

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Friday, 10th October, 1941.*

The Council met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. G. D. OWEN, C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

### PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, (Acting), Mr. G. C. GREEN, M.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M.C., K.C.

The Hon. F. Dias, O.B.E., (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. J. S. Dash, Director of Agriculture.

The Hon. E. G. Woolford, K.C., (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. E. F. McDavid, M.B.E., Colonial Treasurer.

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, O.B.E., (Georgetown North).

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E., (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. W. A. D'Andrade, ●.B.E., Comptroller of Customs.

The Hon. N. M. MacLennan, Director of Medical Services.

The Hon. M. B. Laing, O.B.E., Commissioner of Labour and Local Government.

The Hon. L. G. Crease, Director of Education.

The Hon. B. R. Wood, Conservator of Forests.

The Hon. J. Elazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. I. De Aguiar (Central Demerara).

The Hon. Jung Bahadur Singh (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. E. M. Walcott (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. C. R. Jacob (North-Western District).

The Hon. J. W. Jackson (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. F. A. Mackey (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. T. Lee, (Essequibo River).

### MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 9th of October, 1941, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

### ORDER OF THE DAY.

#### FINAL SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE 1940.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the final statement of supplementary expenditure for the year 1940, additional to that included in the Schedules of Additional Provision for the year 1940, already passed by the Legislative Council.

#### MEDICAL—HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.

Mr. JACOB: When the Council adjourned yesterday afternoon I was referring to the shortage of certain necessary comforts for the sick at the Public Hospital, Georgetown—something I had seen myself and the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) had also seen together with the Resident Surgeon. I was informed—I think I have to stress this on every occasion I get up to speak here—by people throughout the Colony that that state of affairs does not only exist in Georgetown but in nearly all the public hospitals in the Colony, and having seen those conditions ourselves on a particular evening at the Georgetown Hospital, I am strongly of the opinion that they exist in other public hospitals of the Colony. I am not saying that they exist to any greater extent, maybe to a lesser extent, but if the Hospital in Georgetown, which is directly under the supervision of the Director of Medical Services, is lacking in those minimum of comforts one can imagine what the position is in the other institutions of

the Colony. I cannot imagine such conditions possible with all the medical experts we have here. I do not claim to be an expert in anything. I do not even claim to be a teacher. I claim to be a young man without even a secondary education or University education. I have managed to be where I am by dint of perseverance and hard work. I certainly think every single individual in this Council and every human being will agree with me that it is undesirable for a sick person to lie on the floor on a rough mattress without a sheet and in some cases without a pillow, and in other cases with a pillow without a case, and without a blanket. I cannot understand how those conditions can be permitted in any civilized country, especially a Crown Colony. This is a Crown Colony and things like those are occurring in a British Crown Colony under the direct control of experts. We were able to show a surplus of nearly a million dollars last year. I believe applications were made for those necessary comforts but they were not granted. I am not in a position to make a definite statement but I believe so; I was told so. I have noticed applications being made for all kinds of things, unnecessary expenditure, and they have been granted.

There is the question of contamination. A patient is discharged from the Hospital to-day and to-morrow the same mattress without a sheet and a pillow without a sack have to be used by another patient. Is it any wonder that the Hospital is overcrowded? Is it any wonder that the expenditure on preventable diseases and medicines has to be increased year after year? I am not a medical expert; I do not wish to be an expert in anything, but my ordinary commonsense with my very limited education tells me that it is extremely bad that a sick in a Government institution should be treated under such conditions. I am told further that there are seven doctors at the Georgetown Hospital besides the Resident Surgeon and the Assistant Surgeon—nine altogether, including the V.D. and the Eye specialist—and if a patient is seen once in the morning he is not seen again until the following day, except in very exceptional circumstances. I do not know if that is strictly correct, but that information has been given to me, and by nurses. Probably I will be asked to give the names of the nurses and submit a written communica-

tion so that my statement can be verified. I will not be prepared to give the name of any person who gives me confidential information. I was told so and I believe it.

Prior to that visit I addressed a letter to the Director of Medical Services complaining about the Seamen's Ward, and other Wards; about vermin being found on things in the Hospital, and about the shocking neglect of one of the doctors. I have all those things in writing. That letter was somewhat satisfactorily answered, but not wholly. That was some time ago. I have made complaints in the past about the treatment meted out to the helpless poor who must find themselves at the Hospital. The attention given by the doctors in the institution itself and also that given at the Out-patients Department should be better in view of the staff of doctors. I do not know what the doctors do, and I am not concerned either, but I am concerned with the complaints I receive and with the administration of the Hospital. If a satisfactory explanation is offered I may accept it.

There is a lot of talk about Tuberculosis. I am told there is no separate place for suspects of "T.B." to be treated pending fuller diagnosis as to what the patients are really suffering from. For instance, a suspect is put amongst confirmed "T.B." patients. If that is true then something is seriously wrong. Suspected cases should be kept elsewhere. They should not be mixed with ordinary patients or with confirmed "T.B." cases. That is how I feel about it although I am not an expert. I am told further that there is no special mark on ware and cutlery used by patients suffering from contagious diseases. I strongly recommend that a different type of ware and cutlery be kept for the use of such patients if we are to check the spread of contagious diseases. I do not want to be accused of being a University graduate, an engineer or even a barrister-at-law. I make the complaint that conditions are very deplorable at the Public Hospital, Georgetown, and I trust that now that there are funds those minimum comforts will be provided at those public institutions.

As regards the cause which was so ably advocated by my friend, the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) yesterday

afternoon, I do not know how in view of the conditions I have referred to, the incident in connection with the scrubbing of the floors could have been carried to such a stage as to cause people who have given satisfactory service for a number of years to be dismissed. Whether on the ground of rudeness or insubordination to a particular individual I do not think such drastic action should have been taken to put so many people out of employment. I think it will be agreed that there are strong differences of opinion as to which method of scrubbing the floor is correct. I am not advocating either method, but I feel as a public man that the matter should not have gone to such an extent as to relieve people of their employment at this time when there is so little employment and so much unemployment in the Colony. Maybe that is one of the reasons why such drastic action was taken. I may be too democratic or too communistic, but a servant should be given every consideration before being dismissed. In view of what has been stated—and I have been told so indirectly—I think other means could have been adopted to remedy that unfortunate situation.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have also visited the Public Hospital on several occasions and I was astounded with what I saw. The number of derelicts there astounded me, and I observed too that the accommodation was not sufficient. The beds were already too close together and there was no room to put other beds. What astounded me most was the number of derelicts we have in this country, and I wondered how it was possible to relieve the congestion at the Hospital. I do not think the doctors are to be blamed. Dr. Gomes is a creole of the Colony and one of whom we have reason to be proud as an ideal medical practitioner. Then there is Mr. Grierson, who we all know, stands in the first rank of surgeons. They are on the spot. To conceive that a doctor should visit each patient in the Hospital more than once a day or even once a day is impossible; it cannot be done. Of all men we cannot blame the Director of Medical Services for that state of affairs, or make him feel that we are seeking a quarrel with him. It is a pitiable thing that we have to build a larger hospital.

