

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 7TH MARCH, 1951.

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

PRESENT:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. G. H. Smellie (Nominated)

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

The Clerk read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 2nd of March, 1951, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed

PRESENTATION OF REPORT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table —

The Sixtieth Annual Report of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Georgetown for the year 1950.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

INDUSTRIAL REFORMATORY.

Mr. FERNANDES, on behalf of Mr. LUCKHOO, gave notice of the following motion :—

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

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

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

PETITION.

Mr. FERNANDES presented a petition on behalf of Ex-Police Constable Frederick Philips.

PRINTING CONTRACT.

Dr. JAGAN presented a petition for transmission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the Printing Contract to be entered into by Government for public printing: and asked that copies be made for circulation to Members of Council.

HOAXES ON FIRE BRIGADE.

Mr. ROTH: Sir, before we proceed to the Order of the Day I crave your indulgence to mention a matter of no little public interest. As Your Excellency is aware, there has been in recent months an epidemic of false fire alarms. It is well known that the consequences of such pranks might very well be very disastrous in the event of a fire occurring while the Brigade is out on some wild goose chase. So serious does the law consider such an offence that it has fixed a maximum penalty of \$500 or six months imprisonment. From the very nature of the offence it is very difficult to secure a conviction, yet within the last few days when the police did succeed in getting a conviction a Magistrate considered the matter of such small import that he imposed a fine of \$10 on the defendant. I suggest that the hon. the Attorney-General bring to the notice of Magistrate the seriousness of this offence and instruct them in future cases to act accordingly.

Mr. DEBIDIN: While appreciating what has been said by the hon. Nominated Member, as a member of the legal profession, and as one who regards constitutional rights very seriously, I feel that in spite of the fullest appreciation of what has been said, the suggestion made by the hon. Member strikes at the roots of justice.

The PRESIDENT: The Attorney-General cannot instruct Magistrates as to what they should do, but he can, through counsel, bring to the notice of Magistrates what he regards as the seriousness of the offence. He cannot instruct a Magistrate as to what punishment he should impose, because the Magistrate hears the facts, but before sentence is passed he can bring to his notice the gravity of an offence. I take it that that is what the hon. Member intends.

Mr. ROTH: That is what I ask.

ORDER OF THE DAY**LOANS TO TRADE UNION LEADERS.**

Mr. ROTH asked, and the COLONIAL SECRETARY laid over replies to the following questions:—

Q. 1.—With reference to the loans from Public Funds of \$1,200 and \$1,827.56 made to Mr. A. M. Edun on 28th February, 1947, and to the British Guiana Trades Union Council (on behalf of Messrs. D. M. Harper and H. J. M. Hubbard) on 29th December, 1945, respectively, will Government state how much, if any, of these loans have been repaid to date?

A. 1.—A. M. Edun — repaid at 31st December, 1950 — \$380.00. Trades Union Council — repaid at 31st December, 1950 — \$60.00.

Q. 2.—In the event of any portion of these amounts remaining unpaid, what action has Government taken to recover same, in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance Committee?

A. 2.—Mr. Edun arranged to repay the balance of his loan at the rate of \$25 a month and has paid regular instalments accordingly since August 1950. The Trades Union Council has made no payment since June, 1950. A final demand is being addressed to the Trades Union Council and if no satisfactory reply is received, consideration will be given to taking legal action to recover the amount due.

ESTIMATES, 1951**APPEAL FOR EXPEDITION.**

The Council resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1951.

The CHAIRMAN: Before we proceed with the Estimates may I remind hon. Members that it is now over two and a half months since the Budget was introduced in Legislative Council, and so far we have only passed 12 out of some 45 or 50 heads. Not only that, but we are already in the third month of this financial year, for which no proper financial provision has yet been made. Of course, until the Appropriation Bill is passed I cannot authorize any expenditure apart from what is absolutely essential, and there are certain works, such as this

Council desires to be carried out during the year, which are all held up by this delay. So I would ask Members to be concise and to the point when the rest of the heads are being considered.

It is not only the Estimates. If you look at the Order Paper you will see that there are no less than nine Government Bills, and some 13 Official and Unofficial motions already on the paper. There are another 10 Bills waiting to go on the Order Paper, some of them of a very urgent and important nature. For example, there is the Bill to raise a loan of \$10 million, which we hope to raise in two months' time. There is also another public loan Bill to enable us to proceed with our housing scheme. There will probably be a third loan Bill to be got through quickly if we are to proceed with our telephone reconstruction scheme. Then there is the Aid to Industries Bill. Apart from those Bills there are also 16 motions on the paper, Official and Unofficial, and there are still another 30 waiting to be put on the paper. So you will see that the Order Paper is becoming very congested indeed. It is important, I think, that we should transact our business with a little more expedition than has been the case up to the moment. As I have said, I trust hon. Members will be concise and to the point in any further comments they have to make under the remaining heads of the Estimate.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I shall endeavour to be as concise as possible as I quite appreciate the volume of work to be done. I trust that a motion by me, against which time is running out, will be brought up some time this week.

The CHAIRMAN: It will be.

FOREST DEPARTMENT.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Thank you, Sir. I will make my point very pithily, and it is that in respect of the timber industry and the question of an export tax on timber, I feel that an export tax may be imposed.

The CHAIRMAN: May I tell the hon. Member that there is a proposal that that should be done, and among the Bills I mentioned is a proposed amendment of

the Forest law. It is proposed that an additional royalty should be placed on timber. I only tell him that to save time.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I am very glad that that is going to be done, because timber is a wasting asset, and we should get as much as we can from our forests. There is just one more point I would like to make. I think the Forest Department should attach more importance than hitherto to the question of the export of shingles to the West Indies, and that the necessary instructions should be passed on to those Colonies as to the proper method of nailing British Guiana shingles. I find that Barbados imports a large quantity of shingles from Canada, a hard currency area, and I think the West Indian Colonies would prefer to import their shingles from British Guiana and thus conserve their sterling.

The CHAIRMAN: May I also tell the hon. Member that there is very shortly to be a conference in Barbados of architects in the Caribbean concerned with housing, and I propose to place before that conference particulars of the timbers and shingles we can produce in British Guiana. I shall probably send an officer to represent this Colony at the conference, to see that the other Caribbean Colonies know what we can do in the way of supplying shingles for housing.

If I may refer to forest revenue the hon. Member will see from the Estimates that the rates of royalty have already been put up, and that there has been an increase in revenue of \$40,000 in the last few years, which is a sign not only that we have increased the royalties but that we are more efficient in collecting them. As I have said, there are further Regulations relating to a special royalty on timber which is exported from the Colony. It only applies to timber exported.

Dr. JAGAN: There is one point I would like to make with respect to the question of revenue. Looking over some of the heads which yield revenue in terms of royalty and export duty I added the figures with respect to the Interior, Lands and Mines, Forest and Geological Depart-

ments, and I find that those four Departments cost this Colony \$500,833 per annum while they are bringing in revenue to the extent of \$511,370. It seems to me that we are spending a great deal of money on those four Departments, but we are not really obtaining a large amount of revenue, especially when we consider that the Lands and Mines Department deals with minerals such as gold, diamonds and bauxite, while the Forest Department deals with timbers, etc.

I agree with the hon. Member that attempts should be made to increase our revenue in that direction. There is one fact which I think should be given very serious consideration by Government, and that is the setting up of a factory to produce prefabricated houses. I do not think that the C.D.C. is contemplating the establishment of such a factory at the present time. I know that they are erecting a large sawmill at Houston, but I believe it is particularly intended to produce more timbers of various sizes. I feel that Government would do well to make an investigation in this direction with a view to setting up a factory of its own to produce prefabricated houses. We know that there is a great demand in this Colony at present, not only for houses for Government officers but for houses for people in various parts of the City and in the rural areas. There is also a great demand for houses of that kind in the West Indies, and I think Government should give the matter some consideration if it is not going to be considered by the C.D.C. in the near future.

There is one other matter which I feel should be given some consideration, and that is the setting up of a central marketing organization for handling the timbers of this country — an organization similar to the Rice Marketing Board. I know that the tendency in this country is to set up centralized marketing, and we all realize the advantages of centralized marketing, provided it is done on a democratic basis. I was told that at the present time there are many small producers who receive orders from abroad, but because the importers require large quantities, many of those small producers cannot fulfil those orders, with the result

that they have to compete in the local market for the sale of their timber. If we had a centralized marketing organization it would be able to supply from a common pool the various demands which are made for Colony timbers. I hope that this matter will also receive Government's consideration.

The CHAIRMAN: The question of the prefabrication of houses has been under Government's very close consideration for a considerable period of time, and in fact we have already taken the matter up with the C.D.C. The trouble is that no mill in British Guiana at present can produce prefabricated material; we have not the modern milling machinery to do it, but as an interim measure the Corporation has put up a type of house before the Planning Authority for which they can cut the timber to the required lengths, so that those who purchase that timber need not do any more sawing. It is not prefabrication in the proper sense of the term, but it is going as far towards it as can be done with the antiquated machinery which we have here at present, and they tell me that until the new machinery arrives they will not be able to go much more into that matter, but they have produced a type of house of which they say they are able to supply 50 or 60 in a matter of three or four months. I know that that type of house has been before the Town Planning Authority and I believe approved.

