their normal duties also. Perhaps in some cases he is a professional man, such as a lawyer, and finds he has to appear before the Courts on occasions simultaneously with the sitting of this Council. Included among the Members of this Council are also businessmen who have to attend to their regular business during the hours of sitting of this Council from 2 to 5 p.m. It is true that many Members have probably left their business or their professional duties to come to this Council, but it is also true, Sir, that because of those outside activities of business and professional duties there may have been clashes at certain times in the past which prevented those hon. Members from attending the meetings of the Legislative Council. I do not have the figures here with me, but no doubt you will recall that at the end of last year when a summary was made of the number of meetings attended by hon. Members we found that in many cases Members had not been attending as many meetings as possibly we would like. It certainly would be of greater value to this Council and the debates taking place in this Council if all Members are able to be present to take part in all the deliberations. But I feel that this lack of attendance may have been due to the fact that hon. Members

may have been pressed either in their professional duties or business occupation. Consequently I feel that this Council will do well to amend its Rules so that we can meet leisurely in the comfort of the evening, when it is cooler, to carry out the deliberations of this Council.

At the present time I know that in certain Colonies night meetings of the Legislative Council are held. In Barbados even though the meetings are summoned for the afternoon they carry on their session in the evening. In Jamaica a proposal is now being put forward by one of the political parties there asking for night sittings of the House of Representatives. In Great Britain we know it is a fact that the meetings of the House of Commons are held in the evenings and sometimes they go on to the early hours of the morning. I feel that if we adopt that system, especially when the hours will be kept within the limits of 5 to 10.30 p.m., it would not create any hardship on Members of this Council. Aside from the attendance of Members of this Council there is also an additional factor which, I feel, is very important and that is the question of the public becoming interested in the affairs of this Legislative Council, I have been informed by Members who have visited the House of Commons that the people in Great Britain take a great deal of interest in the affairs of their country, and in order to get seats in the gallery they have to apply long in advance before permission is granted, and in many cases permission is not forthcoming. I feel that in a country, such as ours, on the road to self-government, on the road to major development in many fields, it is all the more important that the public must be at all times informed about the debates which are taking place in this Legislative Council.

During the hours of 2 to 5 p.m. most of the people are at their work. We have had in this Council during the last three years many debates on very vital issues taking place. I recall the debate on Federation, the debate on the Ten Year Development Programme, the debate on Adult Suffrage Franchise, the debate on the Salaries and Wages Commission Re-

port. I can go on naming several other important debates which took place in this Council. I feel sure that if the public were given access — I should not say "given access"; I should say, if time had allowed them access to this Council—no doubt they would have been properly apprised of the *pros* and *cons* of many issues which have been debated in this Council. Today, Sir, we have on our hands a serious strike arising out of the very high cost of living and out of many other circumstances. Only recently we have had an extensive debate on the Salaries and Wages Commission Report. I feel sure that if the members of the public are given access to the meetings of this Council they in making their decisions would be better apprised of all the facts, and consequently things would move on more smoothly.

I know, Sir, that the hours I have set out here—5 to 10.30 p.m.—may conflict with the dinner hour of hon. Members of this Council, but I would suggest that if that is so this Council can meet from 3 to 8 p.m., or alternately from 7.30 to 10.30 p.m., or some such hours which can be decided on by this Council. I do not feel, Sir, the problem is insuperable. On the other hand, I feel it will be convenient for most Members of this Council to attend during those hours. It is true that certain Members come here from far outlying places, particularly from Berbice, but I feel, Sir, that the same amount of time they spend now in attending the day sessions would not have to be spent if we have evening sessions. To attend the afternoon session those Members have to leave Berbice in the morning and in many cases they leave the next day to return home. If we have evening sessions they need not leave home until afternoon, and in many cases they will probably save half a day. With these few remarks I commend this motion to hon. Members, and I do hope it will meet with their support.

Mr. CARTER: I desire to second this motion. I appreciate that the success or defeat of this motion will turn largely on the question of the personal convenience of Members of this Council. I know that when we took the Oath of Office we all undertook to make a certain

amount of personal sacrifice. But very often I too am torn between two loyalties — loyalty to individuals and loyalty to this Council and the country. It should be a matter of more convenience to myself if this Council would agree to some change of the hours of sitting, as the hon. Member for Central Demerara suggests in this motion. I think it would be a boon to the Official Members of this Council who, I know, are weighed down with a great burden of work during the day and who, I am sure, are reluctant to leave their desks to come to this Council during their working hours.

The mover of the motion has also made reference to the fact that the public would be able to attend the meetings of the Council if the hours were changed. I think this will be a good thing from the point of view of the public, although I am sure it will tend to make our debates somewhat more lengthy. I am in favour of this motion purely for personal reasons, and I support it.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I do not know whether the reluctance of other Members to follow after the hon. Member who has just spoken is an indication that they have made up their minds in favour of this motion. I would like to say in support of this motion that it has always been my view that we should have night sessions. We had one experience of night sessions when we discussed the Budget which was overdue, and we found to our great satisfaction not only we went through our work expeditiously but also the public took a very lively interest in what took place in this Council. I do not think it can be sufficiently emphasized that the public of this Colony must be educated along proper lines, politically and otherwise, so that they can have an intelligent grasp of what goes on in their government. I feel that they do not get sufficient information through the Press, although the Press is making a very gallant effort in that respect, and that Members of the public should be afforded an opportunity to listen first-hand, not so much to the speeches (I seem to glean that from the hon. Member's remarks) because I consider that something of secondary importance, but to be informed of the problems which arise and to exer-

cise their minds on the points which are raised in this Council. I feel that that is the important thing. If they come here for entertainment and to listen to fine oratory I feel that they would be losing what really should induce them to come here.

I feel that the Council should endeavour to meet twice a day — before dinner and after dinner, whenever we have a lot of work to do. I visualize that the advantage would be that our sessions would be shorter; that we would be able to get through our work, which is sometimes very heavy, and be able to have longer recesses which are necessary not only for recoupment but to enable us to study the various reports which are presented; and to obtain greater information in our spare time by reading more so that we would be able to return to the Council with fresh minds and renewed gusto to tackle the various problems. That would be no small advantage. If we could sit twice a day we would be able to do much more work, and for that reason I would suggest that the hours of sitting should be fixed by Order in Council. We know that the President can adjourn the Council to any particular hour, and that this motion is perhaps unnecessary, but it seems to me that if statutory hours were fixed by our Rule, we would have our minds adjusted to certain fixed hours. I therefore suggest that our hours of sitting should be from 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. I feel that we should meet the convenience of Members of the Council in this matter. I therefore move as an amendment of the motion that the hours should be 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. because from 5 to 10.30 p.m. seems to run counter to our dinner time. I do not know whether a recess is intended between those hours but I assume that it is. The present hours do interfere with our tea time, so much so that I have my tea brought to me here at 4.30 p.m. every time the Council sits from 2 to 5 p.m.