Where I want to indict Government is

on the ground that some of those people are suffering from malnutrition. I think if the Director's attention was drawn to some of those defects at the Hospital he would take steps to remedy some of them. I have no doubt that he has seen them but he cannot make bricks without straw. There is much to be desired in the general accommodation and treatment at the Hospital, but I do not think it can be laid at the door of the Director of Medical Services, the doctors at the Hospital or even the unfortunate nurses. Just imagine one nurse having 20 or 30 patients to look after, and when she is attending to No. 1 No. 30 is calling for something! Somebody must be neglected, at least for a little time. We know that these conditions exist and when we bring them to the notice of Government it is with the hope that Government will take steps to see if they can be alleviated, and not necessarily to cast blame on any individual.

The hon. Member has mentioned the case I referred to yesterday. That is a matter in which I think the medical staff should have something to say, because it has been stated by a doctor that scrubbing on the knees leads to a certain deformity which nobody wants. Surely the medical profession must be very lacking in genius—I know they are not; I would say want of thought—if it cannot devise some means whereby these wardmaids can be prevented from engaging in a task which must necessarily result in deformity of the individual. I think that dismissal was too drastic an action against those people who protested against scrubbing in that way.

The Director must have recommended to Government increased accommodation and other comforts at the Hospital. If Government can afford the money those things should be done, but I do not think lack of administration has very much to do with the condition of things as we see it.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I have not risen to disclaim or acclaim my qualifications because *en passant* one would be inclined to indulge in the revelry of asking whether the class of individual who preys on the producer of any commodity by purchasing it for as small an amount as possible and selling it elsewhere at a handsome profit

benefits the community or social structure in any shape or form? I have really risen to suggest for the earnest consideration of Government the question of the extension of the Public Hospital and the Alms House, even if it necessitates approaching the Comptroller for Development and Welfare for the West Indies. He has himself indicated at several places that he is prepared, if schemes are put up to him, to approve of any such schemes notwithstanding the expenditure which may be involved. I consider the improvement of the Hospital and the Alms House are too such schemes which need the greatest assistance at the moment in this Colony. I think if the matter were developed along general lines it would be all we can desire and all we can urge that Government should do.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: It would appear that there has been a wholesale dismissal of wardmaids, and that between 30 and 35 women have been put on the street to find new employment. I presume that they all have dependents, and one does not know how many people have been embarrassed as result of their losing their employment. There must have been some system in operation at the Hospital before the introduction of this drastic method of scrubbing the floors. Was that system not satisfactory all these years? The trouble has arisen since the new Superintendent of Nurses came to the Hospital and changed the system. I think if anyone wishes to change a system that existed for years some discretion should be exercised; the change should be enforced gradually. I am appealing to Government to re-consider the matter and mete out justice to those wardmaids.

Mr. WALCOTT: I have listened with considerable interest to the remarks made by the various speakers. I have visited the Hospital on one or two occasions quite recently and I admit that the patients at the Hospital are dirty and that the Hospital is not nearly as clean as one would like to see it, but how can we expect it to be otherwise if the moment those in charge try to enforce discipline, Members get up here and criticize the people who have been brought in to try to make matters better than they are at present? I think it is manifestly unfair to the people in charge of the institution that they should be criticized for trying to do what I con-

sider is their duty, and I would appeal to those Members who have spoken so strongly about it that they should consider the whole position seriously before they make remarks of the kind which have been made here as regards the 35 wardmaids who were dismissed because they refused to go down on their knees and scrub the floor. I would like to know if there is any Member of this Council who lives in his own house and who does not have it scrubbed? I would like him to tell this Council honestly whether that is not so.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Question.

Mr. WALCOTT: I would like proof to the contrary. Perhaps the hon. Member is the exception.

Mr. ELEAZAR: My wife has treated the floor of our house in such a way that it does not need to be scrubbed at all. I know of houses where that is done and no scrubbing is necessary.

Mr. WALCOTT: I repeat what I said just now—that every Member or practically every Member sitting here has had the floor of his house scrubbed. I know I do because I have not such a thing as a stone. Some Members seem to think that scrubbing is only done in this Hospital. I know that in Barbados, Trinidad, Jamaica and Curacao the floors are scrubbed and scrubbed very thoroughly. In addition to that, as the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) remarked, 35 persons have been put out of work, but 35 new persons have taken their places. Therefore it seems that the unemployment will not be any greater than it was before those 35 persons were discharged for refusing to do their duty, rightly I consider. I would hate to be in the position of any Matron of a hospital or anybody in charge of an institution in this Colony—it is a most damnably unfortunate position to be placed in—and expected to do my duty and do it honestly and faithfully and to be criticized for doing it when it came to a question of colour. There is no question of colour about it. If we are to be satisfied to do without people better qualified to carry on the work in this Colony than those we have available locally, then do not bring them in to be insulted. That is my opinion of the matter. I am not going to stand the whole day talking about it, although I can spend



a lot of time doing so. Members should think of the people they are criticizing and the jobs they have to do.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If that speech refers to me I must tell the hon. Member that I am one of those who never give one single thought to class, colour or creed. I know as an African pure and simple that I am a man, and if I were white I would be somebody else. I am proud to be what I am and if I changed my skin I would be somebody else. For the same reason I do not charge any man because of his colour. The question of complexion or colour is the greatest accident in this world. No man has any choice as to what colour he is going to have. It is absurd to talk like that. The hon. Member should have more sense than to charge people on the ground of colour. It is a question of an innovation brought in by a subordinate, which her superiors for ages have never seen fit to introduce, and dumped down upon other subordinates, and because they protest they are put on the street for disobedience of orders. If you are going to say that this person is more qualified than the others you will have to begin with the Director of Medical Services who has been here several years, and include Dr. Gomes and Mr. Grierson—all from hospitals in England, and yet that wrong method has been going on until this person has come with all the wisdom in the world. God forbid. I rose to deplore the statement that I have raised the question of colour. The hon. Member has known me for some time. I have advocated the cause of all and sundry at all times, and I have called attention to what I considered something which ought not to be.

Mr. JACOB: I was able to hear nearly every word of what the hon. Mr. Walcott said, but I was not in the fortunate position to hear all that other hon. Members have said. Lately the hon. Mr. Walcott has not been using correct phrases here. He said he knew of conditions in Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica where the floors of hospitals were properly scrubbed. I would like him to think that over a bit, but the point I wish to make is that so far as I am informed the system at this Hospital had been in operation for over 20 years, and while the innovation may be correct the method of putting it into force was far from satisfactory. The wardmaids were actually tan-

talized—if that word is permissible here—and told “You must do it.” That was told to me. I am not fully acquainted with all the facts but I do not think my friend on my right (Mr. Walcott) has given us the benefit of his full experience in this Council lately. I will not say any more.