The other point raised by the hon. Member has also been taken up and is receiving consideration. I think it has already been placed before the Forest Products Association, or is to be. I refer to the question of centralized marketing. It sounds easy in theory but it is extremely difficult to put into practice. All sorts of considerations arise, such as the quality and so on of the timber to be exported, and the question of whether all would-be exporters would join a common pool to produce timber of the requisite quality for export. Nevertheless, that also is a matter which Government is considering.

The hon. Member referred to the question of revenue. The total expendi-

ture of the Forest Department for this year is \$155,000, while the estimated revenue from royalty on timber is \$212,000 and \$23,000 from woodcutting licences — a total of say \$235,000 against an expenditure of \$155,000 on the estimate. The hon. Member remarked that the Department of Lands and Mines should be a paying concern. That Department does a tremendous lot of work which is not revenue earning — except the hon. Member would wish that survey fees and things like that should be charged what it really costs the Department at present. Fees charged for surveys, transfers of property, etc., are far below the cost of such work, and if it is desired to make the Department fully self-supporting or revenue earning we would have to put up the fees for surveys, etc. which the Department undertakes.

The hon. Member referred to the Geological Department as earning very little revenue at the moment. The Colony's revenue will depend on what they find. He knows that for the first time in this Colony we now have a real geological survey team at work. No less than eight officers are engaged and in time they will complete a comprehensive geological survey of the whole Colony, which is the thing we have needed for years. I cannot forecast what the results will be, but at least we will know what there is and what there is not in the interior of this Colony.

Head passed as printed at \$155,230.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Mr. DEBIDIN: May I draw attention to the fact that it had emerged in Finance Committee that there is an agreement between the United Kingdom Government and the U.S.A. for the sale of gold. This is one of the things, to my mind, which can be regarded as an Imperial act which works detrimentally against this Colony. It may be useful so far as the currency balance between the dollar and sterling to the United Kingdom is concerned, but British Guiana, we are told, loses quite a great deal of income. I understand that in the open market we can get \$70 per ounce for our gold. I feel the time has come when

charity should begin at home; when we should ask for a release by the United Kingdom from this Imperial act or what they arrogate to themselves the right to deal with our gold, so that we would be able to sell our gold in the open market and get the most for it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member means blackmarket—not open market!

Mr. DEBIDIN: I think we have Departments with adequate supervision for the sale of gold, the same way as it is done today. When I speak of open market I mean the countries other than the U.S.A. from which we can get far more for our gold and still have the same amount of supervision in the handling and export of gold. I feel sure that we would profit by it. I am asking that this Government transmit our observations in the hope that we may be free to receive this additional income in selling our gold in the foreign markets.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread"! The hon. Member has chosen a rather dangerous sphere in which to tread. He has now sallied into the sphere of high finance. There is an agreement between the United Kingdom, the U.S.A. and other contracting Government,—an international agreement in regard to gold, under which the Government of the U.S.A. buy all gold offered at a fixed price. But for that the position would be entirely different. Who knows if the U.S.A. stops the purchase of gold what the price would drop to? What the hon. Member asks for is that, notwithstanding this very high level international agreement whereby all the countries that produce gold get the advantage of a market at a fixed price paid by the Treasury of the U.S.A., we in this small country should seek to remove ourselves from this benefit and to blackmarket our gold at whatever price we can get elsewhere. That is what he means; but that cannot be done. We are part and parcel of the British Commonwealth which has entered into this agreement for our mutual benefit. As I said, but for that agreement I do not know what would happen to the price of gold. That the

U.S.A. authorities may decide to increase the price is all we can hope for. We cannot solemnly ask that British Guiana be permitted to blackmarket its gold.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Is it a fact that all we get is \$35 per ounce, which I regard as extremely low?

Dr. JAGAN: That is a very good point taken by the hon. Member. The price of \$35 per ounce has been fixed over a very long period of time. We appreciate the fact that the cost of production even in the case of gold-mining is increasing as in other spheres of activities. This is really a fundamental issue which he has taken up, and I know, the hon. the Financial Secretary would dismiss it rather lightly; but I do not think the matter should be dismissed very lightly, even though it may touch on international agreements, etc. The whole point is, gold either has to be sold directly or indirectly by us to the U.S.A. in order to earn dollars, but the possibility cannot be lost sight of that we can sell the same gold to non-dollar areas and get more on the exchange than the equivalent of 35 U.S.A. dollars. For instance, we may sell gold to Holland and get more than 35 U.S.A. dollars in return. It is true that Holland may require to buy certain goods from the U.S.A. and may prefer the exchange, but it is a question of whose dollar is worth more and to whom it is a great necessity. We all appreciate the fact that there is a deficit on the balance of payments by the Commonwealth as a whole and, consequently, every Commonwealth territory has to contribute to the dollar pool, but the fact must not be lost sight of that we at the present time contribute more to the dollar pool and receive less out of it. Consequently we are losing at all times

Mr. PHANG: I had intended to raise this matter under Lands and Mines, but as it is raised by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara I desire to say that I agree with what the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) has said. We, the producers, are compelled to ship our gold to the U.S.A. or the United Kingdom, and all the price we get for it is \$35 per ounce while other countries

are eager to get the same gold at double that price. The whole thing savours of colonial exploitation.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I object to that statement. The international agreement applies equally to South Africa and Canada. South Africa being the greatest producer of gold we can safely leave it to them to see after the price

Mr. DEBIDIN: Is not the hon. Member out of order? He has not risen to a point of explanation. An opinion is offered and the hon. Member is making a reply to it. The hon. Member for North-West District was not finished when he was interrupted.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I am sorry. I thought the hon. Member was finished.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member wish to continue?

Mr. PHANG: No, Sir.

Head passed as printed.

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT.

Mr. PHANG: I desire to congratulate Government on the repeal of that gold tax. I felt it was a very wicked tax because it made the local people pay more for their gold. I have found out that between the years 1947 and 1950 the sum of \$8,400 was collected under the tax. That means the poor people of this Colony who invest in gold jewellery are poorer by that amount. Since that tax is taken off I am just wondering whether those gold dealers who have gold in hand at the end of February would be given a refund of the tax on that gold?

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid not.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: This tax has been introduced on devaluation and when the sterling value of gold had increased. I entirely agree with the hon. Member that, contrary to what appeared in the Press, the tax was to be borne either by the large miner who did not choose to

export, or by the gold trader. However, by some machination it has been passed on either to the porkknocker on the one hand or to the gold jeweller or goldsmith on the other. The burden was intended to fall on a different head but it did not. I do not think it is correct to imply that what has been taken should be given back, because the price of gold had increased in terms of sterling by virtue of devaluation.

Mr. PHANG: What I refer to is the amount of gold the dealer had in hand at the end of February when the tax was repealed. You will have to refund the amount of the tax paid on that gold.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I am afraid that would be quite impracticable. You could not check the amount in hand on which he should legitimately get back the tax.

Mr. FERNANDES: I do not think the dealer paid any additional tax on the gold he had in hand when the tax was imposed in 1948 and, therefore I do not think he is entitled to any refund when the tax is taken off.

Mr. PHANG: To a point of correction; On all the gold at the end of 1947 \$8 per ounce was paid. Stock was taken.

Mr. FERNANDES: If that is so, I humbly submit they are entitled to a refund.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not aware of that.

Dr. GONSALVES: What I understood was that it was only when the gold was actually smelted and in use that the person paid the tax but, as it has been explained by the hon. Member that the tax has been imposed on all the gold in the possession of the dealers now I think it is only fair that the tax should be refunded. One of the points mentioned by the hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer is that it was not so much devaluation that caused the price of gold to be raised. That was only a blind theory. It was raised because of devaluation of the sterling, but the actual cost of production here bears no comparison with

South Africa where there is sweated labour. I do not think that comparison can stand up to the fact that even though we get more by devaluation of the sterling, in proportion to the cost we pay more. It seems to me a paper loss and does not mean anything to us.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: It meant quite a lot if the objective was achieved; that is, to force the export value upon the holder of the gold. The price would have gone up if he had exported. I can say at once there can be no refund of the tax on gold in the hands of the trader. I have been informed by the hon. Member for North-West District that they had paid the tax on gold in hand. I do not know that. Obviously when the tax was introduced the gold which was reported to the Lands and Mines and that unreported had to pay the tax. I cannot see that is the same thing as trying to refund now the tax on gold which they had reported and not disposed of.

The CHAIRMAN: It cannot possibly be done. It is the porkknocker who is fleeced. He never got the tax. He should be considered if anybody is.