Mr. FERREIRA: I am afraid I must sound a rather discordant note because I am not in agreement with the motion. I would like to point out that, having done a day's work Members would like some rest at night, and where the Official Members are concerned I can see

that the change of hours suggested would affect them as much as other Members. We have had discussions on this subject before, and as a result of those discussions it was decided to retain the hours of 2 to 5 p.m. Personally I feel that morning sittings, say from 9 to 11 a.m., would have helped, but of course it would have encroached more on the businessman's day, and possibly interfere with meetings of Committees.

As regards the question of the public attending night sessions of the Council, we might have some more people attending, but Members will recall that when a certain Bill was before the Council recently we had the entire Chamber filled to overflowing. In other words, if there is interest we would have the public.

With regard to the Barbados House of Assembly, they may have sat at night, and so have we, but their official sitting is in the day, and so far that matter is that of the House of Commons, but its sittings frequently extend into the night and sometimes until the early hours of the morning. It would be unfair to give the impression that the House of Commons sits only at night, and even if it did we must bear in mind that conditions in England are entirely different. As a matter of fact it is well known that the House of Commons only caters for 75 per cent. of its Members because of the poor attendances. I will oppose the motion, and I think other Members will do the same.

Mr. PETERS: I too rise to oppose the motion. In the light of my experience in this Council I cannot say that the hours of 2 to 5 p.m. have proved very inconvenient when we consider the balance of convenience of the Members of the Council as a whole so far as our attendance here is concerned. We must all admit that the business of the Council is serious business, and I think the best time to pursue that business is in our wakeful moments — the moments when we are out for business in the course of the day. When we turn our attention from the normal course of our peculiar daily business and come to this Council Chamber we come here with minds which are imbued with the idea of pursuing business, but if we run the risk of going

through an entire day facing up to the challenge of the day's business, and after that are expected to come here and give efficient attention and consideration to the business in hand, I am sure in the long run when we consider the balance of convenience we would find that the evening sessions certainly would fall into discount. I did not hide it from my friend that I was opposed to his motion, and I shall vote against it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Hon. Members are aware of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Council, and the particular Standing Rule which is relevant at the moment is Rule 2(b) which reads:

“(b) The Council shall ordinarily meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. The President may, however, require the Council to sit on such other days and at such other times as he may determine”

Following on that, as hon. Members have already observed, this Council has met on several occasions in evening sessions and has carried on the business of this Council when it was necessary to meet at that time. One or two hon. Members have made the point that the motion is intended to suit personal convenience. As against that two hon. Members have said that evening sessions would not be personally convenient to them. Consequently it will be appreciated that what might be suitable to one Member might be very unsuitable to another Member.

The next point was that night sessions might be of value in educating the public, but, as has been observed by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Ferreira), where there is interest you will find the public attending. Another factor is that the accommodation in this Chamber is somewhat limited, as was apparent from the attendances which we had during the debate on the Rice Marketing (Amendment) Bill. Consequently it will be seen that the education to which reference has been made would obviously be limited to the few persons who attend. Although it may be regarded that there is something in the point as regards the education of the public, on balance I think that the Rule as it stands is satis-

factory and allows sufficient elasticity, so that where, in the opinion of the President, it is desirable that meetings of the Council should be held at other times which would suit the convenience of Members, such meetings can be held. I do not think it is necessary to amend the Rule in order that we may have a night session, because it is already provided for, and in actual fact we have on many occasions held night sessions up to 10.30 and sometimes up to 11 o'clock.

Dr. JAGAN: I have listened to two Members who spoke against the motion, apart from the hon. the Attorney-General. The hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peters) made a good point that he likes to relax after dinner, but I feel that he could come to the Legislative Council and relax right here. (laughter). We have so much more fun in the Legislative Council, and we certainly would not like to deny him that pleasure. But to be serious, the point which was made by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) is a very good one indeed. He recalled that in Barbados the sessions of the Legislature are usually held late in the afternoon, around 4 o'clock, and continue until dinner time, and they re-assemble after dinner to complete the business of the day. Many of us would prefer such a system. We would much prefer to have -- as the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara suggests -- if possible, a sitting from 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. and, if necessary, a sitting before that, maybe from 5 to 6.30 p.m., so that the business of the Council could be expedited, and, what is very important, in order that the Council should have definite periods of recess.

At present many of us cannot make plans because there is no definite period of recess. This country is an extensive one and many of us who take an interest in its affairs should take time off from our Legislative Council duties to visit areas such as the North-West District and possibly the Rupununi, the Courentyne and other areas which are not easily accessible. So that if we had sittings limited to possibly a few times per week -- maybe twice a week -- with the hours extended from 3 to 4½ hours we would find that the work of the Council would

be expedited, and we would have very much more time for recess which we could utilize for either our own education or for visiting our constituencies.

The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Ferreira) spoke against the motion, but because of the fact that the Council now sits from 2 to 5 p.m. I felt that on many occasions he experienced difficulty in attending the meetings I am endeavouring to change those hours in order to suit him. However, I do hope that other Members will support the motion when it is put to the vote.

The PRESIDENT: I will put the original motion, and if it is not carried I will put the amendment.

Motion put and declared lost.

The PRESIDENT: I will now put the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) that the hours should be from 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. Was the amendment seconded?

Mr. DEBIDIN: It has not been seconded.

The PRESIDENT: Then the motion is lost

SUBVENTION FOR MAINTENANCE OF KITTY ROADS.