Mr. WALCOTT: I do not think I have had the opportunity as most of the time has been taken up with platitudes from the Member on my left. (Mr. Jacob).

Mr. LEE: I am very fortunate that I had to enquire into the complaints made by the wardmaids and I feel that Government has not acted equitably towards them. Nor have the Heads of the Department acted in a manner that can be considered reasonable at the present time. Government seems to recognize trades union and unionism in the Colony, and is trying to teach the workers that in every case that it is possible they should ask for arbitration or conciliation. That has been done in this case. To my knowledge, and to the knowledge of Government, they asked that their dismissal be suspended until an enquiry had been made into the matter and their complaints listened to in order to see whether they were just or not. In my opinion they were just. Many of those people were employed as wardmaids knowing the conditions of their employment. They knew they had to wash the floors in a particular manner and they accepted the employment under those conditions. The new Superintendent, perhaps on instructions, introduced new conditions into their contract of service. They asked that they should be heard before those new conditions were imposed, but the Superintendent refused to give them a hearing to see whether they would accept the new conditions or not. Further than that, they say that scrubbing is more laborious than the method they were accustomed to use, and that if they were compelled to scrub the floors they would ask for better wages, which every worker has the right to do.

The CHAIRMAN: Do I understand the hon. Member to say that they said that if they were required to scrub the floors they would ask for higher wages?

Mr. LEE: Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: Then, obviously, they had not been scrubbing the floors.

Mr. LEE: They were scrubbing in the manner in which they knew at the time of their employment they had to do it. They used brooms and brushes. If new conditions of employment are introduced into their contract of service the workers should be given the right to say whether they would accept those conditions or not. They were not given that right and were dismissed arbitrarily. I am appealing to Your Excellency to re-consider the case of those wardmaids, many of whom have given faithful service to Government for over 20 years. They were turned out because they refused to scrub on their knees. I feel that if Government is going to assist unionism in this Colony it should show the first example. When the wardmaids asked for a suspension of their dismissal in order that the matter might be investigated and their request was not granted the only conclusion one can arrive at is that this Government does not want to help trade unionism and the workers at all. I feel so and they feel so too. They were given one month's notice. I have enquired and I have been told that in many of the hospitals in England scrubbing is not done in the manner in which the new Superintendent intends it to be done here. If it is not done in any of the large hospitals in England, and if the floors are kept clean by the usual method, I do not see why it should be introduced in this Colony.

Mr. DIAS: I think I have a little experience of the Hospital by reason of being on the Council for a long time, and I am able to express an opinion on some of the points raised here. Like the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) I can claim that I visited the Hospital many years ago in connection with the matter of floor beds, and the late Dr. Rowland informed me that those were cases which had no right to be in the Hospital; they were known as Alms House cases, incurable cases, but the other institution having no accommodation, those people could not be allowed to lie on the roadside and therefore a shelter was provided for them at the Public Hospital.

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction. I never complained about people lying on

the floor; I complained that the minimum of necessary comforts—sheets, pillows, pillow cases and blankets—was not being provided. I have not suggested that there should be additional accommodation. The present accommodation is sufficient.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would ask the hon. Member if he is serious in his statement to the Council that he is satisfied that the accommodation at the Hospital and the Alms House is sufficient.

Mr. JACOB: I have not said anything about the Alms House. I say the accommodation at the Hospital at the moment is sufficient.

Mr. DIAS: I was giving my own experience. I am not here to have any discussion with the hon. Member and I do not propose to have any. I was saying that these floor beds are forced upon the Hospital because the Alms House cannot receive those patients on account of lack of accommodation there. On the abolition of the Orphan Asylum a suggestion was made to Government that the Hospital should be relieved of the patients it was then taking by converting the Orphan Asylum building into some kind of shelter, but Government wanted Queen's College to go there and the result is that the Hospital has been carrying this load up to this day. The hon. Member says he is not complaining about the floor beds but about bed sheets. I know nothing about bed sheets or pillows. I am more concerned with that old story which has been going on for years, and the explanation given by Government is that the Colony has not been able to afford the expenditure to enlarge the Hospital. Hospital cases proper can be safely and conveniently accommodated there were it not for this run upon it by cases from another institution. I do not know if the hon. Member has visited English hospitals. If he has he would have seen that the beds are fairly well separated from each other and are not close up together. If the beds are practically jammed together at the Georgetown Hospital, as has been said here, it is a necessity which has arisen by reason of having to make space on the floor for people who have no right there. It is easy to condemn, but hon. Members should make themselves acquainted in the first instance with the circumstances which

have led to that condition of things at the Hospital before criticizing the Hospital itself. The man who fails to advocate a remedy is a man who should be the last to criticize, because criticism is worth nothing except it is followed up by some suggestion of a remedy. The remedy is quite easy if Government could find the money. Extend the Alms House and you will have all the accommodation necessary at the Hospital.

With regard to the other story about the dismissal of the wardmaids I know nothing except what I have heard in a casual way and read in the newspapers, but in my opinion the whole thing seems to be one of discipline. The last speaker, the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee), came in late and I believe there is some excuse for him; he did not understand what was going on. He spoke about the wardmaids having gone there under a special contract to do the work in a special way. I cannot conceive of any special contract in such circumstances, nor is it sensible to say that because an employee came in to work in my office when I kept my books in a certain way, and I shifted my books to another position I had introduced new conditions of service. I have not heard such an absurdity in my life. The hon. Member did not know what he was talking about. Does he not make improvements in his business or his house? If I could not require my work to be done in another way it would be a sorry state of affairs for anybody. Hon. Members are asking for improvements at the Hospital. Would it be justifiable for the Superintendent to say "Oh no, when I came I found a dirty hospital and I will continue to keep it in that condition?" I have seen people all over the world; I have done a good deal of travelling and I have seen English girls scrubbing the concrete entrances to their houses. I have said to myself "I wonder if our Amerara girls would ever do that?" It is done at 6 o'clock in the morning. I would like to ask if a scrubber who is engaged to scrub a house does not go on her knees to do it? She does it voluntarily. If the Superintendent is endeavouring to make the Hospital cleaner, it would be a mistake to interfere with the discipline she is seeking to exercise, because it would do the institution more harm. I am very much concerned about discipline anywhere, and especially in an institution like a

hospital where there are hundreds of employees. Unless people understand that they must obey orders nothing can be done.

I happened to see from my office in Croal Street a procession of ladies who, I was told, were wardmaids going up into the Law Courts. The first thing that struck me was that if they had nominated two or three of their number to ventilate their grievance and remained at the Hospital to carry on their work it would have been a far more sensible thing to do. Instead of that a large body of employees left the institution which, in my opinion, was a great error on their part. The point was whether they were given lawful orders and whether they disobeyed those orders. The authorities having decided, I am not prepared to interfere.