Head passed as printed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Once again may I draw attention to what I regard as being a very indifferent approach to the Land Settlement Scheme at Pln. Cane Grove. This again is a hardy annual. I think it should be a matter of self-reproach to the Government to know that we have year after year to complain very bitterly over the fact that there is no feasible verdict in so far as the carrying out of Land Settlement is concerned. One would expect that the survey, which is so necessary for the allotment of lands to the people, would have been done ever since. We have had the Commissioner of Local Government before the Finance Committee, and I was very amazed over the statement he made that he could not get a surveyor to do the survey. That I look upon as being an extremely specious excuse to be put forward to any set of intelligent men, for we have an abundance

of surveyors in the Lands and Mines Department, surveyors who are doing all types of work and who do work at various times at the request of private people and can very well do this little bit of surveying of a few acres of land and allotting it for building purposes. I am thoroughly disappointed. I cannot accept that reason which has been put forward, for if the Government could not get a surveyor from its Department—and I submit they can get one to put on this job which will not take anything more than a week or two at the most, as only a small area of Plantation Cane Grove is to be done—then I feel sure a private surveyor could have been got to do this work. When one realizes that agreements of lease have to be entered into after the place has been allotted, one sees how much the people are getting assistance, and that is having a distressing effect on the morale of the people there. They have not only experienced all the difficulties of the elements—drought, floods, etc—which is sufficiently disconcerting and disheartening to them, but they have to suffer a sense of frustration in not knowing what to do for themselves for the future, where they stand. This is made all the more complicated and difficult for those unfortunate people when one realizes that the housing scheme does not take in the entire population of Cane Grove. So this Land Settlement is going to settle partially the people of Cane Grove as, I understand, only a limited number of houses will be built about 50. Therefore the majority of the people or families are going to be left in further suspense and probably left at the mercy of not only the weather but of other people who are so willing to exploit them.

I say that because, following logically upon the last statement, I know as a fact that hundreds of people have been by force of circumstances gravitating towards the sugar estates of the Colony looking for work, and the best of these people have been snapped up and are working on the sugar plantations when they ought to be settled on a land settlement, having given all their youth, energy and strength to the building up of a new industry—the rice industry—in respect

of which the entire plantation of Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere is to be converted from a sugar plantation to a rice area. The families at the outset have had to pay the cost of that conversion. I have discovered that the young men of the area have all had to leave because they could not stay there in a state of suspense and uncertainty. It is not right and I am not saying only what I feel in this matter. I must quote Mr. Laing, the Commissioner of Local Government, whose candour we must appreciate. He admitted that the people are having a very difficult time. It is not therefore what I say but what the person who is in charge and at the head of the whole of this scheme has himself felt about these unfortunate people. I think something ought to be done.

The CHAIRMAN: Something is being done. The hon. Member knows that something is being done.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I would like to ask whether the leases have been entered into. If that has been done I would take my seat.

The CHAIRMAN: I have said a lot about Cane Grove to hon. Members of Council. We have settled 400 families and \$800,000 has been already spent, and money is still being spent. It was no use worrying whether the scheme was economic. We could not go into that as the people were stranded there and we had to do something for them. The impression given that nothing is done for them is totally false. I have been to Cane Grove and I know the people had a hard time. They have had a hard time from the day the sugar estate closed down. They are going to have a good time, but it takes time. The hon. Member referred to frustration of the people. There is no question of the people being driven off the land. They are secure on it, and we are to have everyone's lot surveyed. There is not a single one there who believes he is going to be thrown out of the land, or has any feeling of insecurity. I have been there half a dozen times and talked to the people. Then the hon. Member said there are hundreds of surveyors—why not have one to survey the land?

I may tell the hon. Member that the total number of surveyors in the Lands and Mines Department is 20.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I did not say hundreds!

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member said "an abundance of surveyors", but the total in the whole Colony is 20. If the hon. Member looks up the Estimate he could see that. The hon. Member knows as well as I do that with all these major irrigation schemes a terrific amount of survey work has to be done and a tremendous lot of it is going on. We cannot make more rapid progress. The people of Cane Grove need not worry on that score.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I will admit, Sir, that you have tackled this problem on more than one occasion. You have discussed it with me, and I was at the point where more or less I anticipated your remarks about the expenditure on Pln. Cane Grove. It is not sufficient to refer to that fact because, as I have always said, the expenditure on Pln. Cane Grove is merely increasing the value of the estate to Government, the lands of this Land Settlement Scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: Not the lands of the Government, the lands of the people!

Mr. DEBIDIN: The capital in the terms of land value is going to be considerable. You have built a bond which, it is true, will be helpful to the people and that bond has several uses. It keeps padi which will help to assist the central mill of the Abary Rice Scheme. It will reflect the development of an industry in which Government is very much interested, and from which Government derives money through the export of rice. It is to our advantage to so improve Cane Grove as to make it a very large rice cultivation area. So it is today, and we must admit that fact. But it is not sufficient to say we spend all that money when actually the money does not go into the hands of the people at all. It is a fact that the people had set-backs in their production returns of rice. What I would like to make as a point, a most important point, is that the longer things

remain in a state of uncertainty or insecurity the more impoverished the people are becoming, and the more impoverished they become the less chance they have of engaging in the housing scheme which is an integral part of the land settlement scheme. If it is the prerequisite of Government that they should deposit one-sixth, I think, of the money required to build the houses for the families. I have already made that point. Those people have not got it and, therefore, in spite of our solicitude for them I feel that when the time comes to settle them they will not be ready. While no one will turn them out, I am afraid they will not be able to take part in the land settlement scheme, because they will be financially incapable. I am afraid if they are going to be provided with houses costing \$1,200, only shopkeepers or those who have accumulated \$200 would be in a position to avail themselves of them.

So we have to look at this matter most realistically and make sure that we set the land settlement scheme on a very sound footing very early. There are two points which come up very strongly from what I am saying on your own remarks, Sir. Land settlements are not assets. One would infer from what you say Sir, that they are a liability instead of an asset from Government's point of view. That is the reason why I have emphasized before so strongly that the land settlement schemes are on the wrong footing. To my mind this Colony would do very well indeed if we bought lands with that huge sum of money — properties on the East Bank Demerara — and sold them to the people with the right to go there and use their talents. I feel, if the people are given that chance, the land being their own they would see that the returns be manifold. It is no use our taking charge of the question of land settlement when we ourselves seem to be helpless in the way of putting it to the fullest use. That is why we find so much difficulty ourselves. For that reason I do trust that in all these land settlement schemes some commission would again make full enquiry into the whole matter to see what could be done for this Colony in a great realistic system of land settlement. That is going to be an extremely important

problem of the very near future in British Guiana. Therefore there must be a complete reorientation of the land settlement policy for British Guiana.

Government has seen the necessity to remove the police station at Cane Grove. It would be a nice thing to be able to say that all is well in that area, that the behaviour of the people is of a high order, but we know that Cane Grove was recently a sugar plantation, and that for the peace, harmony and rehabilitation of the people there some amount of protection is required, especially for the Superintendent and those in control of the land settlement scheme. I cannot see the wisdom in removing the police station at Cane Grove. The crime statistics have been made to appear to be low—

The CHAIRMAN: I must object most strongly to the hon. Member's suggestion that the crime statistics prepared by the Police or anybody else have been deliberately framed to show that there is less crime in that area. I ask the hon. Member to withdraw it.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I am not making any suggestion at all that the statistics provided by the Commissioner of Police are wrong, but I am saying that the police at Cane Grove have been deliberately not making cases, and have probably been told not to make cases. The words I used in my previous statement can only relate to that, but if they do suggest anything else I would say that it is unfortunate and not intended. It is a fact that the figures which have been given to us indicate that there has been a decline in cases of crime at Cane Grove, or a slackening of activity by those in charge of the police station. I stated that in my petition to Government.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member made no mention of any deliberate misrepresentation of the statistics submitted to Government. I have seen the correspondence and I considered the case.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I referred to the making of cases, not to misrepresentation of figures. Anyhow it is not an important point. What I wish to point out is that Government ought never to

have removed that police station, because it was an established institution, a very substantial building properly sited. There are rumshops in that area still and a huge settlement, and what is more, there was telephonic communication between that station and headquarters in Georgetown. As a result of the removal of the police station I am afraid that communication will be very slow, and should anything occur in that district I am afraid it may be very disastrous. I am speaking on behalf of those who would like to see peace and order maintained, not for those who would like to see disorder. I therefore advocated the retention of that police station until the land settlement scheme was fully established. It all bears upon the whole question of Government's slowness in the full establishment of the Cane Grove land settlement scheme. It can only have one result—the further discouragement of the people in that area before the scheme is really put on a proper footing

Dr. JAGAN: I am in agreement with the setting up of more and more land settlement schemes in this country. I know that Government is spending a great deal of money on land settlements, but the question may well be asked: are those land settlements properly organized so that sufficient income can be obtained to compensate for the expenditure incurred, and also to give the settlers a decent standard of living? If we look at the Cane Grove land settlement scheme at Appendix C in the Estimate we find that Government has merely put a Manager and a few other people to organize the business of the settlement and rent land for rice and ground provisions at \$7.20 per acre. I do not think that that is enough. I think that land settlements are an ideal proposition, and being under Government control they should bring about increased production and greater prosperity for the people concerned. But what is happening today on these land settlements? A man and his family are allotted a few acres of land for which he pays rental to Government just as he would to a private landlord or a sugar estate. If he agists his cattle on the settlement he pays fees as he would to any landowner. It seems to me that now

that we have a Co-operative Department some effort should be made to organize those settlers, either by coercion or persuasion into producer co-operatives, because I can see that unless that is done we are not going to raise the standard of living of those people.