Dr. JAGAN: The object of my second motion is very clear. The motion states:

"WHEREAS the town of New Amsterdam with a population of 9,567, according to the 1946 Census, is granted an annual subvention by Government of \$12,000 for maintenance of roads and streets;

AND WHEREAS the Mayor and Town Council, Georgetown, is granted an annual contribution of \$50,000 towards the maintenance of roads and streets;

AND WHEREAS Kitty Village with a population of 8,927, according to the 1946 Census, has to maintain a large number of roads and streets, many of which are in a bad state of disrepair;

AND WHEREAS the revenue of Kitty Village is not adequate to maintain roads, etc., in a proper condition.

BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommend to Government the granting of an annual subvention of

\$10,000 to the Kitty Village Authority towards the maintenance of roads and streets."

I move this motion because the Kitty Village Council has been experiencing a great deal of difficulty in meeting the expenditure required for the proper maintenance of their roads. They have made appeals to Government officially and, I believe, unofficially for a grant towards the maintenance of their roads and streets. I quite appreciate the fact that there is great danger inherent in this motion, because it may be argued that the moment we vote in this Council a subvention to the Kitty Village Council we will have all the villages crying out for similar treatment, but I would like to point out that Kitty village stands out on its own because it is different in many respects from the other villages. It is not really a village in the sense that it has no back lands, and should really be a municipal area. In my constituency there are villages like Plaisance, Beterverwagting and Buxton which have back lands, but Kitty has no back lands, and because of that it is deprived of revenue which is obtained from the back lands of other villages, for the proper maintenance of roads and so on.

In their estimates for this year the Kitty Village Council voted a sum of \$10,000 for the maintenance of their roads and streets, and the vote has already been exceeded. When one examines the condition of the roads in the village one finds that there is need for greater expenditure in order to maintain them in proper condition. I am told by the Chairman of the Village Council that Kitty and Subryanville have a total of 23 roads, whereas most of the other villages have either one or two roads connected in the back lands with the residential areas. They may have one or two cross streets which are used by vehicular traffic. Consequently, Kitty village stands more in relation to Georgetown and New Amsterdam than to other villages. I therefore feel that as subventions are voted by this Council to the Georgetown and New Amsterdam Municipalities towards the maintenance of their roads and streets, similar action should be taken with reference to the Kitty Village Council.

In the preamble to the motion I mention that the 1946 Census records the population of New Amsterdam as 9,567 and the population of Kitty village as 8,927, so that New Amsterdam has a little over 500 more people than Kitty, but we have to have regard to the fact that since the Census was taken many people have migrated from Georgetown to Kitty village on account of the serious housing shortage in the City on which you, Sir, have commented on more than one occasion. In consequence many dwellings are being constructed in Subryanville and other sections of Kitty village. If population figures were available for the present time I have no doubt that it would be found that Kitty and New Amsterdam would be in the same relationship so far as population is concerned. If Government has found it necessary to grant the Municipality of New Amsterdam a subvention of \$12,000 towards the maintenance of their roads I submit that the same consideration should be given to the Kitty Local Authority because they are similarly placed.

There are roads in Kitty village which are constantly being used by vehicular traffic which really does not concern Kitty village as such. Vlissengen road being in the condition it is we find that many of the P.W.D. trucks travelling up the East Coast make a detour through Kitty village via Barr street. This practice has tended to destroy many of the roads in Kitty village which were previously in very good condition. Again, since the advent of the large motor buses there has been further deterioration of the roads in Kitty village. Of course it may be said that those large buses are providing a service for the people of Kitty village, but on the other hand it can also be argued that Kitty formerly had a 'bus service of its own which was run by residents in the village, and that when the new Company applied for a franchise in the City of Georgetown Kitty village was included in its route and the former bus owners had to give up their business. The result of this increased traffic is that Barr street, Sandy Babb street and the main street which runs through the centre of the village have been completely destroyed, and it takes a great deal of money to maintain those

streets in proper repair. I therefore feel that if this Council voted a sum of \$10,000 to the Kitty Village Council towards the maintenance of their roads it would be relieving a serious situation which should not be allowed to deteriorate any further. Kitty is in very close proximity to the City of Georgetown. There is one group who holds that Kitty should be incorporated with Georgetown, while others feel that Kitty should be made a municipality of its own. Whatever that may be, the fact that Kitty is so much related to the other municipalities places it in a position where it should be similarly treated. If New Amsterdam can be given a subvention of \$12,000 per annum and Georgetown \$50 000 per annum for the maintenance of roads and streets, then I feel this Council would be doing the right thing to vote the sum of \$10,000 for the maintenance of the roads in Kitty.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I beg to second the motion. At first blush when I read this motion I felt I should not support it at all. I thought that here is an instance of partiality to a particular village, and I am deadly against such principle being adopted by this Council. I detest any idea of partiality and maintain there must be equal treatment for all villages of this Colony. But on closer reflection I have been able to observe, first of all, that Kitty Village is very largely used today as a means of travelling to the East Coast Demerara. The Vlissengen Road section of the public road which passes by Kitty is not only narrow but is congested nearly at all times, particularly in the evenings. I have noticed myself many a driver of motor vehicles travelling to the East Coast make a short cut through the village of Kitty, and I know as a fact—and it is a statement all will support—the roads of Kitty are used very largely by the vehicular traffic going in and out Georgetown in the direction of the East Coast Demerara. That makes me realize a very important factor and that is, Kitty is an important adjunct to the City of Georgetown. As a suburban district I feel that its importance rises very high, and it should always have some regard from this Council in so far as its beauty, its maintenance and its various services are concerned, because anything that hap-

pens to the village of Kitty will reflect on the City of Georgetown very closely.

There is another point which has always struck me as being important and that is the Government is certainly commencing the entire proceeds from licences. It seems to me that when due regard is given to the fact that the roads of Kitty are important to the public and are open for use by the general public, Kitty, just as much as Georgetown, should have the right to say "In the proportion commensurate with the use of our roads some of the money for roads ought to be devoted to the upkeep of our roads". There may be one serious objection to be raised to that, and that is, because it is practically a town something like New Amsterdam — a well built-up township — and because it is near to Georgetown automatically the rents of its houses will be very high and the village will be able to receive a very much higher income than any of the other villages of the Colony. That is an aspect to be examined very closely, for if the rates are such and the valuation is such that the village is able to recoup, I feel sure that this Council should not have the necessity to give the subvention, but on the other hand — I am assuming from the arguments that have been led and because this motion is put forward — there is great need for this subvention and, I am satisfied, if granted it would not be placing Kitty in any invidious position with any other villages because it seems to play a much more important part in so far as vehicular traffic is concerned than any other village in the Colony. There is only one main road that passes through the villages on the East Coast Demerara, and that is maintained by Government, but the village roads are used by a few cars which go in and out of them but that is not as often as in Kitty. I feel, if we would like to support and see that Kitty is a well kept village and a credit to its neighbour, the City of Georgetown, a small subvention for the upkeep of its roads is a very important thing.

