

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

THURSDAY, 30TH 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. B. Singh, G.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. G. H. Smellie (Nominated)

The Hon. J. Carter (Georgetown South).

The Hon. L. A. Luckhoo (Nominated)

The Clerk read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, the 24th of November, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

**ANNOUNCEMENT.****LOANS TO STUDENTS IN NORTH AMERICA.**

The COLONIAL SECRETARY communicated the following message:-

**MESSAGE No. 7.**

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

You are doubtless aware that the devaluation of the pound sterling in

September 1949 increased to a substantial degree the financial burden on parents and guardians who had sent their children or wards to North American schools and universities for further education. While it is probable that, in most cases, the decision to give young people from the Colonies the benefit of higher or more specialised training in North America involved considerable sacrifice, the advent of devaluation has not only imposed a much heavier demand on limited resources but, indeed, threatens in many instances to cause the curtailment or even abandonment of course of study.

2. Several West Indian Governments, including the Administration of this Colony, have received either from students themselves in North America or from their parents or guardians, requests for financial assistance in meeting this situation. The Government of Trinidad has already decided, subject to certain necessary safeguards, to grant loans to the parents or guardians of students who were taking courses of instruction in North American Universities on 20th September, 1949, when devaluation became effective; who are pursuing courses considered to be of value to that Colony; and who submit authoritative evidence of satisfactory progress in their studies. The terms and conditions on which the loan are made are as follows:-

- (i) the amount of the loan is equal to the difference between the sum remitted prior to devaluation and the sum now required to be remitted;
- (ii) the loans are paid annually in advance;
- (iii) interest at a fixed rate per annum is charged;
- (iv) students and/or parents or guardians are required to enter into an agreement for the repayment of the loans in instalments commencing in the year following that in which the student graduates;
- (v) adequate security must be given;
- (vi) applications for loans must be renewed annually and must be accompanied by authoritative evidence of satisfactory progress by the student in his studies.

3. The question of granting assistance on similar terms to students from this Colony has been considered by Government, and it has been decided to adopt the procedure now in force in Trinidad. It is proposed that a small Committee should be appointed as in

that colony with the duty of examining applications for financial aid and making recommendations to the Honourable Financial Secretary and Treasurer for loans on the terms and conditions outlined in paragraph 2 above.

4. To this end a motion will shortly be introduced inviting the Council to approve in principle of the action proposed by Government, and of the provision in the Estimates of Expenditure for 1951 of a sum of \$10,000 for the purpose.

C. C. WOOLLEY,  
Governor.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
British Guiana.  
27th November, 1950.

#### PAPERS LAID.

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

Statement of Supplementary Loan Expenditure which has occurred during the year 1949 and which has not been included in any previous schedule for that year and is to be admitted as a charge to loan funds under Colonial Regulation 283.

Schedule of Expenditure on Services etc., incurred during the year 1949 to be charged in the accounts of that year as advances pending the raising of a Development Loan.

Schedule of Supplementary Provision required during the year 1950 from funds raised under Loan Ordinance No. 5 of 1945.

Schedule of Supplementary Provision required during the year 1950 in respect of services financed from 'Advances pending the raising of a Development Loan'.

#### GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

##### LOANS TO STUDENTS IN NORTH AMERICA.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motion and of his intention to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Rule and Order of the Council at a later stage to enable him to proceed with the motion:-

"That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 7 of the 27th of November, 1950 this Council approves in principle of the proposal that public funds should be made available, on the terms and conditions set out in that

Message, as loans to the parents or guardians of students who were receiving instruction at schools and universities in North America prior to the devaluation of the pound sterling to enable them to meet the increased costs resulting therefrom."

#### STATEMENT OF LOAN EXPENDITURE.

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

"That, this Council approves of the Statement of Loan Expenditure which has occurred during the year 1949 and which has not been included in any previous schedule for that year being admitted as a charge to Loan Funds under Colonial Regulation 283."

#### SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURE, 1949.

That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Expenditure on Services, etc., incurred during the year 1949 being charged in the Accounts of that year as advances pending the raising of a Development Loan.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION, 1950.

That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Supplementary Provision required during the year 1950 from funds raised under Loan Ordinance, No. 5 of 1945.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE ON LOAN ADVANCES.

That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Supplementary Provision required during the year 1950 in respect of services financed from "Advances pending the raising of a Development Loan."

#### UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

##### COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE LIME CULTIVATION.

Mr. ROTH gave notice of the following motion:-

"WHEREAS the local Toilet Water Industry has in recent years expanded to such a degree that it cannot obtain sufficient raw material locally and has to import large quantities of expressed lime oil from the West Indies and the United States;

AND WHEREAS experience has shown that the locally expressed lime oil is superior to all the imported varieties and is at present valued at twelve dollars per pound;

AND WHEREAS the industry is prepared to invest a further forty thousand dollars per annum in the North West District alone if and when the required quantity of expressed lime oil becomes available there;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommends to Government the immediate appointment of a Committee to enquire and report on the steps that should be taken to encourage and ensure the extension of the lime-growing industry in the North West District and elsewhere in the Colony."

#### AMENDMENT OF BAKERIES ORDINANCE.

Mr. DEBIDIN gave notice of the following motions:—

"WHEREAS it is very desirable to establish complete good relationship between all concerned engaged in the bakery business in the Colony;

AND WHEREAS for the above purpose it is necessary to obviate all chances for unfair competition;

AND WHEREAS the interest of the general consumers must be taken into account and the time for the supply of hot or fresh bread should be regularised;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommend to Government the introduction of legislation to effect the following amendments to the Bakeries (Hours of Work) Ordinance, 1946, hereinafter referred to as the Principal Ordinance:—

1. That where the words "no person shall be employed in a bakery" appear the following words be substituted therefor, viz: "No person including the proprietor, the occupier or any relation of either of them shall engage or work in a bakery."
2. That the restrictions imposed by Section 3 of the Principal Ordinance be not made to apply to Section 4 (1) (a) and to Section 4 (1) (b) of the said Ordinance.
3. That with respect to Section 4 (1) (c) of the Principal Ordinance the Commissioner of Labour be substituted for and/or be given the right to exercise the powers under Section 4 of the said Ordinance in the stead of the Governor in Council.
4. That the restrictions imposed by Section 3 of the Principal Ordinance be not made to apply to Section 4 (1) (d) of the said Ordinance.

#### ALBOUYSTOWN DECANTING SCHEME

"WHEREAS the Town Planning Authority has put forward a report setting out a planning scheme for the

City of Georgetown which though in some respects excellent to contemplate, yet it is so unrealistic and would involve such an enormous expenditure of money to be put into effect, that the whole scheme can be regarded as impracticable.

AND WHEREAS because of the financial position of the Colony it is clear that the scheme would not be able to be put into effect for a long number of years in the future, if at all;

AND WHEREAS if the scheme generally is impracticable it would not be desirable to put into effect any recommendation for any part only of the City;

AND WHEREAS it has been suggested by the Town Planning Authority that a substantial area in the Albouystown Ward of the City be reserved as an industrial area;

AND WHEREAS Government is proceeding with a programme for decanting the population of this area;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommend to Government the constituting of the entire Legislative Council into a Committee to investigate that part of the Report of the Town Planning Authority which deals with the Albouystown Area and also to consider and report on the whole question of the decanting of the population of Albouystown area or any part thereof;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no decanting of any of the population of Albouystown be done until the aforesaid Committee has investigated the Report of the Town Planning Authority as relates to Albouystown, and has reported on the decanting of the population thereof."

#### TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT.

"WHEREAS the Town Planning Authority has submitted a report setting out a planning scheme for the City of Georgetown which though in some respects excellent to contemplate, yet it is so unrealistic and would involve such an enormous expenditure of money to put into effect, that the whole scheme can be regarded as impracticable;

AND WHEREAS because of the financial position of the Colony it is clear that the scheme would not be able to be put into effect for a long number of years in the future, if at all;

AND WHEREAS the Town Planning Authority has been responsible directly and/or indirectly for the suspension of building operations in many areas of the City of Georgetown and nearby districts as a result of its report and plans, much to the great hardship of Citizens and others;

AND WHEREAS a prime necessity of the Colony is the increasing of housing facilities and the setting up of Housing Schemes instead of schemes which would involve such heavy expenditure that it would be most impracticable to put them into effect;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council strongly disapprove the the Report of the Town Planning Authority and the Schemes set out thereunder and pass a vote of censure on the Town Planner in respect thereto."

#### NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

##### LEGUAN AND WAKENAAM HOUSING SCHEMES.

Mr. LEE gave notice of the following questions:—

1. Is Government aware that a closing demand has been made for the demolition of the insanitary ranges situate at Maryville, Leguan, and Success. Leguan, and that the period of such notice and/or demand is ended?
2. Will Government state what steps are being taken in order to implement the acceptance of the motion for compulsory acquisition of the front lands with a view to the formation of a Housing Scheme?
3. Is Government aware that the residents of these ranges are willing to acquire the lands in order to erect decent and sanitary houses?
4. Will Government state what is happening to relieve the congestion of houses at Sans Souci, Melville and Good Success, Wakenaam?

##### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VENN COMMISSION.

The PRESIDENT: I had hoped that today we should be discussing the motion

standing in the name of the Colonial Secretary on the subject of the Venn Commission report. That was what I had in view when we adjourned last week, but owing to the unavoidable absence of a number of Members today I consider it desirable that the discussion of that motion should be deferred and until we have a fuller Council. That leaves the Order Paper open, but the Colonial Secretary wishes to move the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders.

##### LOANS TO STUDENTS IN NORTH AMERICA.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the suspension of the relevant Standing Rule and Order to enable me to move the motion standing in my name.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND TREASURER seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move:

"That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 7 of the 27th of November, 1950, this Council approves in principle of the proposal that public funds should be made available, on the terms and conditions set out in that Message, as loans to the parents or guardians of students who were receiving instruction at schools and universities in North America prior to the devaluation of the pound sterling to enable them to meet the increased costs resulting therefrom."

I do not think it is necessary for me to say very much in amplification or justification of Your Excellency's Message on this subject. There is, as hon. Members are aware, a considerable number of students from British Guiana in North American Universities where their parents or guardians have sent them with a view to equipping them better for their future careers. In many cases those parents or guardians were only able to send their children to those Universities and schools in North America at very considerable sacrifice to themselves. In fact it was extremely difficult in some cases for them to find the necessary funds from their limited resources. The sudden devaluation of the

pound sterling in September last year placed these people in a very difficult position in view of the consequent increase in the cost of keeping students in North American Universities. In these circumstances, unless it is possible for some assistance to be given to the parents or guardians in order to tide them over the difficult period, it would, I am afraid, be necessary in some cases for the students to be withdrawn, or for their courses to be curtailed. As hon. Members will see from the Message, the Government of Trinidad has already introduced certain arrangements for meeting the situation by granting loans in deserving cases to help the parents or guardians to keep their children at the Universities. This Government proposes to follow suit and to adopt arrangements similar to those already adopted in Trinidad.

It is desirable, among other things, that there should be uniformity in this matter among the various West Indian territories. In the interim period, however, a Subcommittee of the Scholarships Committee has given consideration to a number of applications, and assistance by way of loans has already been approved in two most urgent cases which it was felt could not wait any longer. This was done in anticipation of this Council's covering approval. I feel sure that the proposals which this Government proposes to put into force will commend themselves to hon. Members, both as being fair and just in the circumstances, and also in the educational interests of the Colony. I formally move the motion.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND TREASURER seconded.