Let us take, for example, the coconut estate at La Bonne Mere. All that is being done on that estate is that the Manager appoints somebody to take charge of that section of the settlement, and all he does is to sell 550,000 nuts at \$22 per 1,000, yielding an income of \$12,100 estimated for this year. I do not consider that good enough. I think the people in that section should be made to take a hand in the organization of the coconut industry on that settlement. Let the Co-operative Department go in there and organize 20 or 40 persons into a co-operative. Give them so many acres of land for coconut cultivation and charge them a block rental. Once organized into a co-operative various things could be done on that coconut cultivation which is already producing fruit. On a co-operative basis the people could go in for coconut oil making, the production of sweets made from cocoanuts, and shredded coconut which could be exported with the help of the Social Welfare officers. What are we paying the officers of the Social Welfare and the Co-operative Department for if, on a settlement controlled by Government, we cannot get those trained officers to organize the people? Unless that is done we will have the people planting rice, and in many cases only a few acres, and when there is no work to be done in the cultivation of rice they will sit idly doing nothing during the rest of the year.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would it satisfy the hon. Member if I told him that that is Government's policy? I have already spoken to the settlers at Cane Grove on the benefits of co-operative farming. The hon. Member must not expect these things to happen in a day. It is only two years since we established our Co-operative Department, and we have to teach the people to co-operate. It is not that they are bursting to co-operate; the great difficulty is to get them to co-operate. When I suggested to the people at Cane Grove

that they should make use of the new ploughs on a co-operative basis one of them said to me "It is not as easy as all that." They have to be educated to it, and that takes time, but it is the policy of the Department. I hope to see the co-operative movement established on every one of our land settlements. There is no difference of opinion between Government and the hon. Member on that point.

Dr. JAGAN: It may be the policy of Government but it seems to me to be proceeding so slowly as not to be visible at all.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. Member will help to do it himself.

Dr. JAGAN: If I had a hand in it I would.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no reason why you should not preach it.

Dr. JAGAN: I always go about preaching co-operation. I feel the time has come when the Co-operative Department should move along a little faster with this business. It is true that it is only two years since we have had a fully staffed Department, and on the other hand I appreciate the fact that there are many individuals who are not willing to join producer co-operatives, but I feel that Government has power in its hands to give an incentive to these people. Take the question of rentals. Instead of charging the settlers a flat rental of \$7.20 per acre for land I think Government would do well to consider the proposition of giving the land free to the people who would join producer co-operatives, and charge them a certain percentage on their yield which would take into account land rent, drainage costs and such things. But what is Government doing at present? The settlers are charged a rental of \$7.20 per acre for the land. They borrow money from the Loan Banks, and for machinery which is brought in from the Abary scheme they have to pay \$3 per hour for the use of a plough. Then comes a flood and the people lose everything, or most of what they have planted. It seems to me that the correct procedure would be to provide an incentive to those

people. They should be told that if they would form a co-operative the land would be given to them free of rent: that drainage and irrigation would be provided, and when they reap their crops a certain percentage would be taken from them for the facilities provided. In that way the farmers would not stand to lose anything. At present they incur debt at the Loan Banks and for the hire of machinery, and in many cases they are worse off when they reap than they were before they planted.

Another matter to which I think Government should give serious consideration is the question of setting up machinery pools in various parts of the Colony, especially in relation to land settlements. There again I think Government should levy a certain percentage on the yield for the hire of machinery instead of charging a flat rate. If they have to pay \$3 per hour for the hire of a plough and it breaks down during operation they stand to lose money and are not encouraged to use mechanical tillage. The effect of that would be that they would sooner or later revert to the use of oxen. The correct procedure would be for Government to set up machinery pools in the various land settlements and encourage the people to form producer and consumer co-operatives. I hope that something very tangible will be done, and very quickly, to re-organize the land settlement schemes. I have very great hopes of those schemes, but in their present state of organization I fear that they will be failures. I know that Government is subsidizing all those land settlements, and on the present basis it will have to continue to subsidize them at the expense of the general taxpayers.

Dr. GONSALVES: One of the points I wish to comment on is the one which was made by you, Sir, that it is not quite so easy to get the people to co-operate as perhaps we would like to see. The co-operative system in this country is still in its embryonic stage, and I can say from my own experience, after having been asked by the people to assist them along certain lines, that I am not satisfied with the effort they have made after receiving the help they asked for. It seems to me that they are still chary

about something. They either do not trust themselves or they do not trust the other fellow. I am somewhat disappointed in what the people have asked me to do, and it seems to me that it requires more education to get the people to see the benefits of and the reasons for co-operation.

As regards the point made by the hon. Member for Central Cemerara (Dr. Jagan) I would say that I admire his zeal, but I do not agree with his suggestion that the people should be made to co-operate either by coercion or persuasion. It seems to me that the method of persuasion is better, but it would take some time, unless we resort to coercion.

The CHAIRMAN: Education is the right word.

Dr. GONSALVES: That is just what I am thinking. It is a slow process and we would have to be very patient, but in time we would get them to see that co-operation would be to their own benefit. I also do not agree with the suggestion of the hon. Member that the people would revert to the antiquated method of ploughing. I do not think there are many people who would not realize the advantages of mechanical tillage, because if it is pointed out to them that a mechanical plough could plough an acre and a half of land within one hour it is difficult to believe that people would not see the advantage of using mechanical methods. But some of the people, particularly in my district, hold on to the old method of ploughing because they feel they cannot afford to hire a mechanical plough. I think that a greater effort should be made to cancel the use of mechanical resources. Just how it could be done I do not know, but if mechanical implements were placed within easy reach of the people they would not only derive benefit but would learn to appreciate the benefit derived.

Mr. DEBIDIN: In my survey of the rice industry I expressed the hope that Government would do nothing to discourage the use of bull ploughs, because such a step would spell disaster not only

for the peasantry of the Colony but also for the rice industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Government has not discouraged them.

Mr. DEBIDIN: From the hon. Member's observations I gather that he feels that way, and I join issue with him on that point, because if one looks carefully one would see that in the past the production of rice by the old method was nearly as much as it is today. At present, although we have the Abary Scheme, which is almost entirely mechanized cultivation producing a fairly large quantity of rice, the increased production is extremely small when compared with past years when the farmers only used the bull ploughs. The mechanical plough can only succeed on large areas of land, and where the farmers have some resources of their own. But where it is just a matter of two or three acres people cannot afford the use of mechanical ploughs, because if they suffer loss, as they do sometimes, it would not be just their own labour involved. I do trust that the change-over will be gradual, and that people will not be pushed off their two or three acres of land for the purpose of introducing mechanical cultivation. We do want to speed up production and to encourage the mechanization of the rice industry, but that can only be done by those who have financial means at their disposal.

Dr. GONSALVES: I think my friend missed my point very badly. I did not suggest that we should discourage the use of bull ploughs, but it is obvious that if a man who owns two or three acres of land could get a machine to do in an hour or two what bull ploughing would take seven days to do it would be far more economical to him to use mechanical methods.

Dr. JAGAN: While I appreciate the effort and recognize the necessity of education on this question of co-operation I know that it is a very slow process. On the other hand there is also the obvious fact that the educators must themselves be educated, and that is what

I think is very much lacking in the Government officers today. They do not seem to have very much foresight.

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SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATION.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I am going to make one of my shortest annual speeches under this head. I feel that social welfare must take a very important part in the life of this Colony, but I feel it is still being mishandled by those in charge of the service.

MR. LAING'S RETIREMENT.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Sir, I suggest that this Council should record its appreciation of the service rendered the Colony by the Head of this Department who, as we know, will soon be leaving the Service. I feel that this is the appropriate time to do so, and in spite of the fact that we may have had disagreements with him on some points, particularly in the functioning of the Social Welfare Department, I feel that this Colony will find it extremely hard to replace the officer who is leaving this Department. I think we should record our debt of gratitude to him for having steered local government over the long number of years he has done in so efficient and able a manner, and we should further record our wish that in his retirement he will look back upon his work in this Colony with a great deal of self-satisfaction, and that he will enjoy a useful and long period of retirement from active service. I also suggest that Mrs. Laing be included in the expression of our appreciation.

Dr. SINGH: I wish to associate myself with the remarks made by the hon. Member

Dr. GONSALVES: My friend has made a very nice speech and I would like to join in the felicitations to Mr. Laing.

The CHAIRMAN: I feel quite sure that the Council would like to record its appreciation of Mr. Laing's service to this Colony which has extended over 40 years.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I see, Sir, we are making a big jump to "Medical". I want to say something on Magistrates.

The CHAIRMAN: I called the Head and passed on.

Mr. ROTH: I rise to a point of order! The hon. Member heard you call the Head and said nothing.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member wants to make remarks on the Magistrates, he can do so when we come to the Head "Supreme Court".