I am extremely keen on this question of roads, and I am going to ask permission to make this point. That is, the time has come — and I would like to see it exercised and publicised and every agita-

tion made until Government is prepared to do what it should have done years ago — when every portion of the public roads of this Colony passing through the villages of this Colony is macadamised, for it is to the interest of the villagers that they should not be inflicted upon by the dust nuisance from the roads. The roads are bad enough in their condition and to add to that the dust nuisance during the dry weather is too much. Nearly the whole of the East Coast villages are subject to this nuisance

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Member has made his point. I do not want him to wander too far from the motion.

Mr. DEBIDIN: That is why I pre-faced my remarks by asking permission. I think it is a very appropriate time for me to mention it when we are dealing with a subvention for Kitty roads. The point, I wish to make, is that the roads on the lower East Coast Demerara are extremely bad, so bad that if we can have the Kitty roads done well —

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is getting out of order, and my suggestion to him is to stick to the point. He has said what he had to say about the roads.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Kitty should not be made to fall into line with the bad roads on the East Coast Demerara. That is the point I am making and, I think, this subvention is not too much to give out of the large funds we receive from licence fees to a village like Kitty.

Mr. FARNUM: As one who has been associated with Kitty Village for a long number of years, I can say that we enjoy the reputation there of being one of the villages of the Colony that help themselves. We do not go asking alms or go to Government asking for aid. We are very proud of that reputation in practising self-help I am very surprised to see this motion and, I am sorry to say, I will not vote in favour of it. I think there is too much of asking Government to do this and that. Let us practice self-help. All the villages I am associated with are adopting that principle. It is all well and good to say that New Amsterdam

and Georgetown are getting a subsidy, but what the mover of the motion has failed to remember is this: Georgetown and New Amsterdam are the termini and starting-points of all vehicles to the country districts on the East Coast and East Bank and the Courantyne, but Kitty is not in that position. A certain number of cars and other vehicles leave the public road and travel through Kitty, but on the other hand they travel through Kitty and bring traffic to Kitty, they pass through Kitty and their passengers make purchases at the Kitty Market. Therefore I do not see my way to support this motion.

Another reason I will not support the motion is this: It is well known that property in Kitty is very highly under-appraised, so much so that the Village Council has recognized it and intends to have a general reappraisal next year. To give an instance, land in the district is all assessed at \$400 per lot, but that land has been selling for \$1,800 and \$2,000 per lot and in the Subryan section it has gone as high as \$4,000 per lot. It is clear that if the place is properly appraised we would have enough money to do our roads and to provide all the amenities necessary without coming to Government for assistance. What I am saying today is going to be very unpopular, but I do not feel justified to ask the general taxpayer to subsidize the Kitty taxpayer. The lots in Kitty are valued as high, if not higher, as those in Georgetown, and I do not see why the general landlord in Kitty should expect the general taxpayer of the Colony to subsidize Kitty.

Mr. CARTER: Like the last speaker I claim long association with Kitty. I have spent 25 years of my life there, and that is long enough for me to know something of the history of its roads. Very recently — I think it was while the last speaker was Chairman of Kitty — the Council constructed two excellent roads — Barr street and Alexander street. Those roads were so good that vehicles forsook the Government or public road between Barr street and the Kitty public road and cut through Barr street and along Alexander street back to the public road. By going through those roads they caused

much corrugation in those roads that the Village Council had to spend a great deal of money in maintaining those roads. There is another road of the village — Sandy Babb street — which was very recently constructed for light vehicles, and that road stood up very well until large buses started going through it, and within a few weeks there were terrific channels in that road due to the passage of these very large vehicles through it.

The PRESIDENT: Through buses or buses for the Kitty people?

Mr. CARTER: They are buses for the people of Kitty it is true, but in spite of that you have people from Georgetown — the Queenstown and Alberttown area — who do their shopping at the Kitty Market. The Village Council has built such an excellent market-place that people from Georgetown travel continuously to that market-place. I am in favour of this motion, because I think it is not entirely due to the people of Kitty that these roads have been destroyed from time to time. For another reason I am going to support the motion. The people who live in Kitty are for the most part people of the lowest income group, and they are taxed beyond their capacity to pay. I do not think there should be any increase of taxation in that village. I do not think the people will be able to pay very much more than they are paying now. I think this motion should meet with the approval of this Council for the reasons suggested by the Mover and other speakers.

Mr. FERREIRA: Although I am opposed to the motion in its form I still am sympathetic and feel that Kitty Village should receive some sort of help. I am not going to support the motion as it is,—that there should be an annual subvention given to Kitty. The last speaker certainly stated what I have in mind, that those two streets — Barr street and Alexander street — should be put in order by Government on a permanent basis and the maintenance undertaken by the Village Authority. I am painfully aware of the corrugation of 'Vlissengen Road. I know as a fact that vehicular traffic avoids that road and goes through Barr street and Alexander street. That is

perfectly correct, and for that reason that Village Council should have some consideration from this Government. I would, of course, like to remind the hon. Mover that when he compares Kitty with New Amsterdam he is treading on rather dangerous ground. The population may be the same, but in New Amsterdam we pay 5¼ per cent. taxes which yield a revenue of \$98,000. On the other hand they in Kitty pay 2¾ per cent. taxes yielding only \$35,000. In addition, it is well known that Kitty properties are notoriously under-appraised. We have to bear all these facts in mind and that my friend across the table may get up and ask for Bartica. We have to bear in mind the rental values of Kitty and New Amsterdam. We do not get a rental of \$50 and \$60 per month in New Amsterdam, \$25 and \$30 is quite high in New Amsterdam.

Kitty is not a village but reflects the over-population and wealth of Georgetown. But having borne the brunt of the heavy traffic that bypasses 'Vlissengen Road, I think, Government should be sympathetic where those two roads of Kitty are involved. I think it would be better if the Mover withdraws the motion and Government gives an undertaking to look into the matter and give some help where those two roads of the village are concerned.