Mr CARTER: I would like to commend Government on the steps which have been taken, or which it is about to take in order to assist the parents of students who have suffered as a result of the devaluation or revaluation of the pound sterling. I think it is a necessary step because, while we plan the future of this country, it is necessary for us to have the men and women who will be able to carry on at least the technical and professional side of the burden which this country must bear. I am a

member of the Students Advisory Committee in this Colony which, I am afraid, is not functioning at the moment, and obviously I am going to support this motion.

Mr. DEBIDIN: This motion will have my complete support, but there is a but in it. I refer to the possibility that students who have gone to North American Universities may not return to the Colony, and there is nothing in the proposals to make it compulsory that they should do so. At least I think there should be some obligation imposed on the students to return to the Colony in consideration for the assistance they are being given to advance their education.

I also think that care should be taken to see that there is no discrimination in the granting of these loans, and that every case is dealt with on its merits. I take it that that is what the Committee will go into, and I assume that consideration will be given to the ability of the parents or guardians to carry out their obligations to the students despite devaluation.

I would also suggest that whatever assistance is given should be set out in reports from time to time as to the nature of the assistance, because I know that so much has resulted from devaluation that the people of the Colony generally feel rather peeved over the fact that certain steps have not been taken to alleviate the hardships they are experiencing as a result of the devaluation of the pound. I need hardly go into details about that, because we know how much it is affecting the cost of living of the people of this Colony. I hope, therefore, that Government will issue reports from time to time so as to satisfy the public that the measure is a safe one. I support the motion.

Mr. LUCKHOO: There is only one point I would like to make. I consider this a very good gesture on the part of Government to students of the Colony who are abroad. It provides them with an incentive to return home after they are qualified, seeing that in this time of necessity the Colony is standing by them.

The PRESIDENT: With regard to the point raised by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) the Colleges and the school authorities are consulted as to the means of the individual students and their needs. That has already been done in several cases. I think I am right in saying that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, sir.

Motion put, and agreed to.

#### LOAN EXPENDITURE, 1949.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND TREASURER: I move the suspension of the relevant Standing Rule to enable me to move the motions standing in my name.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND TREASURER: I beg to move:

- (a) That, this Council approves of the Statement of Loan Expenditure which has occurred during year 1949 and which has not been included in any previous schedule for that year being admitted as a charge to Loans Funds under Colonial Regulation 283.
- (b) That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Expenditure on Services, etc. incurred during the year 1949 being charged in the Accounts of that year as advances pending the raising of a development Loan.
- (c) That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Supplementary Provision required during the year 1950 from funds raised under Loan Ordinance, No. 5 of 1945.
- (d) That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Supplementary Provision required during the year 1950 in respect of services financed from "Advances pending the raising of a Development Loan".

The passing of these motions is a necessary formality in the Legislative Council in order to confirm these excess

items in relation to loan expenditure in the four categories set out in items (a), (b), (c) and (d). I regret to say that items (a) and (b) relate to expenditure in 1949, and that there was omission to take this necessary step at the proper time, which has been pointed out to us by the Audit Department. The items of loan expenditure are, as Members recall, detailed in the Appendix to the Estimates, the actual amount of the cost of each work being shown, the expenditure to the end of the preceding year, and an estimate of the expenditure which is expected to be incurred within the year. Where that estimate has proved to be inadequate the excess is usually reported in the Schedule to Finance Committee, more as a formality than anything else, because of course the Council had already approved of the total for the work. This estimate for the year is really an intelligent guess of how much money out of the total allocation will be spent within the year, and Finance Committee gives its sanction to this excess.