Mr. DEBIDIN: The Heads were called so quickly that before we could get to speak on them they were passed. It is not fair to us that they should be gone through so quickly.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member wants to raise a point he can do so under "Supreme Court".

Dr. SINGH: As a member of the Medical Advisory Committee I feel that the general public should know what is being done to improve conditions in our hospitals and to improve conditions for our patients. The Medical Department with its allied departments and ancillary services, is responsible for planning or directing the health programme of the Colony. Its departments have a staff of medical officers, some of whom have specialised, a staff of Sisters qualified nurses, sick-nurses and dispensers, sanitary inspectors and trained technicians. These ladies and gentlemen are posted at the different institutions in the Colony and carry out the instructions or initiate those instructions in those institutions. We have several institutions — two in Berbice, the New Amsterdam Hospital and the Mental Hospital; one on the East Coast, Demerara — the Leprosarium at Mahaica; the Georgetown Public Hospital and the Best Sanatorium; one hospital at Suddie, one at Bartica and one at Mabaruma. These institutions have already passed the test of time and have done well. But when they were constructed, some about

a century or more ago, it was not envisaged that they would cater for 400,000 people as today. Perhaps it was envisaged that they would cater for about 200,000 or less. We must remember that in those early days we had studded over the Colony about 48 sugar plantations which were self-contained; they had their own hospitals and cared for the sick, so there was no pressure on the public institutions. Today, with the closing of the majority of those plantations, their hospitals being demolished, and the present public institutions not able to cater for 400,000 people or the present population of the Colony, we must experience overcrowding and dissatisfaction.

Sir, if we are going to implement the Report of the Venn Commission on Hospitals by the establishment of dispensaries and about six district hospitals, then the overcrowding and other abnormalities would be overcome. But, Sir, I think we are doing well. I remember when I qualified in 1918 and was coming to British Guiana I had to pass through Jamaica where I visited the public hospital there. I would not speak at this time of the conditions I saw at Kingston, Jamaica. Then I stopped at Trinidad and saw the pupils hospital there. I can say definitely and emphatically that we were then superior and ahead of these hospitals. But things have changed today. Jamaica is prosperous and so is Trinidad, but our time will come. Last year I mentioned that various people visited the Public Hospital on Sundays and had to wait for hours outside in all types of weather. They had to sit on the parapet outside the compound with nowhere to shelter. Today there is a shelter with proper arrangement—seating accommodation and good water supply. Instead of having to go to places nearby and beg for water they can get it there and wait in comfort until they enter the institution. There is also ample water supply in the hospital itself. We have also provided fire escapes at the institution in case of the hazard of fire. At nearly all the wards there are these fire escapes. Then the incinerator at the hospital, which was causing a nuisance in my neighbourhood and I had to report about it, has also been improved. For the convenience of the

people from the country visiting their sick relatives in the hospital we have made arrangements whereby they can attend the hospital at certain hours and spend enough time in the institution and leave to catch the ferry steamer or the train to return home.

I may also mention that last year, when we were considering the Estimates, some of my friends retorted sardonically when I mentioned that the out-patients department would be ready. I am glad to say it is a reality today. It is completed and operating. The painting was initiated during the month of January or February. We had during the year 1950 built three bungalows at the Georgetown Hospital compound for specialised medical men. The Best Hospital, about which there was so much talk, is three-quarters finished. I am glad Dr. Eddey told hon. Members about it in Finance Committee. I must also mention that through the hon. Member for New Amsterdam and the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice, who advocated that instead of the inmates of the Mental Hospital lying there idle with nothing to do they should be made to do dairying, that has been started; so that in time that institution will be self-supporting with its supply of milk for itself and outside. It will be a profitable engagement of the inmates and, we hope, it will prosper. Another suggestion was made by those two Members in the Advisory Committee that there was a printing press at the Mental Hospital and there were men there capable of handling it, and use should be made of it. Circulars can be printed at the institution for the Department at a nominal cost without causing any heavy expenditure.

I think we are endeavouring to do our best. It is true that the expenditure of the institution is heavy, but with the increased cost of living, increased salaries, enhanced prices of drugs, cutlery and other articles pertaining to hospital requisites — we cannot help this heavy expenditure. But I feel sure if the public would continue to have patience the internal administration would be improved. Although the exterior of our hospitals at the present time do not make the show we desire, yet internally we

have everything that is needed for the comfort of our patients. Our water closets are all tiled and there are amenities in the institution for the comfort of patients. We do hope we will in time make our institutions up to date as we progress.

Mr. DEBIDIN: The hon. Member seemed to have anticipated Members of this Council. I thought he would have waited until criticisms were levelled before he made that speech, for we certainly cannot share with him the view that all is well so far as the Medical Department is concerned, particularly in respect of the hospitals of Georgetown and elsewhere. Within recent times I have had to come up with most appalling conditions having to go to the hospital by force of circumstances and visit the various departments. I have already said much on this in Finance Committee and I am, therefore, going to be as brief as possible. The hon. Member referred to the out-patients department. It is no use telling us you have a nice department erected when you have the out-patient doctor having to do casualty work and having to attend to 150 patients within one hour. Why this particular officer has to perform so many other duties when he can hardly cope with the number of people he has to attend to? This is something that naturally relates to the shortage of medical staff at the hospital. There is no question about it that the Medical Advisory Committee (I have said so before and I repeat it) has not been taking an overall interest in the Department and treating first things first. Probably this must have been because the members of that Committee share a very happy view of things as they are without really and actually examining them and seeing deficiencies here and there. I cannot commend those in charge of the Medical Department for having thought of building three bungalows at great expense to Government before increasing the staff or doing other necessary work, such as the erection of a proper surgical ward with all modern amenities at the Public Hospital, Georgetown. Nevertheless I do not intend to catalogue what would be a tremendously long list of vitally necessary things to be done, and which are not being taken care of at all.

The entire medical work is just like the public roads of the Colony. They are bad because they are not maintained, because adequate funds are not placed at the disposal of those Departments, and that is why there are so many ruts in both. However I shall make this point. If the hon. Member is referring to the work of the hospitals as being increased by the closing down of sugar plantation hospitals, then I am going to ask that some definitely strong effort be made to establish Cottage Hospitals throughout the Colony. I have had the very great privilege in 1949 of being shown what public health work was being done in England. I was taken to Winchester and was actually shown a hospital which is the best example of what a Cottage Hospital should be. I have since advocated that one should be established somewhere between Mahaica and Mahaicony where the people have to travel long distances and there are many fatalities because there are not adequate and sufficiently fast conveyances in cases of emergency to take them to get medical help. It seems that what is necessary is that Cottage Hospitals be established and possibly within easy reach of the District Medical Officers throughout the Colony, where there can be direct supervision of those hospitals. I do trust the Medical Advisory Committee would go into this question seriously, not merely to fulfil the deficiencies created by the closing down of sugar estate hospitals but to satisfy a long felt need long before the closing down of the sugar estate hospitals.

In the rural districts of the Colony in so far as the Medical Department is concerned I feel that much more should be done in the training of midwives. It is not sufficient to have a midwife subsidized by Government and put in a district. I would like to see young women from the creek-lands being trained as midwives—those who would like to take up the training, and there are many who would — and also young women from the various other centres in the remote districts, who can be invited at some expense to Government to remain in Georgetown and be trained in midwifery, to return to their various districts and perform this very necessary and vital function. That is an important work in so far as

posterity and the youth of this Colony are concerned. Many fatalities have occurred because of the lack of qualified midwives in some of these remote districts. I trust the Advisory Committee will also go into that important question.

There is another point I would like to refer to, and that is the question of the appointment of these strangers to British Commonwealth in our midst. I refer to those of other nationalities who may be introduced in this Colony to work as doctors. I happen to have had a sad case brought to my notice. A man from the West Coast, Berbice, sent his wife to Georgetown, the doctor of that district having certified the case as tetanus, which he could not handle. She was taken to the Hospital and this doctor of foreign origin who received the patient refused her admission and said it was nothing but just a matter of cold, although there was a letter saying it was a case of tetanus. That person was taken to an outside doctor in Georgetown who also certified that it was a case of tetanus. She was taken back to the Hospital and on this occasion she was accepted as a patient but it was too late as in another 24 hours she died.

The CHAIRMAN: I would suggest to the hon. Member, as I did at the last meeting of the Council, that if he wants to make reference to this particular question he should bring it up in another place. All he has said, cannot be challenged here, as Government is not in a position to do so. I do suggest that with a very serious charge of that kind the hon. Member should use another channel to find out first or be certain of the facts before making his statement in the Council. The practice is becoming very common in this Council to bring up individual cases knowing fully well that they cannot be investigated in open Council. The hon. Member can ask questions or ask that an enquiry be made into the matter. To get up here and make allegations against professional men, such as the hon. Member has done is wrong, as there is no opportunity for such allegation, to be refuted without enquiry. I am not saying that they are true or untrue, but I do

suggest the better course is to bring up the matter in another way.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I would not say, as another Member said, I will not bring any matter before you, Sir.