Mr. JACOB: The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) being absent temporarily I think I should say something in reply to the hon. Mr. Dias. If I understood him correctly he made two points—one that those people were employed at the Hospital under certain general conditions which had been in operation for a period of 30 years. While some of the wardmaids objected to the work being done in a different manner all may not have objected. They asked for consideration as regards pay and time to re-consider the matter. Being trade unionists they expected such consideration would have been given to them, but they were given no consideration at all, I understand. The point my friend was making was that Government should have given them an opportunity to represent their case; if necessary by arbitration, and I think there is a great difference in that from what the hon. Mr. Dias stated. He says he cannot see any difference if wardmaids had been scrubbing the floors in a particular way for 30 years and they are now told to go down on their knees to do it. I am told further that they were not promised disinfectant to be used after scrubbing. The matter cannot be adequately debated here.

Dr. MACLENNAN (Director of Medical Services): I am always very sympathetic with those hon. Members who champion the poorer class workers in the Government Service. With respect to the question of the wardmaids at the Hospital



I was absent from the Colony when the incident occurred, but I most heartily endorse the action taken by the Authorities during my absence. I have been in a great many hospitals in all parts of the world but never have I seen a hospital with wooden floors in which those floors were not scrubbed. It is impossible to keep hospital floors clean without scrubbing, particularly when they are apt to be stained with blood and excreta. It is true that in many modern hospitals on the Continent and in England the floors are usually made of some impervious material and very often treated with some special polish, but although they may not have to be scrubbed at regular intervals they require scrubbing at certain intervals. Furthermore they frequently require polishing, which is done on the knees and hands in the same way as scrubbing is done. In this particular instance I may say that the hon. Member's question has been so ably answered by the hon. Mr. Walcott and the hon. Mr. Dias that there is very little left for me to say, but I do feel that the wardmaids have taken the wrong line in the matter. They were given every opportunity to return to their work; they were given the opportunity of going to a Medical Board to see whether they were fit to go on their knees, but not a single wardmaid took that step. I have felt for them but I think they should have carried out their duties on the instruction of the Nurse-Superintendent, but that they refused to do so.

As regards the Nurse-Superintendent, who has been the subject of a certain amount of criticism, I think it was the hon. Member for Berbice River, (Mr. Eleazar) who said she most probably had come from some obscure Colony—Nigeria, Hong-Kong, or some part of the world termed "The East." I may say that she came from that great paragon of Colonies—Barbados—and on my recent visit to that island I was attacked on all sides by the staff of the Hospital and by the public generally for having stolen one of the best Divisional Sisters they ever had. We have a splendid Nurse-Superintendent and she is doing her utmost to keep the Hospital in order. If you give her support you will see a really clean Hospital.

Remarks were made by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob)

regarding his visit to the Hospital. We are always glad to have visits from Members of the Council and I do wish they would come oftener. The Resident Surgeon has told me that during the 14 years he has been at the Hospital hardly a single Member has gone to see the Hospital. Elected Members and all doctors are Official Visitors to the Hospital and we do welcome them and are glad to have their views. It helps me to have their views on the Hospital, to see where we can improve it. The fact remains that the whole trouble at the Hospital is overcrowding. There is no question about that. The average number of floor beds varies from 40 to 100. Every day the medical officer on duty at the Out-Patients Department is told how many vacant beds there are, and he endeavours to his utmost to try not to overload the Wards, but it is practically impossible to avoid it. People go to the Out-Patients Department who may not be really very ill but in a poor condition and hungry, and the medical officer cannot refuse to take them in. A great many of those cases are definitely Alms House cases, as I have said before, and it is not fair that the Hospital should have to admit those cases.

When we have an overloaded Hospital of that kind it must from time to time be quite obvious to hon. Members that we may be short of mattresses, sheets, blankets, &c. Frequently we have in Hospital cases of dysentery, etc., which may contaminate mattresses, sheets and blankets which have to be removed and replaced, and if a large number of such cases come in in a day, it is quite possible that there may be a shortage of linen or mattresses. If mattresses and linen are contaminated in any way they have to be disinfected, and that is always done before they are returned to the Wards. I think on the occasion of the visit of the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob), he noticed a shortage of those things, and that was probably the reason for it. We make our own mattresses at the Hospital and we are dependent on the Prisons Department for the fibre. Very frequently mattresses have to be condemned and sometimes the Prisons Department has not the material available, the result is that we have a temporary shortage, but generally speaking, from the point of view of that type of equipment we are not too badly off. With regard to the remark that the other hos-



pitals are suffering in the same way, I definitely say "No." I have never had any complaints from the Hospitals at New Amsterdam, Suddie, Bartica and the North West District of lack of that type of equipment; I think it is centred in Georgetown, due not to the fault of the Hospital itself, but to the fact that we have to take in cases which are really not hospital cases.

The hon. Member for North Western District also mentioned the question of infectious diseases. Those are always kept in the Isolation Ward, and in that particular Ward the utensils used are kept in the Ward as far as possible, but on certain occasions there may be over-crowding there and cases have to be isolated in some of the other Wards. This again is due to lack of sufficient accommodation, but it seems quite obvious to all that the time has come to think about the question of having a new Hospital in Georgetown. It was very clearly pointed out to me when I first came to the Colony, that sooner or later we would have to get down to rebuilding the Hospital or building an entirely new Hospital. I pointed this out to Sir Frank Stockdale when I went to Trinidad recently, and I had the opportunity of seeing the new hospital building there. Perhaps hon. Members do not know that the Trinidad Government has engaged a very distinguished firm of British architects, one of whom is at present in the Colony, to remodel and reconstruct the Port-of-Spain Hospital. Already a certain amount of work has been done and done extremely well. While I was there I was able to persuade the Medical Adviser to Sir Frank Stockdale that the time had come when we should take initial steps towards getting a new hospital here and I am very glad to say now that an important initial step in that direction has been taken. The Comptroller has promised us to pay the expenses of the hospital architect at present in Trinidad to come here and draw up plans for our future hospital. It may be that construction will not start until after the war, but the initial steps of drawing up plans, clearing the land and the fixing of compensation take a lot of negotiation. We hope to have this architect over very shortly, when he will go into the whole question. I feel that this Colony has to get down to brass tacks because the Georgetown Hospital has grown up piecemeal over many years. It is the most difficult hos-

pital to administer I have ever seen. Fancy having a public road running through the Hospital compound! It is absurd, and the medical staff and the nursing staff have an extremely difficult job. I have great sympathy for them and I think they are doing extremely well.

I regret very much that this unfortunate episode has arisen in connection with the Band of the Mental Hospital. The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) raised the point and I feel I must answer him. The position is that the Members of the Mental Hospital Band are partly employees of the Hospital and partly outsiders. They are all paid a certain amount of money—about \$3 per month—from the Entertainment Fund which is limited. On this particular occasion—a cricket match—the Band refused to play. They were asked by the Superintendent their reason for refusing and they said they would not play unless they got more money. I think the Band took a wrong line there. They should have played under protest, had their protest reported to me and I would have gone into the matter. But they refused point blank to play. I promise the hon. Member that I will endeavour to reinstate the Band as soon as possible. I have asked the Superintendent to get the members of the Band together, and I hope he will put their case in writing. I will be able to see what their grievances are, and if they are just they will be reinstated. I know the Superintendent is very anxious to get the Band together again. I think in this instance they were disgruntled because they thought they should have had a little more money from outside.