Mr. LEE: I did not intend to say anything, but if this motion goes through I would like Government to consider the question in respect of where the Government lorries pass through Bartica. I think that the traffic has increased in that village, not the village traffic but public traffic through the village, and that to some extent destroys the roads. But to give an annual grant I cannot agree with that.

Dr. GONSALVES: I would like to be a bit sympathetic with the motion of my hon. friend, provided there can be an amendment, and my feeling is that of the last speaker. If it were a special consideration because of a special condition to ask for a grant rather than asking for an annual subvention, I would be more inclined to think that way, because being a member of the Local Government

Board I know that it is going to create a terrible situation. Once it becomes a matter of a grant of an annual subvention to Kitty we will find ourselves in a very difficult position to argue against other motions or requests of a similar nature which will be presented to that Body or this Council. For that reason I would like to ask my friend to consider the question of an amendment. If it is due to the heavy traffic passing in and out of Kitty that their two main roads are bad, and if they are asking for help from Government in order to place those roads in order, then perhaps while we may be a bit loth it should be considered.

But I cannot support a motion asking for an annual subvention. To my mind it will be creating a very dangerous precedent. There is no need my going into the point of Kitty's position in regard to that of New Amsterdam. To my mind they may appear similar on the surface but they are not. The two circumstances are entirely different. I believe it is a very difficult thing to find a town like Kitty, if it were to be incorporated as a town, in close proximity to Georgetown. On the other hand Kitty would not like to be incorporated into the City of Georgetown. If they are asking for township status, there are several other things to be taken into consideration. They will have to move in accordance with the Municipal Ordinance and, therefore, I think it is unnecessary for me to go into that point. If it is a question of asking for special consideration I would consider it, but not because Georgetown and New Amsterdam are receiving subventions Kitty should also get. Kitty has no right to ask for the same consideration because it is not under similar conditions as those places. If my friend were to move an amendment to his motion to ask for special consideration I would be more inclined to support that.

Mr. KENDALL: I am opposing the motion as presented, but like the last two speakers I will agree that Kitty be treated in a similar manner as Lodge Village was treated a few years ago. I just want to make this observation for the benefit of the Mover of the motion when comparing Kitty with New Amsterdam. In New Amsterdam you have 29 cross streets

between Queenstown and Smythetown and 22 in Stanleytown alone, and there are three main roads over a mile long, and the main traffic of the Courantyne passes through New Amsterdam — a traffic that Government is aware of and from which Government receives very much revenue. Personally I feel that Government is not playing fair with New Amsterdam in giving \$12,000 as an annual subvention to New Amsterdam. This, I think, is a very good opportunity to let Government know how we feel about it.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member heard what I said just now, and so he will not continue along those lines.

Mr. KENDALL: I will not say much more on this matter. If the hon. Member is prepared to amend his motion so that it will fall in the same category as the Lodge Village road, I would support it as I did on the occasion when the hon. Member for Georgetown South asked for a grant for Lodge Village.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I think we have had a very interesting as well as amusing debate on this matter. The hon. Mover presented the very best of a rather poor case and, I think, he must have said to himself "Save me from my friends", including his seconder who did not do much to support the case for the motion. Kitty is, I believe, a village which is now aspiring to be a "borough". I am very glad to hear the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farnum, recall that in times past the Village Council of Kitty and the inhabitants of Kitty would have blushed to come to the Government with open hands to ask for what we regard as alms. Most of the points which I would make if I were giving a formal reply to the motion have been already made, but this particular point must be emphasized. Kitty is undoubtedly a suburban and a very delightful place where well-to-do people who have the advantage of the business facilities of Georgetown choose to live in a rural atmosphere. Kitty is by no means a poor locality. It is a residential suburb. The hon. Member himself said there are no lands for cultivation. It is purely a residential suburb particularly occupied by comparatively well-off people, who

choose to live there and to work in Georgetown, and also by a number of lesser folk.

It is absolutely correct to say that the ratepayers of Kitty are able and more than able to meet the charges which should fall upon them for the adequate maintenance of their roads and other facilities which they have. The rating of the village is very low, the valuation of properties there is extremely low and if these matters were put right, I am quite sure, the revenue that would come in would be more than is adequate to meet the needs of Kitty.

The only point, as far as I can see, that has been raised in this matter is the fact that some of the traffic which would normally use the public road provided by Government passes through that village as an alternative route, merely because of the temporary bad or poor condition of 'Vlissengen Road. The time was when that road was rebuilt and, as usually happens, it was allowed to deteriorate. That is the reason for traffic by-passing it and using Barr street and Alexander street, the central road of the village. I submit that is the point, but the answer to that is that the Public Works Department should make up 'Vlissengen Road throughout its length and restore it to the condition it was in before. If that is done — I hope in the not too distant future — there could be no excuse for traffic which should go to the public road going through the village itself. That is the correct answer, and not that we should give a subvention. We should use our money to maintain the public road.

An analogy has been made with Lodge. That is in a different position. There the traffic was required to pass through the village and did use the road and destroy it, and money had to be spent to rebuild it. The streets at Kitty which are being used are not in such a poor condition as to require complete reconstruction. What the motion seeks is an annual subvention towards maintenance, and I cannot see any justification for that. If there is any money to be spent on roads let us make up Vlissengen Road and let it be used again as the main public road.

Analogy was also drawn with New Amsterdam, which is unfair. What is known as the Strand in New Amsterdam is in reality a section of the public road, and I believe that Main Street, New Amsterdam is also almost a public road of the Colony. Both of those roads are through roads carrying traffic which must pass to the Courantyne and up the East Bank of the Berbice river. Consequently New Amsterdam can properly claim that it is entitled to a substantial subvention in order to keep those roads in order, and I think I am right in saying that Government has accepted that contention, and as part of the reconstruction of the Courantyne road that section of the New Amsterdam road will be done at public expense. I think that was admitted and will be done.

To come back to Kitty I think it is envisaged that some day this delightful place will see fit to join Georgetown on reasonable and proper terms. I know that the fear of the inhabitants of Kitty is that by joining they will be taxed to a greater extent than the facilities which they will enjoy justify. I think that if that fear is removed it would be a welcome proposition that this village should become part of the City of Georgetown, and in that case, of course, this particular argument would completely disappear. I do submit that what should be done is that Government should make up its public road and thus prevent the internal roads of Kitty village from being used as they are. I hope the motion will not be accepted — at least in this form.