In the case of estimates of expenditure and supplementary provision in relation to items which are defrayed from revenue, it is necessary that those Schedules should be continued by a formal resolution of the Legislative Council. This motion seeks to have that confirmation. Item (a) relates to loan expenditure incurred during the year 1949. Item (b) also relates to expenditure during 1949 but which has been charged temporarily as advances pending the raising of the Development Loan next year. Item (c) relates to excess expenditure during the current year in regard to items which have been met from the balance of funds raised under the Loan Ordinance, No. 5 of 1945. Item (d) is excess expenditure on services this year which are being financed from advances pending the raising of the Development Loan. All these items have already come before Finance Committee. They are really excesses on forecasts of expenditure incurred on loan items, and I hope the Council will approve of the resolution.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. DEBIDIN: While approving of the expenditure I must draw attention to the fact that the expenditure on the new Queen's College building has certainly exceeded the amount originally approved. It is regrettable to see the considerable sum of additional expenditure required, but what I wish particularly to refer to is the fact that there has not been, in my opinion, very discreet or wise expenditure on certain items required for the building. I refer to the type of glass panes which have been imported, and I understand that nobody can properly assume responsibility for the type of glass which is breaking of its own accord and may cause injury to the students. The matter was raised by one Member in Finance Committee, and since then I have been able to get more information about the affair. It seems to me that inquiries made point to the fact that one person alone, possibly the man in charge of the entire building operations, assumed the authority to make importations on his own. I think it is most unsatisfactory, and as a result the general taxpayers have to bear an additional expenditure of thousands of dollars to replace the glass which has been found to be useless. Whether it will be replaced I do not know, but I hope it will be.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: With regard to the question of the glass at Queen's College building it is a fact that the matter has been brought to the attention of Government also by the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the College, but I must say that the remarks of the hon. Member are of rather an exaggerated nature. I think I am correct in saying that so far only 20 panes of glass in that building have broken, and this was reported by our technical experts to be due to the fact that those particular panes had to be cut, and the instrument used in the cutting slightly fractured the glass, so that after the panes were inserted the effect of the sun caused them to crack and drop out. A certain amount of concern has been expressed in case panes may drop out in future when the College is occupied by students and cause harm to them. We are looking into the question of the possibility of introducing wire mesh below certain of the windows

here that might happen. It is a fact however that only 20 panes of glass in the whole of that building have so far broken.

Mr. ROTH: As one of the Board of Governors I may point out that 20 is a small proportion of very close on 4,000 panes of glass in the building. It is a proportion of breakage which is no more than occurs in an ordinary building fitted with ordinary panes of glass.

Mr. DEBIDIN: The explanation given by the hon. the Colonial Secretary seems to indicate that those panes have broken as a result of cutting, but my information is that they broke as a result of expansion due to heat. The frames in which they are fitted are unable to expand correspondingly as there is no provision for that. The result is that the panes break of their own accord, which is something that is likely to occur with respect to the remaining panes.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member can be assured that the matter is being looked into. I cannot accept his explanation that the glass expands, but rather think that the frames expand and cause the panes to fall out. The hon. Member has been assured that the matter is being looked into and that steps will be taken to prevent further damage to the panes.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND TREASURER: In so far as the cost of the building is concerned, it is true that it has risen from \$50,000 to \$480,000, and now I believe another \$50,530 is required, but that includes the cost of erection of a certain number of houses for the Principal and Masters. Members who have visited the site have no doubt admired the compound and the extremely convenient and economical buildings which have been put up. Generally speaking, I think the Council would agree that even if it cost half a million dollars this Colony has invested in an extremely valuable asset in that building which, I hope, our children will live to admire and use for very many many years to come.

Motion put, and adopted.

## FUTURE SITTINGS OF COUNCIL.

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members, that concludes the business on the Order Paper. Although there is a tremendous lot of business to be brought before the Council, I propose that we should now adjourn *sine die*. But in all likelihood the Council will meet on the 14th December. We have to budget for the forthcoming year, and we have the revised Development Plan, also the motion on the Report

of the Venn Commission and legislation dealing with the Amerindians and several other highly important matters to deal with. But as I say, I hope I will be able to resume the sitting of the Council on the 14th December and carry on until the holidays. After that we shall have to go right through with sittings in January and February without interruption. The Council will now adjourn *sine die*.