I do not like to sound a note of warning but I feel I must do it. From time to time I get letters from Members of the Council and from people outside asking me to intervene in questions of discipline between the various Hospital Superintendents and members of their staff who have refused to obey orders or carry out their duties. Whenever I get those letters I always try as far as possible to be just, fair and tolerant, and I think that in every case of that description we have made a proper investigation and given the complaint a fair hearing, but I will say this: that whatever happens in other Departments of Government there is one thing we must have in the Medical Department and that is discip-

line. A breach of discipline in a public hospital, the failure of an employee to carry out his duty, or a nurse sleeping on duty may mean the death of a patient. The question of discipline in a medical institution is definitely more important than in other Departments, and in a mental hospital it is even more important. If through a breach of discipline an inmate should develop a homicidal tendency it may mean the death of several inmates of the institution. Lest in future I may be accused of being intolerant or unjust, hon. Members must remember that we must have discipline in medical institutions.

Mr. JACOB: I think I can say that we have had a fairly satisfactory reply to several points, but I do not think it was satisfactory on one or two points. My complaint is not so much as regards lack of accommodation at the Hospital but the shortage of sheets, mattresses, pillows, pillow cases and blankets, and I would be interested to learn if since my visit an order has been put in for further supplies of those necessary articles. I do not know what surplus supplies are kept, but if from experience it is found that there is overcrowding—and we must expect overcrowding at all times—it is necessary to have a fair stock of those things.

I am interested to hear what is the position to-day regarding the eastern wing of the southern block of the Hospital. On the night of our visit that Ward was not occupied at all. A few pieces of old wood were lying about and I think there was accommodation for at least 50 patients in that wing. Probably we may be told why that accommodation was not available. I understood that night that that accommodation had not been available for several months before. I do not know whether it is available now. Perhaps because another Department is involved and because of various other things which we were told here yesterday and the day before, the work was not being carried on on the occasion of our visit. Perhaps something over at the Best Hospital is responsible, but that has not been brought out at all. I should like to be informed when that Ward will be made available.

I have been told that when a patient is admitted into the Hospital in the morning he hardly gets anything to eat until the fol-

lowing day. For instance, a patient from the country comes to Georgetown to go to the Hospital. He has been travelling several hours; he is admitted and carried into the Ward and may not have had anything to eat for several hours before. That is the general complaint—that patients get nothing to eat for several hours after admission. I think some provision ought to be made in the dietary for cases of that kind.

Dr. MACLENNAN: I am very surprised to hear what the hon. Member has said and I cannot definitely state whether he is correct or not. I shall certainly put that question in the hands of the Resident Surgeon. If patients are not given anything for several hours after their admission in Hospital there must be something wrong and it will be rectified.

With regard to the other point raised by the hon. Member I wish to say that the portion of the southern block of the Hospital referred to by him is under reconstruction by the Public Works Department and we cannot utilize that space just now for that reason.

Mr. JACOB: The question is how long was it under reconstruction and how long will it remain so?

Dr. MACLENNAN: That is a question for another Department. I do not know how long it will take. We hope to relieve the congestion at the Hospital a little when the Best Hospital is opened very shortly. Furthermore we have a new Ward for V.D. cases, and that will relieve to some extent the congestion in the main Hospital.

Mr. JACOB: Will Government state definitely how long that portion of the Hospital has been under reconstruction, and how long it will remain so?

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the hon. Member give written notice of those questions; I am not prepared to answer them now.

Mr. JACOB: I am asking the question so that it will be recorded in the report of the debate—how long has it been under reconstruction; how long will it remain so, and what accommodation will it provide? I said that the accommodation

at the Hospital is ample. By that I mean that if the whole of the Hospital was available the accommodation would be ample. I do not object to patients lying on the floor but I am saying that sufficient use is not being made of the building and sufficient comfort is not being provided.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid it may be inferred from what has been said by one or two Members that these wardmaids were given notice to quit immediately they refused to scrub the floors in the way they were instructed to scrub. In fact one hon. Member said they were shown no consideration at all. I wish to inform hon. Members of the Council of the other side of the story, and I think they will agree with me that a great deal of consideration was shown to them. As Colonial Secretary I had a great deal to do with the matter and I came to the conclusion that they had been ill advised. I was asked one day to receive a representative of the Trade Unions on the subject. I readily agreed and it was the first appointment I made for that day. I asked the acting Director of Medical Services to be present in case he could throw any light on the questions raised. I was told that when the order was issued that the floors would be scrubbed in a particular way the wardmaids, or at any rate some of them, felt that they were returning to the days of slavery. They felt that by scrubbing the floors in that manner they would be looked upon by their friends as slaves. That is the word which was used. I said to the gentleman who had come to see me: "Do you really think yourself that if they scrubbed the floors in that way they could rightly be regarded as slaves?" I added that I hoped not because, if that were so, I employed a slave, as that was the way my house was scrubbed and I was never aware of the fact that the scrubber had complained to anybody; she had never been asked to scrub on her knees. It is the only way to scrub a floor and my scrubber scrubs on her knees. The gentleman, I am glad to say, was frank enough to tell me "Mine does the same thing," and I said to him "I hope you will inform the people who have come to see you on the subject either that you are not in agreement with them that they are slaves or that you employ a slave."

The conversation then continued and he found another excuse. He said: "Well,

the fact of the matter is this: some are too old and some are too ill. One of them is over 60." I said "She has no right to be in the service as the retiring age is 60." He then changed the subject and went to the question of health. I was told that every second person in the colony was suffering from filaria and therefore 50 per cent. of the wardmaids were suffering from filaria, and that a person suffering from filaria could not kneel to scrub a floor. I said I was glad to say I was not suffering from it, but I readily accepted that statement. I then said to the acting Director of Medical Services: "Will you please instruct the Resident Surgeon to have those wardmaids examined, because they cannot be expected to perform a duty for which they are not physically fit. If they are not well enough to do that work there may be some other work which could be assigned to them. If they are too old for that work there may be work elsewhere which they could be given to do." My instructions were carried out that day and the wardmaids were told that those who were not well enough to perform that duty should appear for medical examination. Not one of them appeared. They were given another chance and asked definitely whether they did not intend to be examined, and they said they did not intend to be. In the meantime no notice to quit had been given. I then asked the acting Director of Medical Services to give the wardmaids another chance, that is to tell them, and have it explained to them by himself and by the Resident Surgeon, that it was considered by the Government that there was only one way to scrub wooden floors of a hospital properly and that was the way suggested.

Here I should point out in reply to what the hon. Member said about other hospitals, that I can speak about Trinidad and Barbados, where the Colonial Secretary is on the Board, and as a matter of course the floors are scrubbed in a proper manner and no complaint is made. As a member of the Board I came into contact with the present Superintendent when she was in Barbados and I am not surprised at the Director of Medical Services being attacked by the Medical Board there for taking her away. That, however, is by the way.