Dr. JAGAN: I have listened to the criticisms which have been levelled against the adoption of this motion. To deal first with the remarks of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farnum, I would say that when he referred to self-help I do not think he was very serious, because in a matter such as maintenance of a large number of roads and streets it is not a question of self-help alone. Residents of the village are not going to give a free afternoon's labour to build the roads. I do not know whether the hon. Member initiated such a scheme during his regime on the Kitty Village Council, but I do know that a few days ago in Finance Committee he championed

the cause of the straw-makers and mat-makers in social welfare work for a \$700 vote, part of which to be used for advertising those products. However we did not find the hon. Member championing the cause of self-help on that occasion. We know about self-help but it certainly has its limitations, and we cannot talk about building roads by self-help.

The PRESIDENT: I think what the hon. Member meant was taxation.

Dr. JAGAN: I know that he also raised the question of taxation, and that the view held by other hon. Members is that Kitty is a very rich area, and that we should begin to raise taxes and rates, but I want to suggest that though it may appear on the surface that many individuals of high income can afford to pay large rentals, that is not the general position of the people at Kitty. The suggestion has been put forward, I believe by the Town Planning Authority, that every house at Kitty should be provided with a septic tank. We know that it is a very progressive health measure, but the Village Council realizes that, because of the poor economic status of many of the residents in the village, that recommendation cannot be accepted very readily. The people are so poor that they cannot afford to construct septic tanks, so that when the hon. Member talks about increased valuation and raising the percentage of rates I think he refers to himself and others who are in a similar fortunate position. I submit that the bulk of the people at Kitty (I do not refer to the few emigres from the City of Georgetown) are living a hand-to-mouth existence, and help is very desperately needed.

Reference was made by the hon. the Financial Secretary to Vlissengen road. It is true that the argument he put forward is very good — that once we maintain Vlissengen road in good condition everything would be o.k. and traffic should continue along that road, but I want to remind him that when a man gets accustomed to the bottle and to drinking rum it is hardly likely that he would give it up when the necessity arises. In this case people seem to enjoy going through Kitty and enjoying the sights.

The PRESIDENT: Is there a rumshop at Kitty?

Dr. JAGAN: I do not know if they go for that purpose. Maybe that is one of the reasons, but many persons have got into the habit of going through Kitty. I myself do it at some times. I go through Subryanville merely to look at the new houses which are going up. It is part of the afternoon's drive sight-seeing. Even if Vlissengen road is improved we would still have this detour through the village.

On the question of the deterioration of the streets of Kitty proper I remember hearing it said that the buses have done a great deal of damage. That is true, but it is also true that the buses are providing a service to the people of Kitty. What must be borne in mind is that the people of Kitty were well served and well satisfied with the bus service they had before, which did not create any great havoc on the roads. I was living at Kitty when the change-over took place, and I had occasion to drive through Kitty every day. I could see the great difference when the new buses began to operate on the streets at Kitty. It is true, as the Financial Secretary pointed out, that the circumstances of the damage done in the case of the road at Lodge Village are not the same as in the case of the Kitty roads, but I would point out to him that that might merely be appearance, because as soon as the main roads on which the buses travel show signs of deterioration the Village Council repair them, and do not wait for them to deteriorate completely and become impassable, as was possibly done in the case of the Lodge Village road. Alexander Street, Barr Street and Sandy Babb streets were repaired as soon as they showed signs of going bad, and funds for the maintenance of other streets were diverted to the making up of those three streets in which the buses run.

If hon. Members feel that they cannot accept the motion as it stands I would be pleased if they would suggest an amendment. I do not know if I can do so at this stage. Anyway, if Government would give an assurance that it would either grant a subvention, possibly at the

figure suggested in the motion, or agree to maintain the roads, especially Alexander Street which is tantamount to the main road of the village, I would withdraw my motion. We know that in the villages of Plaisance and Buxton Government maintains those roads leading to the railway station, and if Government would agree to maintain Alexander Street and a few cross streets in proper condition it would be a service which would be appreciated by the Village Council who would thus be able to utilize whatever funds they have at their disposal for the maintenance of other streets which are in a very disreputable condition. Some of the streets are so bad (I have in mind Thomas Street, Pike Street and a few others) that on many occasions people by-pass them, especially during rainy weather. I do not know whether the hon. the Financial Secretary will give an assurance that the matter will be given future consideration, in which case I would withdraw the motion.

The PRESIDENT: I will put the motion.

Dr. JAGAN: It seems to me that most Members feel that something should be done.

The PRESIDENT: I can only give an assurance that Government will examine the matter, but I cannot give an assurance that Government will give a subvention for any purpose whatever. If there is a case like that of Lodge Village Government will promise to examine it. We must take the circumstances of Kitty Village into consideration—whether it is an expenditure they cannot afford to undertake themselves. Government will examine the question of the roads being through roads.

Dr. JAGAN: I accept the assurance that Government will give the matter consideration, and with the consent of my seconder I beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn.

CONTROL OF PRICE OF FRESH FISH

The next item on the Order Paper was a motion by Mr. Kendall for the control of the price of fresh fish.

Mr. KENDALL: Sir, I think you will agree with me that in view of the present strike, situation and your decision to appoint a Committee to go into the question of the cost of living, I should ask that consideration of my motion be deferred until the Committee has reported, when I will consider what course to pursue.

The PRESIDENT: With the leave of the Council do you wish to defer consideration of the motion?

Mr. KENDALL: Yes, Sir.

Dr. JAGAN: Before the hon. Member is allowed to withdraw his motion I would like to make the comment that the Committee which has been appointed is really to consider the dispute which has arisen between Government and a section of its employees. I hope that a Committee will be appointed with wider terms of reference to include other employees who are non-Government employees, and to examine the possibility of a new cost of living budget being drafted by Government and corresponding wages being worked out. I hope Government will give the matter some consideration.

MODERN LIGHTING IN RURAL AREAS

Mr. FARNUM: I beg to move the following motion standing in my name:

“WHEREAS it is desirable that every effort be made to encourage the youth of our villages to remain in the rural areas;

AND WHEREAS one means to give effect to this end is the provision of modern lighting for homes, community centres and village halls;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House recommend to Government the exemption from Customs and other duties, of gas lamps, wind-chargers and electric generating plants.”