Mr. FERNANDES: To a point of explanation! If the hon. Member refers to me, the two matters are entirely different. My matter was one of principle and I took the precaution to invite the attention of the hon. the Financial Secretary to it the day before. I was not making an accusation against anybody. I was making a statement of fact. It was entirely different from the point raised by the hon. Member today, which is stating an individual case that may be true or may not be true. Mine was a statement of fact verified by documents.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Mine is a statement of fact and I am only using my facts in the debate in support of a point.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. Member to refrain from doing so. It is unfair to the officer concerned and unfair to everybody else until the thing is substantiated. The general belief will be that what the hon. Member said is the truth. I do not know where he has got it from, whether he personally was a patient and knows the case. But he gives only one side of the story. Will the hon. Member proceed?

Mr. DEBIDIN: I will continue to make the point without further reference to the facts. What I was referring to was that we want to see that appointments are made properly and with due regard to what one would want in the way of efficiency. And that brings me to a very important point in the question of appointments. I find in some cases the reverse is taking place at the Public Hospital, Georgetown. When we have no doubt about efficiency we find something is done by Government against rules that may be existing, or in the absence of rules, as to the appointment of people fully qualified. Appointments are being refused and certain things are happening. In other words, we have two cases. Certain people may not have the full

qualification but they are introduced and appointed to the detriment of others. On the other hand, we find, especially where it concerns our local people who take the trouble to be fully qualified, our Government importing conditions from nowhere — not from the Colonial Regulations, — to find some excuse for debarring such qualified persons. I am not calling any particular name, but it occurred quite recently at the Public Hospital. It is not a matter which challenges the professional reputation of an individual. I do trust that when the matter is brought forward — I am sure Members of this Council, Official Heads and the hon. the Financial Secretary know fully the case I refer to—the fullest investigation will be made and the proper thing done in so far as that is concerned. We do want to see when appointments are to be made, that our local people who are qualified are given their due position, and once fully qualified are quickly appointed to serve their own people.

Mr. FERNANDES: I would just like to make two short observations. First of all I desire to thank Government for appointing the Administrator for the Public Hospital. I had asked for this two years ago. Nevertheless I am very pleased that Government has been able to find one, and I hope that when he comes and makes his recommendations they will be given the consideration they deserve because there can be no doubt whatever that there is a lot that can be learnt in hospital administration in all the hospitals of British Guiana. From the newspapers I see this gentleman has had some experience, and I have no doubt whatever that during his period of service here he will do everything possible to strengthen the efficiency of the Hospital.

Another point is, I would like to thank the hon. Member, who is Chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee and who spoke very early, for having fulfilled the assurance he gave me last year that the 100-bed ward at the Sanatorium would be completed at the end of the year. I was very pleased when I returned in January to see that that promise had been fulfilled. I would like also to express how pleased I am at Government'

decisions, as conveyed to us by Dr. Edey in Finance Committee, to go ahead some time in the not too distant future with the improvement to the Surgical Block. I had a look at the plan and I am very pleased to see that Government is at last going to take steps to put that plan into operation, so that we will have what I think is most needed in the Hospital, and that is a perfect surgical set-up which is badly needed here. I am not going to condemn the hospital or the administration. Personally I think they are trying to do a good job under the existing conditions and the terrific overload they have to carry. I do not share the optimism of my colleague's hope and aspiration that the overload will disappear, because the population is increasing, and with the various ills we have to face, which we cannot readily remedy, through bad housing and overcrowding the tendency to cause the spread of disease is naturally far greater than otherwise as long as they exist. We will have overcrowding. I hope that in the not too distant future British Guiana will have such health conditions that the doctors will work three hours a day instead of eight.

Dr. GONSALVES: Following on the remarks of the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Fernandes) I think we should adopt the system employed in other parts of the world where doctors are paid to keep people healthy. If the hospitals are empty the doctors are not paid to keep the people healthy. I went to a school where we were told that as soon as the graduates showed sufficient proficiency they would replace the Professors. I would like to see the same thing applied in this Colony, not only in the Medical Department but in every Department, so as to encourage local people to be properly trained for their jobs. I think Your Excellency said in your annual speech that you would like to see more of the people qualifying themselves in other fields. I think you know to what I am referring.

I had intended to make some observations in connection with the Education Department but circumstances prevented me from being here before that head was passed. I feel that whenever local people are qualified for any position they should

be given a chance. Properly qualified persons should be encouraged in that way because they would provide the nucleus of the scientific and cultural background of this country which we are hoping to build up. It is very unfortunate when we find young people of the Colony who have gone abroad and qualified themselves returning here to find a lack of proper encouragement from the Heads of Government Departments.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I can assure the hon. Member that such is not the case. I do not propose to say any more at this stage.

Dr. GONSALVES: In reply to what the hon. the Colonial Secretary has said I will say that I know of several cases of persons with diplomas from recognized schools abroad who, on their return to this Colony, have not been given an opportunity to make use of their special knowledge. I am able to prove what I have said. I am not making a general statement without having sufficient facts to back it up.

Total of head passed as printed at \$688,058.

MEDICAL — X-RAY DEPARTMENT.

r. JAGAN: I notice under this head provision for three radiographers. In answer to the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Dr. Gonsalves) the hon. the Colonial Secretary said a moment ago that there was no discrimination so far as appointments are concerned. In this case we know that recently one such person was employed on a temporary basis on the salary scale stated in the estimate — \$2,400 — \$3,000 per annum— but I am informed that the person in question has been demoted from a salary of \$200 to \$150 per month. I am wondering what is the reason for that, because the radiographers all have the same qualifications. I am also told that the person who has been demoted holds a diploma from one of the best hospitals in Ireland, and has the highest recommendation from those in charge of the institution. I would like to know the reason for discrimination in this particular case in which the academic qualifications are the

same. I know that the matter has been discussed in Finance Committee where the view of hon. Members was that this particular radiographer should be allowed to continue at the Public Hospital, Georgetown in order to gain experience, if such experience is necessary at the present

At the present time there is only one other radiographer at the hospital, for whom I see provision for a personal allowance of \$360 per annum. If there is provision in the estimate for three radiographers, two of them are to be stationed at the Public Hospital, Georgetown, and it is felt that one of them has not sufficient practical experience, it seems to me that the best way for that one to gain experience would be to become an understudy to the trained radiographer at the hospital. Instead, I am informed that it is Government's intention to remove the radiographer in question to another institution. I cannot understand the reason for such a step because, if a person has not the necessary experience, I do not see how that experience can be gained at another institution where she will be solely in charge. I should have thought that she would have been made an understudy of the trained radiographer in order to gain experience before she was transferred to another institution.

It seems to me that this incident bears out the remarks made by the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice a few minutes ago about discrimination. We have been told in the past, and we are continually being told that there is no justification for such a feeling, but we are being faced with cases here and there where persons with diplomas are told that they have not the requisite experience. Some persons are placed on probation, and their probationary periods extend over two or three years. We do not understand how long one has to be on probation, in some cases, before one gains the necessary experience. On the other hand we find that in some cases allowances are given to certain officers to qualify for posts in which they are employed before they have acquired the necessary qualification. In this very Department that has been done. Government has been very generous to

certain officers who did not have the necessary academic qualifications. They were appointed to posts and then given facilities to go and get the necessary academic qualifications, but in other cases that practice is not adopted.

I know from personal experience of the subject of radiography, that a person has to get accustomed to various types of apparatus at his or her disposal, and necessary adjustments have to be made. A person may be accustomed to using a modern type of apparatus, and with an antiquated type cannot give the same results. I go further and say that, working with the same type of apparatus in different places, one has to adjust oneself to the new apparatus. I know that from practical experience with X-ray apparatus, and the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Dr. Gonsalves) can verify that statement. In the case of the radiographer who has been employed for only a few weeks, using what may be described as not as efficient equipment as perhaps that she has been accustomed to, one can see that a period of readjustment was necessary before there could be any evaluation of her ability or otherwise. Consequently, in this particular case, if Government does not consider it to be discrimination then I feel that Government has been very — I would not say high-handed, but I would say that it has taken too stringent a view of the whole situation, because the initial period was very short. I am sure that over a longer period the lady in question would have produced results, if at all her ability was in question. I hope the matter will receive Government's attention.

Mr. ROTH: Following on the remarks of the last speaker, and in view of the very disquieting statement made on the subject in Finance Committee, I would ask whether Government would not take this Council into its confidence with regard to the inquiries made into this particular case, otherwise Government may be faced with a motion asking for a commission of inquiry into the whole X-ray Department and its personnel, from the Radiologist downwards.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir,

I am sorry that in spite of your appeal to hon. Members not to bring personal cases before the Council several hon. Members have dragged the case of this lady before Council. I do not propose to allow myself to be dragged into a debate on the merits of this particular lady. It would not be in her interest that that should be done, but I would like to make a few facts perfectly clear. This lady was engaged as a radiographer at the instance of my office because, as she had returned to the Colony with a diploma, we wished to see her placed in employment with Government. Unfortunately, after she had been employed for only a very short while it was very clear that she did not possess the requisite experience. She had her diploma, but in addition to that a long period of experience is required in this profession. Her shortcomings are not in any sense due to any fault of hers. If there is any fault it lies with my own office, (for which I take full responsibility) in pressing for the engagement of this lady. In the circumstances which have arisen special arrangements have been made for her to be kept on as a temporary Assistant Radiographer, and I hope she will make good in the appointment.