I should also point out that when I told the gentleman who came to see me that the question of age would be investigated he switched off to a different subject—hours of work, type of work and salaries. I said “This is something quite new, but those questions would be investigated if they are put through the proper channels.” I told him to explain to the wardmaids that there was only one way to scrub a floor, and if they were prepared to scrub properly they could then put their protest in writing and it would be considered, but one thing must be understood and that was that the floors must be scrubbed. If they were not prepared to scrub the floors other hands would have to be employed. I think they thought it over for a day and their decision eventually was not to scrub the floors. The result was that notice—the usual notice required under their contract—was given to them.

The hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) has, quite rightly, every sympathy with the people in the Hospital, and I should like to inform him that for two days the patients had to do the work which the wardmaids had refused to do, because they were not available to carry food to the bed patients. Those patients who were convalescing had to be called upon to work for two days. I said to the gentleman who came to see me—I think I actually quoted a remark often used by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar)—“What’s in a name? A rose by another name smells just as sweet.” I think there is a great deal in a name. I think if the wardmaids, or at any rate the people who are required to scrub the floors, were called scrubbers possibly that objection might not have arisen. In other places they are called scrubbers. I asked why they were not called scrubbers here and I was told that scrubbing forms a very small part of their duties; it is done in the morning and they do not scrub all day long. I think perhaps it may be possible later on to separate the duties and have people doing nothing but scrubbing and call them scrubbers. They do not all object to doing it, and I am afraid a few of them received bad advice.

With regard to the suggestion made by one hon. Member that there should be an investigation or Committee of enquiry, I

would refer him to paragraphs 36 and 37 of Sessional Paper No. 8 of 1941 where he will see that it is hoped to be able to obtain the services of an experienced Hospital Secretary who would investigate, advise and improve the administration of the Government hospitals, and I hope that when the Council is asked to vote a sum of money for that purpose, in view of what has been said this morning, the vote will be readily accepted.

Mr. ELE. AZAR: I must assure you, sir, that I am thankful for all you have said because you have told us what Government means by discipline. Nurses are told to cut off the sleeves of their uniforms and if they do not do it they would be cleared out. That is discipline. What miserable things are done under the name of discipline? Where is the breach of discipline in this case? The whole medical profession has been indicted with incompetence because they allowed a practice to go on for 50 years which was so inimical to the health of the Hospital, and left it to this great worthy seer with all her academic qualifications to come and find it out and to get down upon the wardmaids to return to slavery. Here is a form of work which the medical profession says must necessarily lead to deformity, yet they are told they must do it that way, and when they refuse to do it they are dismissed for breach of discipline. There is also the case of the man who, while off duty, was called in to do work for which he would not be paid, and because he refused he was dismissed.

THE CHAIRMAN: I understood the Director of Medical Services to say that those Bandsmen are paid a small amount for playing elsewhere. From what was said yesterday I understood that they got nothing at all.

Dr. MACLENNAN: I think they are paid \$3 per month and sometimes a little more. I have already told hon. Members that I hope we will be able to get the Band together again. The particular man is not dismissed; he is suspended, and I hope temporarily.

Mr. ELEAZAR: These men have been employed for many years and when they play they get something for it. On the last occasion when they went to play at Port



Mourant they were not even given breakfast, and when they were called on another day they refused to play unless they got an assurance that they would get something. They were then told that the Band was disbanded, and the particular individual among them who was employed at the institution was interdicted from duty for disobeying orders. Discipline!

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: In view of Your Excellency's remarks I am appealing to you that the avenues which have been suggested by you for the transfer of those wardmaids to some other employment should remain open.

THE CHAIRMAN: That opportunity was given them but they have not taken advantage of it. I can do nothing more about it.

Mr. LEE: I am not convinced that Government is following the principles of trade unionism, for the simple reason that Your Excellency said that perhaps later on scrubbing would be separated from the other duties of the wardmaids.

THE CHAIRMAN: I said it was a point worth considering.

Mr. LEE: It was put forward by the Trade Union that a new condition was being introduced into the contract of service; that the manner in which the Superintendent required the scrubbing to be done constituted a new form of contract. As pointed out by the gentleman who saw Your Excellency, scrubbing was onerous duty and involved more work, and you admitted that the pay of a scrubber was more than a man's pay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Nothing of the sort. I do not know what the hon. Member is referring to.

Mr. LEE: That brings the case out more forcibly that Government should consider the question put forward by the Trades Union that scrubbing was more onerous work, and that it was a question of arbitration between employer and employee. That is why the Trades Union Council as a body saw the Labour Commissioner.

THE CHAIRMAN: I said "There is

only one way in which the Hospital is going to be scrubbed; you must first agree to scrub that way and then put forward any representation you may have to make as regards hours and the type of work and salary: but the first thing you have to do is to agree to scrub in the way you have been told."

Mr. LEE: I quite appreciate Government's view and what Your Excellency has said to-day, but that view was not put forward by the Trades Union Council.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have already said and I am perfectly sure that the wardmaids have been ill advised.

Mr. LEE: That gives Government all the blame, and I am going to prove it. (laughter). Hon. Members laugh, but it is so. They do not want to hear the workers' views at all; they are very autocratic. They say "You do so and if you do not like it take the door." That is against the principles of the trade unionism.

THE CHAIRMAN: I said that if they felt they were not properly paid for that work there was a correct method of procedure. The question of pay never entered into it at all. The whole trouble was that they were not going to scrub in the way that they were told. The question of pay was an afterthought.

Mr. LEE: If they were ill advised in Government's view there should still be avenues open to those people who have served Government for a number of years. Why should Government say that because they refuse to obey an order they should go?

THE CHAIRMAN: They received a great deal of advice. I happen to know that they received advice from the acting Director of Medical Services, the acting Deputy Director, and from the Resident Surgeon as well. They were advised by three officers on behalf of Government. I do not know how many representatives of the Union advised them, but they were given the chance of doing the work as they were told and then making any representations they desired to, and I am of the opinion that they took the wrong advice.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Will

the hon. Member sit when the Chairman is speaking?

THE CHAIRMAN: The wardmaids came down to the office of the Director of Medical Services at the Law Courts and had an interview with him. The acting Deputy Director also went to the Hospital and interviewed them there.

Mr. LEE: I will have to take Government's statement that they were told to work and put their grievance in writing. You will admit that this is a new form of contract of service. Isn't it then a matter for arbitration?

THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. Member to be careful about what he says. I understand the hon. Member to say that I have admitted that there was a new form of contract. I said that if we are going to have all this trouble the best thing would be to divide the work and employ scrubbers for an hour and a half to do the scrubbing.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I ask that the question be now put.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I second that.

Mr. LEE: I was on my feet; I would like a note taken of it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will put the question to the vote.

Item put and agreed to.