I do not think I need elaborate on the motion which speaks for itself. Of the 14 Elected Members of this Council I think 11 represent the villages, and I am confident that any measure brought forward for the benefit of our rural areas will have their full support. I therefore expect them to give their full support to this

motion. The question of keeping our youth in our villages is one that has been exercising the minds of Government and, I think, every Member of this Council as well as other members of the community. I think it is our duty to make conditions so comfortable and congenial in the villages as to induce the youths to remain there. Government recognized that by the introduction of social welfare, the co-operative movement, libraries and amenities of that sort in the various districts, but I would point out that full and profitable use of those amenities is hardly possible under the present system of lighting in the rural areas. Lighting in most of the villages is very primitive, and most of the people are unable to furnish themselves with such luminants as would give proper lighting.

I feel that if Government would remove the Customs and other duties that are levied on gas lamps and electric generating machinery it would place those luminants within the means of quite a number of people in the villages and enable them to have more comfortable evenings in their homes. Parents would be happier and their children would be happier. They would be able to make better use of the libraries in their midst and also the instructions they are receiving from the Social Welfare Organisation. I therefore commend the motion to both the Official and the Unofficial Members of this Council, especially those Members who represent rural districts. I do not think they will vote against the motion because I have already said that it is in the best interests not only of the youth but the adults of the country districts.

Mr. ROTH: I have great pleasure in seconding this motion. For more than 30 years I had to depend upon a gas lamp and generating plants. It is true that Government paid for those things but they put me in a position to realize the great difference between those lighting conveniences and the ordinary oil lamps which people in the country districts have to fall back upon. I commend the motion to hon. Members for their favourable consideration.

Mr. LEE: I desire to support the motion. As a youngster I lived in the country and we only knew oil lamps at that time. If people in the country districts can afford to buy gas lamps I think Government should provide them with every facility to obtain them. I therefore support the motion.

Dr. NICHOLSON: I give my support to the motion so far as it affects the lighting of the homes of poor persons in the villages, but those who can afford to buy wind-chargers and electric generating plants are not poor people. They are wealthy persons, and I do not feel that they should have the privilege or the advantage of having those amenities Customs free, but community centres, churches, schools and social centres may be allowed the concession.

Mr. FERREIRA: I never anticipated that there would be any opposition to the motion, and for that reason I had no intention to speak. I am not thinking in terms of wind-chargers, but from personal experience in the river districts where there may be a church and a school hall, the people always look to someone in the district, perhaps a timber cutter, to bring along his gas lamp. But Government can hardly allow one gas lamp to be free from Customs duty for a certain isolated area in the Rupununi or in the Essequibo river. There would be so many forms and so much red tape about it that people would not worry about the concession. We have to bear in mind, however, that there are people who live away from civilization, but they are primary producers and should be encouraged. I have seen the homes in the river districts of hard-working farmers and timber workers, and it is only right that their children should have an opportunity to read and work at night. It is no special concession but something that should be encouraged in these days. I do not know what revenue the Colony would lose by such a concession, but whatever the loss is it would be amply repaid by the benefits conferred upon those people who live away from the amenities of the City.

Mr. KENDALL: I am supporting the motion in its entirety. When we take into consideration that the people in

Georgetown enjoy certain amenities, such as sewerage and water supply, for which the entire Colony pays, I think this facility to the people in the country districts is only what they deserve.

Mr. PETERS: Speaking for one of the rural areas of the Colony I think this motion is certainly a very timely one. I certainly cannot agree with my friend, the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Dr. Nicholson) when he tries to exclude any consideration of electric generating plants such as wind-chargers and other devices, because a person who owns an electric apparatus of that kind is a servant of the community around. I think we can do no better than support the motion. I shall vote for it.

Dr. GONSALVES: I will support the motion because it is a developmental project. I wonder if we have ever envisaged what Georgetown and New Amsterdam would be like in utter darkness. Light denotes development, and development is what we are seeking in this country. It is true that there are certain people in the country districts who can afford to provide themselves with lighting apparatus, but I do not like the term "wealthy" which has been applied to them by my friend. It is not everybody who has a windcharger who can be considered wealthy, but perhaps they make sacrifices for their children's future and are anxious for those children to help to develop our country. In these days of the movies and other amenities in Georgetown we are not going to get the children of the country districts to remain there. We should provide them with certain amenities so as to encourage them to remain to develop the country districts. Let there be light, and for that reason I support the motion so as to encourage the development of the country and to help the youths to develop the countryside.

Dr. JAGAN: I do not think this Council would oppose such a motion as this, unless the financial implications are very serious. What has occurred to me is this: While this motion was being discussed I looked at the resolution very closely. I see that the exemption is for gas lamps, wind-chargers and electric

generating plants. What is passing through my mind is whether we should not include all lamps. There are some people who are so poor that they have to use a small lamp as distinct from the type we know — a little bottle with a wick in it which is considered to be a lamp. The ordinary kerosene lamps, I believe, should also come within this list for exemption from duties. Hon. Members have referred to this matter as if it were only a benefit to be given to people in the rural areas. I want to assure them that even in the City of Georgetown and in Kitty there are many who have not the pleasure of electricity for the lighting of their homes, and if we include the ordinary lamps in this list, I am sure, it is going to do a great deal of good to those people. I do not know what the commercial community may think. A man who may be an agent for ordinary lamps and does not get the concession of exemption from Customs duties may not be able to compete successfully with the other agent who is selling gas lamps with this concession. That is a matter to be given serious consideration. I, therefore, suggest the deletion of the word "gas" and let the motion read "lamps".

Mr. DEBIDIN: I think a reservation should be made by the insertion of the words "for any area not served with electricity", otherwise it would lead to chaos, to my mind, if all the people of Bartica and Kitty can come and say "I am of the rural districts and should have this facility. I think what is intended is that the people in the remote districts particularly should be given every facility to get lamps cheaply. It is a measure which, to my mind, leaves the backdoor open very wide for other concessions such as kerosene and other things used in connection with lamps to be duty free. But I feel sure all those who have already expressed their opinion must have considered it in the light that the poor people of the country districts should be aided to have a better type of lamp. That is the only thing I see involved

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: There is no ground for quarrel or objection in respect of what is set out in the preamble, which reads:

"Whereas it is desirable that every effort be made to encourage the youths of our villages to remain in the rural areas; And whereas one means to give effect to this end in the provision of modern lighting for homes, community centres and village halls;"

I sense some confusion of thought about this, because as a matter of fact if modern lighting is to be provided in any rural area for community centre and village hall the implication of that is that it will be done through the Local Authority and under the Customs Ordinance importations of electric lighting plants, wind-chargers and ordinary Delco sets will be duty free. That is to say, the law as it stands now does provide for duty free importation of modern lighting equipment by Local Authorities for use in their village halls, community centres, etc., or even for use on the streets. So there is really left the question of assisting in the modern lighting of homes as a means of encouraging the youths of the villages to remain in the rural areas.