As regards acquiring experience in the X-ray Department in Georgetown, the present staff consists only of the Radiologist himself and one Radiographer. With all the work that falls on the X-ray Department from a 700-bed hospital, and with the whole surrounding districts to cater for as well, it is quite impossible for those hard-pressed people to spare attention for the inducting of a new recruit into her duties and seeing that she does get the experience she needs. That has been the difficulty, and for that reason we are taking special steps to engage two additional Radiographers to fill the two vacancies for Radiographers under item "C" so that when we do have them they will be able to undertake the training of Guianese recruits such as the lady under discussion. We are only too anxious to be able to do that, and later in the year when it becomes necessary the Financial Secretary proposes to seek the approval of Finance Committee for two or three additional posts of Assistant Radiographer to enable Guianese candi-

dates to be taken on and trained on the spot here instead of having to get their experience elsewhere at great expense.

Dr. GONSALVES: I would just like to say one word. I am very glad to hear what the hon. the Colonial Secretary has said but I hope that the persons whom Government plans to engage to train Guianese will give them that training so that they may acquire the necessary proficiency by experience. I would also like to say that I hope that those Radiographers to be appointed will stand the necessary scrutiny, because we are not quite sure of their experience. It is very strange that a person who has been working in a hospital and making X-ray film should be said to lack experience. I am sorry that I must be a severe critic of Government in this respect.

Dr. JAGAN: I would like to make a few further comments on this issue. I do not know why there should be all this fuss about experience because, as far as I know from personal experience, radiography is a very simple operation. It is not such a very technical operation as all that.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member include radio therapy?

Dr. JAGAN: As far as I know that is a different matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, it is part of a radiographer's job.

Dr. JAGAN: A radiographer is just like a photographer; he takes pictures.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not profess to be an expert but I know that radio therapy is highly dangerous and difficult work.

Dr. JAGAN: The point I was trying to make is that so far as the picture-taking aspect of the work is concerned there are only two things which a radiographer is called upon to do. One is the positioning of the patient in relation to the part of the body to be X-rayed, and the other is the time exposure required. I am sure that within a period of two years of study

and training in radiography a person can acquire the necessary amount of education and experience. It does not take that long to know in what position to put a patient, and how many minutes of exposure are required. Assuming that radio therapy is part of the duties of a radiographer, it seems to me that now that we have two radiographers one could do the photography part of the work while the other person who is better qualified could look after the more technical aspect of radio therapy. If the lady in question is said not have experience in radio therapy that difficulty could easily be overcome. I know that there is a good deal of work to be done in that direction, but if one arrangement I suggest was adopted I think the same amount of work would be done as was done before the second Radiographer was appointed. If the duties were divided, as I suggest, I am sure the lady in question, with the training she has received abroad, would acquire the necessary experience to do the Radiographer's work and, if necessary, even the radio therapy aspect of the work.

Mr. SMELLIE: When the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) spoke for the first time I understood him to say that Finance Committee had recommended that the services of this officer should be retained in order to enable her to acquire further training, but the record in the minutes of Finance Committee of February 14 state :

"After discussion the Committee agreed to recommend that arrangements should be made for the required practical experience for Radiographers to be acquired locally."

I think that is a very different thing.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I was about to correct the impression given by the hon. Member, and I am very glad that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Smellie, has done so, but I would ask hon. Members not to pursue this matter further. It is a fact that in a comparatively small X-ray Department, such as we have here, compared with some of the largest hospitals in England, it is essential that the Radiographer should have long experience, and

I can assure hon. Members that the Radiographers we have had up to now did possess considerable experience elsewhere before they were appointed here. The Radiographer who is now employed at the Public Hospital had, I believe, at least 8 or 10 years' experience in radiography work since she obtained her diploma, the M.S.R., and before she was appointed here, and I remember having read in her papers that she was assisting in radio therapy work in the Colony in which she was employed before coming here. Similarly, the Radiographer who recently left the Colony and has not returned, had at least seven years' experience before coming here. That is to say that after she qualified and obtained her M.S.R. diploma she was appointed to a hospital as an assistant, then transferred elsewhere again as an assistant, and then she did private work, becoming senior Radiographer and afterwards Radiographer in charge of a large X-ray Department.

So that we try in this Colony to get Radiographers of experience, but hon. Members were perfectly correct in insisting in Finance Committee on recommending that facilities should be provided here so that our own people who qualify academically in this particular profession could be granted opportunities for acquiring experience here and not in England. As the Colonial Secretary has said, it is proposed to invite the Council, after Finance Committee has approved of the principle, to approve of the introduction of posts for at least two Assistant Radiographers to which local candidates will be appointed. That is to say, candidates who have qualified after taking a course and have got the necessary professional qualification without that degree of practical experience which can only be obtained by actual service for a number of years in a hospital. That is something which this particular incident has secured, and I do ask hon. Members to accept that as being a very welcome end to this somewhat publicized incident. It is the best we can do and I think it is right that we should do it.

Mr. DEBIDIN: In answer to the question which was raised by the hon. the Colonial Secretary when he said that

this person referred to did not possess the requisite experience, I merely want to refer to one thing and that is a passage in the recommendation given by the Radiologist of a very large hospital in Dublin, Ireland. **"She has acquired a high degree of efficiency in both the theoretical and practical side of her profession, and I have no doubt she would prove herself a capable radiographer"**. This candidate has her M.S.R. I feel this is an answer to the point made by the hon. the Colonial Secretary and by any other person who wishes to make that point, that she did not possess the requisite experience. It seems to me in all these cases when faced with a difficulty we try to get out of it in some difficult way as well, and that is to increase our staff when it may not be necessary to increase it, having regard to the necessity for increased staff in other Departments. Why should not this Radiographer be appointed when she has the necessary degree and recommendation? One point I wish to make is that the appointment is very significant. It was clearly stated that it had to be temporary, and also that it was pending the appointment of a permanent Radiographer with the regular four years' practical experience after qualification. I particularly asked the D.M.S. where that came from. I stated that it was not taken from the Colonial Regulations at all, and he admitted that it did not come from any Colonial Regulation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: These things are not provided for in the Colonial Regulations.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member has said enough on this matter!

Mr. DEBIDIN: There is only one thing I want to end up with and that is to point out that I made reference to this particular case and to the tetanus case to draw the contrast between persons of other nationalities who are given appointments although not well qualified.

The CHAIRMAN: We have been without adequate medical staff for the past three or four years and the hon. Member knows the difficulties experienced at the hospital within the last few years

and our absolute inability to get staff. That is the very reason why all these persons engaged on agreement have come to us. The hon. Member knows it was a practical impossibility to get a staff.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I am not denying that knowledge nor disputing it. I was using that reference as a contrast where you have a qualified person from an Irish University which, I feel sure, is recognized.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not a University. It is a hospital.

Mr. DEBIDIN: She has the degree of M.S.R. and I am sure whether that degree has been obtained after services and tuition or whatever term of apprenticeship there, with this high qualification there should be no cavilling over the appointment. The hon. Member for Central Demerara made use of an example, and I am going to make use of another. That is, we have doctors who qualified just yesterday and have come to this Colony and are practising, and yet we say they must have four years' experience in surgery before they can be admitted to serve.

The CHAIRMAN: We say that as regards a specialist surgeon.

Dr. JAGAN: You mentioned, Sir, a short while ago that Government was always faced with regular shortages in medical staff. This Government has appointed a Radiologist on a contract which, I believe, was entered into about two or three years ago. This contract will expire some time during this year. I would like to ask Government what it has done to see to it that we get another Radiologist? Are we going to wait until the contract expires to get a Radiologist or will this gentleman be reappointed? If the Government wants to have a solution to this regular shortage of staff it must have a practical way of dealing with it.

The CHAIRMAN: We are appointing medical officers as fast as we can. I have told the hon. Member of the number of scholarships. I have given

Members of this Council time and again particulars of the number of medical officers in training. The hon. Member knows that well. It takes 5 to 6 years to train medical officers. We have got ahead with the scholarship scheme and otherwise we have to depend on students who have the means to go to England and get the qualifications on their own. We are doing a tremendous lot.

Dr. JAGAN: It seems to me that what should have been done in the case of the Radiologist is that one of our local boys who are already graduates should have been sent away to study for a year or two for this post, so that when the contract expires we would have someone to fill the post. At the present time this officer is receiving the fees collected, I think, 50 per cent., which is not so in the case of other specialist officers. That is because he is at a premium and we cannot get another person for the post. It seems that Government should make proper arrangements to get these people trained.

Head passed as recommended by the Finance Committee.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 2 — Public Printing regulated by Contract, \$150,000.