#### POLICE.

Item 5—Furniture. \$137.13.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I trust that this furniture is being made locally. I think where possible these things should be done locally in order to provide employment.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): Import licences for furniture are not being issued any more.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 37—Compensation for the loss of a horse by the Police in the Rupununi, \$25.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: When the Police lose a valuable article such as a horse, may

I ask who is to recover it? The hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) has attacked the Police.—

Mr. JACOB: I have not attacked the Police in this Council. I had a conversation with the Colonial Secretary and he brought up the question here. I wish to take this opportunity to state that I have written Government at least a dozen letters making serious charges as regards the discipline, discrimination and what not in the Police Force. Those letters were merely acknowledged and no attempts were made to reply to them. They strike at the root of the Police Force. I would have liked to get the prominence in the *Daily Argosy* which the Colonial Secretary got to-day, but my name was used in mistake for his. I never made the statement attributed to me. It shows what one section of the Press at least does.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The hon. Member—

Mr. JACOB: I respect age and I make allowance for infirmity—(Voices: "Order, order").

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I think the hon. Member should withdraw that remark. I am not concerned with age but I am concerned with his reference to infirmity.

Mr. JACOB: I cannot hear my friend, the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) at this end of the table. That is infirmity, I submit with the utmost confidence, and I think several Members will agree that at times we cannot hear the hon. Member, especially sitting as I am here. I cannot understand this idea of calling "Order, order" when I get up to speak; I strongly object to it. If hon. Members would not allow me to complete my sentence that is their business. I am always anticipated the moment I get up on my legs.

With regard to the letters I addressed to the Colonial Secretary and the Commissioner of Police I will say that while one may agree that four weeks may be sufficient time to reply to them, three or four months is not at all satisfactory. Those letters were not my letters. I merely transmitted letters which had been sent to me. The originals with the names in most cases have been transmitted, containing serious complaints as regards discipline,

partiality, discrimination and other things. It is a serious state of affairs when the Police are attacked by members of the public and the information is conveyed through the proper channel to the Government, that no reply is received to those letters for several months.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is difficult to keep pace with the flow of letters coming from the hon. Member. (laughter).

Mr. JACOB: I agree. It is very difficult for me to do it and I refuse to do several of those things. (laughter). Hon. Members laugh. I received an express letter in the Council to-day; I do not know the individual. I think it is a legitimate case. I think it is my duty here to listen to the public and, when I consider a case legitimate, to bring it forward and let Government accept or reject it. If my duty is just to come here to sit and say nothing I would rather not come here.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member spoke of being within his rights. He may be perfectly correct in what he said but what he did say was in extraordinarily bad taste, and on certain occasion bad taste appears to me to be a greater crime than being out of order. I think the hon. Member should withdraw his remark.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member explained that it was another way of saying that he could not hear the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar), I understood that to be his explanation.

Mr. JACOB: That is so, sir. When the hon. Member was speaking about education I could not gather what he was saying. I asked my friend on my left (Mr. Jackson) but he could not tell me. I have not attempted at all to cast any aspersion on the hon. Member. I can give the Council that assurance. I think I may at times say things I should not say, but I take particular care when I get up to speak here to use parliamentary language and not to be offensive to anybody. What may be parliamentary in my opinion may not be considered parliamentary language by my friends here. I admit that, but I have taken a great deal of care and have made extensive study to see what is the correct procedure.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Even the ingenuity of the human brain will not be able to discover that the synonym for infirmity is acoustics.

Item put, and agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Item 2—Travelling expenses, \$2,416.41.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I am wondering whether this item has anything to do with the Drainage Board, and if so, why it does not carry its own burden? The note says:—

“Due to the appointment of a Paymaster and to the necessity for the supervision of drainage reconditioning works, etc.”

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The reason for the apparently large amount is the Paymaster's travelling, the hiring of a car and the expenses of a car.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: How many days in 1940 did the Paymaster travel? The post was created quite late in the year. I think he has quite a lot of travelling to do, almost throughout the entire Colony, but \$2,400 seems a lot of money.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am sorry I cannot answer the hon. Member's question off-hand, but I would suggest that the business be proceeded with, and I would be glad to give the hon. Member the particulars he has asked for later.

Mr. LEE: I would like to call the Council's attention to the matter and ask Government to adopt the principle that no member of the Drainage Board should be employed as an overseer of drainage works. We have found that a member of the Board has been employed as an overseer and we feel it is not the proper thing.

Mr. SEAFORD: I do not think the hon. Member is quite correct in that.

Mr. LEE: I am very correct. The particular overseer took me over the works on Sunday.

THE CHAIRMAN: Has the hon. Member seen the reply to the letter written to Government? It is one of the few letters that has received a reply.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think the hon. Member is incorrect. I know the work

he is referring to, and the gentleman he refers to is employed by the Public Works Department and not by the Drainage Board.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

Item 6—Furniture, \$7.08.

Mr. LEE : Is this new furniture ?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : For \$7.08 ?

Mr. LEE : It should be \$7,008. I am taking this opportunity to call attention—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I do not wish to interrupt the hon. Member but I wish to suggest to some hon. Members that matters which really concern the budget for next year might be deferred until the Annual Estimates are before the Council. It is quite apparent to me that many of the questions now being raised will be raised again when the budget is before the Council. I do appeal to hon. Members to let us deal with the matters of importance before this session lest we find ourselves running into the Annual Session.

Mr. LEE : I appreciate that but I would like to point out that we must call Government's attention to these things so that when the new Governor comes Government will not be able to say that its attention had not been called to them.

Mr. SEAFORD : The Board of Governors of the College will not fail to do that immediately the Governor arrives in the Colony.

Item put, and agreed to.

Schedule passed.

The Council resumed and adjourned for the luncheon recess until 2 p.m.

2 p.m.

Mr. Woolford present.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I beg to move—

That, this Council approves the final statement of supplementary expenditure for the year 1940, additional to that included in the Schedules of Additional Provision for the year

1940, already passed by the Legislative Council, which has been laid on the table.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE FOR 1940.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : The motion before this Council is—

That, this Council approves the statement of supplementary expenditure which has occurred in the year 1940, and which has not been included in any previous schedule and now admitted as a charge to public funds under Colonial Regulations 265(2), which has been laid on the table.

This is really part and parcel of the Schedule just passed by the Council. Under that particular Colonial Regulation to which reference has been made, it is necessary that these items be shown separately. I move that the Council go into Committee to consider the statement item by item,

Mr. DIAS seconded.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and proceeded to consider, item by item, the statement of supplementary expenditure for the year 1940.

#### AGRICULTURE.

Item 27—Government Produce Depot, \$14.31.