I wish I can believe that the small relief of Customs duties on gas lamps will promote that very excellent end. I am inclined to believe, and I accept the view stated by one hon. Member, that those persons in the village areas who are able to indulge in Delco plants or wind-chargers are well able also to pay the relatively small Custom duties on the cost of those lamps, and I am submitting that I do not think that relief given to people of that nature is going to secure the objective which the hon. Mover has in mind. I hope he is not going to charge me with lack of sympathy. He knows that it is a matter very dear to my heart and that we both feel concerned that these community centres are not getting proper lighting. So I am not unsympathetic to that view, but what I am submitting to this Council is that we must not blind ourselves. We must not fool ourselves into the belief that by taking off the Customs duties on gas lamps or wind-chargers for private houses we are going to keep the youths of the rural areas within their boundaries. That is what I want Members to bring to mind.

I agree with the hon. Member for

Western Berbice (Mr. Peters) that the people in the rural districts who have these facilities are serving a community purpose. It is perfectly true. I myself have passed through villages where such an individual has a radio which is almost a community set, and also he is good enough to pass on messages which are transmitted in that way. But we must be careful not to do something in the belief that it will have that result when it will have no such result but merely present some persons, who can well afford to pay, with the gift of Customs duties or prevent them from purchasing the particular units at the ordinary price.

The discussion went even further. It went outside the scope of the preamble by suggesting that ordinary lamps be made duty free. That is not placed in this motion because the whole object is to provide modern lighting. I do not see how that objective can be obtained by including oil lamps; or how the importation of them for the use of these communities will be stimulated or encouraged through exemption from Customs duties. I hope I have made it very clear. Where it is for communal lighting purposes, the units for electric lighting can be and are imported duty free. That is the position and consequently it reduces the idea of allowing Customs duties off wind-chargers and electric generating plants. Although I am very sympathetic towards the motion I feel very doubtful whether it will secure that objective.

The PRESIDENT: As the resolve part of the motion is worded, and in relation to electric generating plants, it would permit any firm to import any type of electric plant free of duty. That is not the intention, namely that anybody could under this resolution claim exemption from Customs duties. As far as the Local Authorities are concerned all the items mentioned they can get duty free. I do not know whether a system can be devised by which others can get them through the Local Authorities.

Mr. FARNUM: There are just a few points I would like to reply to. The hon. the Financial Secretary pointed out that

with respect to the lighting of community centres that should be the function of the Village Authorities, because in that case it will be free of duty under the Tax Ordinance. But I may point out that the community centres are not under the control of the Local Authorities. The next thing is, the Local Authorities recognize the need for electricity in their districts, and several districts on the West Bank Demerara have gone to the trouble of getting an engineer to go down there and make a survey for them in order to see whether it is practically within their financial means to establish electricity there. But they have found it is beyond their means. The next thing they thought was that if they could get gas lamps, etc., free of duty — it does not matter how small the exemption — they would be very glad. They feel that any small help in that way will be a great help to them, and for that reason they ask that these things enumerated in the motion be exempted from Customs duties.

The PRESIDENT: Then these gas lamps are required by the Local Authorities.

Mr. FARNUM: If you would allow it, I would ask that the resolution be so worded to include the words "for use in rural districts."

The PRESIDENT: What about village halls?

Mr. FARNUM: Homes and village halls.

Mr. RAATGEVER: If you put "domestic use" it would meet the case.

Mr. FERREIRA: May I ask if the remission of duty in aiding commercial enterprise would not cover the point?

The PRESIDENT: New industries. I think it is a practical point. How it is going to be applied? You cannot say that the villages will be importing these things.

Mr. LEE: If we say the villages, how are you going to assist them?

The PRESIDENT: If it is through the Local Authorities the Government agrees at once to it.

Mr. LEE: There are other communities that have no Local Authority but would like to be put in the same category to get this exemption. What I would suggest is that generating plants of a certain horse power which can give sufficient light to houses be exempted.

Mr. MORRISH: Commenting on the last speaker's remarks, that again presents considerable difficulties in that you can get lots of small electric plants and wind-chargers from $\frac{1}{4}$ kilowatts and bigger ones of 3 or 4 kilowatts. I have read recently of one set which is able to produce 1,000 kilowatts. So I think one finds oneself in considerable difficulty trying to tie this up to just a wind-charger. The point that does occur to me is this. There seems to be an opening for a person who may think he can get away with his electrical supplies or get them into the country cheaply by the villages buying them cheaply for him and his bringing them into the town. Are you going to prohibit its use in the town? I will say that for the average village community in the Colony something in the neighbourhood of 10 to 15 Horse Power or a 20 kilowatt plant for lighting purposes only will cover its needs. I do not suggest that it will cover a place like Buxton, which will need three or four times that, but the smaller communities.

The PRESIDENT: There is no difficulty about the Local Authorities, as they can get them free of duty for house lighting or village hall lighting. We are all agreed about that, but to do something practical outside the Local Authorities is what we have to consider.

Mr. FARNUM: Really what I want is lighting for community halls and homes.

Mr. PETERS: What about the churches and schools?

The PRESIDENT: The best thing is to state "for domestic and community purposes". That should meet the point.

Mr. FARNUM: Yes. Sir. Thank you.

The PRESIDENT: I must say there will be some difficulty in putting it into practice.

The motion, as amended with the addition of the words "for domestic and community purposes in rural areas", was put and unanimously adopted.

The PRESIDENT: The Council will

now adjourn. I had intended that we meet tomorrow, but owing to the present situation I am afraid the Members of Government will be otherwise engaged. I propose therefore that the Council should meet next Thursday at 2 p.m., when I hope the situation will be far better than it is now.

The Council adjourned to Thursday, 9th November, 1950, at 2 p.m.