Dr. JAGAN: There are various items under this Head which I would like to speak on. I take item 2 first. Today I have tabled a petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies about the new contract which is intended to be signed by the Government and the **Argosy**, Co., Ltd. According to the first contract which covered a period of five years, the sum voted or agreed upon was \$280,000. Then the **Argosy** Company was given a grant of \$100,000 as an initial advance on that sum, and subsequently they were to be paid \$36,000 per annum. As a result of demands made by the **Argosy** Company for an increase on this global contract for the sum of \$280,000 the Government undertook an investigation of the Company. I have before me a memorandum, No. 15 of 1949 in which is set out an extract of Mr. Davies's report on this Company's activities. I would like to read for hon. Members from this memo-

randum a relevant section so that they would realize that the present amount which is being asked for, a sum of \$193,906 per annum, is really an exorbitant figure. Mr. Davies in his report states that public printing usually gives a profit of approximately 50 per cent., but in the case of Government printing, because of the staid nature of the work over a long period of time that profit is usually lower. He mentioned a profit figure of around 25 to 33.13 per cent. to be the more equitable figure in the case of the Government printing contract. But the real point about his report is this, and I would like with your permission, Sir, to read to hon. Members what he says—

"Following upon this, taking into account that as far as can be ascertained from the information given to me there is approximately a 25 per cent. backlog of work, it is indeed indicated that the Company has only been working on Government printing contract to the extent of three-fourths production, the cost of which has averaged \$66,500 per annum. If in full production total cost of materials, plus working expenses would then be in the region of \$83,000 and a profit of 25 per cent. would show a figure of approximately \$20,000 per annum or \$100,000 in five years."

He recommended that the Company should be given the additional amount of \$70,000, which was agreed upon and voted by this Legislative Council. That increased the sum of \$280,000 to \$350,000 for a period of five years; in other words, \$70,000 per annum. Under the new contract which is to be signed by the Government the sum which is set out in the Finance Committee's Report is \$581,718 for three years, or a sum of \$193,906 per annum. In other words, the increase is from \$70,000 per annum to \$193,906 per annum, nearly a threefold increase.

Let us go back to Mr. Davies's figures for a moment. He says that the Company was doing about three-fourths of the total amount of work which they were pleased to do for the Government year by year, and that was done at an average cost of \$66,500 per annum. If the full amount of work, as set out in the contract, was done it would have cost the Company a total of \$83,000 per annum. Let us assume that from the time this report was written—

the latter part of 1949—to the present time costs have increased; let us say wages costs have increased. We know that the Fletcher Committee recommended a 20 per cent. increase in wages for Government employees. Let us assume 20 per cent increase wages is to be paid to the workers of the Argosy Printing Company, and let us assume again an increase of 20 per cent. in the cost of paper and other printing materials. That will give an additional amount of approximately \$20,000. So that if the then cost to the Company was \$83,000 to do the total amount of Government printing, then today it would cost them an additional 20 per cent. increase for wages and cost of materials or a sum of nearly \$100,000. Let us thereon add a sum of 25 per cent. for profits, that would be in the vicinity of \$125,000. If we are using the figures of the report of Mr. Davies, (apparently he went into this matter very carefully) how is it that \$125,000, based on his calculation, is raised to \$193,906? Certainly something is wrong here. It is a pity the hon. the Deputy President of this Council (Mr. C. V. Wight) is not here to support me in this argument. I notice he has come back from England and only one question is uppermost in his mind.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member stick to the Estimates?

Dr. JAGAN: Anyway I am asking that the Government should not enter into this contract pending the decision of the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the petition which I have tabled today, because I feel that this is one time when hold-up tactics are being used against Government. If a man in the street points a gun at another and takes away his money he would himself in prison, and being prosecuted and persecuted by the Attorney-General and his officers.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We do prosecute but not persecute!

Dr. JAGAN: In this case this is really a hold-up method to get money from Government, without a gun, it is true. I want to say that three years from now, if Government signs that contract it would be in no better position, and the same thing would recur because there is

no other printing company in Georgetown capable to do this printing. Government was very generous towards the Argosy Company in giving them an initial advance of \$100,000. I know that many people would be glad to get \$100,000 from Government today to set up a printery, and probably do Government printing at the same figure it was done for before. I see the hon. the Financial Secretary is laughing, but that is true. Has the Government found out whether anybody would like to set up a printery to do its printing?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: Yes, Sir. We called for tenders and even "Thunder" could have tendered.

Dr. JAGAN: If the hon. the Financial Secretary would give \$100,000 to the tenderer we would do the contract at the original price and we would give a guarantee too. It is true that tenders were called for, but may I suggest that all these printing presses in Georgetown are practically owned by the same people? Examine the shareholders and the directors and you will see that these companies are interlocked in their directorate, the same people being the bosses. So you are not going to get very much variation so far as that is concerned, and Government will not be in a better position three years from now. I am strongly suggesting to Government that this contract should not be entered upon, and that this sum should be taken out of the Estimates for the time being.

We were told when we gave the additional \$70,000 that the Company was going to bring up all its printing backlog, but up to now we have not got that. We gave the money but the promise has not been carried out. I am suggesting that Government reopen the matter for tenders and, if necessary (the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) mentioned some time ago the case of the printery at the Mental Hospital Berbice, an electric printing plant there is not in use at the present time) Government would do well to purchase one or two linotype machines and maybe another electric machine to be used in conjunction with the Technical

Institute and carry out some of its printing which is really urgent, and if necessary we should advertise for tenders from the Government Printers in the other territories, so that matters not very urgent can be done by them. The work would be done much cheaper than the figures set out here. I do hope that other Members would support this view.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: We threshed all this out in Finance Committee, and I fully expected the hon. Member would have his say publicly, which he has done. I must in reply say that Government called for tenders a long while ago in order to give an opportunity to possible tenderers in British Guiana to come forward and offer to do this work. Apart from the "Daily Argosy" and the "Daily Chronicle" printeries, there are at least two others who may be able to do the work—the "Graphic" and the "B.G. Lithographic" printeries. In the advertisement for tenders it was stated that the work is subdivided into sections in the hope that tenders would be received from different firms for the different sections and, as I explained in Finance Committee, the only tenders received were from the "Daily Argosy" and the "Daily Chronicle". It is true that the "Lithographic" company did put in a tender for a certain section of the work—forms—but that tender was so excessive in its amount as to be not worth while considering for a moment. And so we came down to negotiations with the "Argosy" and the "Chronicle" together and, as I explained in Finance Committee what is proposed now is that the contract be awarded to our long established contract printers the "Argosy" with the right to assign or allocate part of the work to the "Chronicle" so that we would be able to get the work faster and better done. It is quite conceivable that one of these two firms would do certain parts of the work better and more efficiently than the other.

As regards the figure, let us be quite frank about it. The contract which is about to expire at the end of March, a five-year contract with the "Argosy", was an extremely bad one for that firm. They should never, speaking after the event, have entered into it. In these

times no businessman in his senses would venture to enter into a five-year contract for a fixed figure for a new undertaking. The "Argosy" was just burnt out completely and only then had come into production in new expensive premises. The contract was quite bad from their point of view, as it turned out. I am satisfied they made no profit but did it at a loss. It is true that Mr. Davies, the Executive Commissioner of Income Tax with their permission looked into their accounts in order to establish for them a case for an increase. It is true that on his representation the Finance Committee and subsequently this Council approved of an increase of 25 per cent. on the old contract. It is also true Mr. Davies, also recommended an increase up to 33 1/3 per cent. at that time and we have granted 25%. Since then the cost went up again and the Argosy Company made representation for a further increase, and we do agree on examination of the figures they were still under this contract not paying their way. That is completely true we are satisfied about that.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. We have just been looking at the Trinidad Estimates where they have a Printery. I can assure hon. Members that in 1950 the Trinidad Estimates for staff, materials and the operational expenses of the Government Printery is \$100,000 more than the figure which is put in this draft Estimates, and that Trinidad figure excludes anything for superannuation for the very large staff they run, anything for depreciation or replacement charges. It excludes anything for interest on capital or what the hon. Member calls profits. So on that basis alone I feel hon. Members would take it they are not being extravagant in allowing the figure on which we propose to enter this new three-year contract. The establishment of a Government Printery in British Guiana would have been a very expensive business even if it was done five or ten years ago, and today it would be madness to do so as it would cost a tremendous amount of money. From the Colony's point of view it would be a waste of capital. We have in the Colony private firms with equipment for producing the work, and we are satisfied that the Colony and the

people are not being gulled in these contracts, and we are quite satisfied that we ought to use that equipment. To bring additional equipment of the same type would be an economic mistake.

After the fullest consideration by all the Officers of this Government who have some knowledge of this matter, we are satisfied that this contract we are about to enter into is not a bad bargain for British Guiana and the tenderers are not going to make enormous or excessive profits out of it. The very fact that the two other firms in the country who may have

done so were not willing to tender and were not willing to equip themselves to tender, shows that it could not be a very profitable undertaking. I feel sure that the smaller firms going in for printing think that about it themselves. They have not even dreamt of getting together in a co-operative movement and attempting to tender. We are doing the best we can in our situation

At this stage the Council resumed and adjourned to the following day at 2 p.m.