Mr. JACOB : I see in the "Remarks Column" the statement—"Certain accounts were incorrectly charged to capital expenditure and on adjustment the excess was disclosed." I think I am correct in saying that the money that has been voted by the last Council for the Government Produce Depot is not really an expenditure but a loan to be used as a revolving fund. I was thinking it would have been better if this amount was paid into the fund as from the receipts of the Depot, and let the original amount remain. You found some error in your accounting and you are therefore going to charge this \$14.31 to expenditure. I do not think that method of accounting is strictly correct. I am moving that this item be deleted, and I am stating further that I addressed a letter to the hon. Director of Agriculture on the 19th September as regards the working of this Depot, and



I sent a copy to the hon. Colonial Secretary on the same date. This letter had the following enclosures—a letter dated 17th September from Agricola Village signed by Ramcharitar Narayan; a letter dated 18th September from Breda Street, Georgetown, signed by Amos Rangela; a letter dated 18th September from Breda Street, Georgetown, signed by thirteen persons whose names are—Rosaline Williams, Victorine Bayley, Ramjohn, S. Persaud, Lilman (his mark), Dheer Singh, Pearly Singh, W. Barrie, Jane Zaitun, M. Bradshaw, Mangree (her mark) and Raghunanan.

Those letters convey briefly that there is partiality at the Depot, discrimination in selling, and point to irregularities as well. I received a letter from the Director of Agriculture in reply dated 2nd October. I do not know that it is necessary to read the whole letter. I think so myself, but I have the whole letter and can read it. However, I am simply going to refer to certain passages herein and make comment on them. I mentioned in a subsequent reply that I intended to ventilate the matter here. In one part of the letter the hon. Director writes: "I am convinced myself that there is no ground for complaint and no question of any irregularities as made out in both their statements and your letters." In the second paragraph he writes: "The Supervisor of the Depot, Mr. E. M. Morgan, through very favourable arrangements has managed to secure reasonable supplies of oranges for the purposes of the Depot." Further down in the same paragraph he states: "Unfortunately some of these individuals appear to have the idea that they can behave or misbehave in any manner they desire in the Depot without being reproached." In the 3rd paragraph there is this statement: "There are various grades of oranges and there must be various prices. It is considered that no useful purpose is served by stating on every bill the exact number of oranges sold since a purchaser may take one of several grades, or may mix the grades, or may take over the fruit which has been damaged in transport and so on."

In reply to that letter I submitted a further letter from five of those parties conveying to my mind a virtual rebuttal of the arguments of the Director of Agriculture. The main point I wish to make is this: Here you have a Government Produce

Depot that is supposed to get the co-operation of the public, that is supposed to work in co-operation with the farmers, and you have various persons going there to purchase oranges and some are being told "You cannot get any now" while others without paying select oranges and march out of the Depot with them, and in most cases recently the number of oranges sold is not stated on the bills. I was amused in reading the reply from the hon. Director that it is not necessary to state the number of oranges on the bills. I wonder if any hon. Member of this Council would send someone to any of the groceries to buy a dozen apples and be satisfied with the person bringing a bill just stating "Apples \$1." The businessman himself, who is running the business, would require the number or weight of the articles sold to be recorded on every bill. I have the bills here, and I have got all the evidence here. One of the bills reads as follows—No. 60421, 24th September, Oranges, \$2.64." Another one reads "No. 60417, 24th September, Oranges, \$1.08." Another one reads—"No. 60312, 23rd September, Oranges, \$6.00"; and another one—"No. 59589, 16th September, Oranges, \$2.16." Some of these customers have made the specific charge that the number of oranges has been recently omitted from the bills for a purpose, when it is seen from actual occurrences there—one particular person would go, fill her basket and leave, without paying on arrival or on leaving the Depot for the purchases made, and when the attention of the Supervisor is called to it he would say "I can do exactly as it pleases me here." A report has been made about it and the hon. gentleman in charge of the Depot, the Director of Agriculture, has issued the statement that it is neither necessary to state the number of fruits purchased nor to receive the money beforehand. I have made no comment on this matter; but I have my own opinion, and if the Depot is going to be run on those lines in the future I imagine what would be the position.

That Depot has not had severe criticism from me. In fact my criticism is very constructive both here and by letters, and it would grieve me to think that the Depot is not being run properly and is not a success. If it is carried on in this way it would certainly not be a success. When we look at agriculture generally here, those

are the things that lead to failure. That Depot is supposed to be selling all kinds of fruits, coffee, coconuts and all other products except rice and sugar. There is another Department for the selling of rice and I am not going to refer to that now. As regards sugar there is something else looking after that. When you look into the history of all these things—there are other organizations to handle coconut oil and copra—when you look and see that you have to import copra and you may have to be importing coconuts from Trinidad very shortly and also coffee, if these things go on we may have to import a greater quantity of vegetables than we are importing now.

I issue a warning. I am satisfied myself that irregularities are going on at the Depot and steps should be taken to check them. I say a different system of accounting should be carried on there immediately. In respect of every article sold the number or weight should be recorded on every bill. I would like to see a check carried out to ascertain how many oranges were bought by the Depot and how many sold. My hon. friend stated in his letter that favourable arrangements have been made for supplies of oranges. Yes, but it did not last longer than a few weeks. The parties making the arrangements were surprised to find that while they were selling the oranges at \$1.08 per 100 the Depot was selling them at \$2.40 to \$3.00 per 100.—more than 200 per cent. profit. I do not know if that is not profiteering. The price went up to \$3.00 and the person who made the arrangements cancelled it. I say that the favourable arrangements stated in the Director's letter did not last. I am so informed and am able to verify it.

There is another grievance by purchasers at the Depot. Perhaps there should be no purchasers at the Depot at all and it should only exist. It is that in the past Government Institutions bought in the open market or by tender, but now they buy from the Depot and no one knows at what price. I have no objection to the Depot selling to Government Institutions, but the tender of the Depot and that of private individuals should be called for and one accepted, unless Government wants to control all the ground provisions and fruits and vegetable products. If that is not intended then the Depot should not have the preference of

supplying Government Institutions at any price. I do not know why the Depot should be placed in a better position than a merchant in Water Street, or a small trader in the market. It may not appear on the surface as a loss for the charges may be so made as to make the Depot show a profit. I am told further that there are about fourteen employees at the Depot. I do not know if the salary of the Supervisor is charged to the Depot and what amount of overhead expenses is charged. I would certainly like to be advised when there would be a statement issued on the working of the Depot, as we would then be able to see how the overhead charges are put on and what profit is really made at the Depot.

On the whole I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not against the Depot being carried on. I welcome it. I have written and have also stated here that properly managed the Depot ought to be a success, but if as it has gone about that irregularities are going on there and also partiality and discrimination in selling and there is general dissatisfaction, then I do not think the Depot can prove a success and the money which has been voted will all be wasted and more money will have to be voted and so much time wasted. Here is something started with the best intention and is not being properly managed. I think the accounting system is bad. I do not know who is responsible for it. When I hear that, I shall have something more to say. The person controlling the Depot should know certain business principles.

I would want to know from the bill the number of articles or the weight of each article sold. As a Member of this Council I cannot be satisfied if that procedure is not being carried on at the Depot and if the procedure adopted is not approved by the buyers. I take it that the buyer should be perfectly satisfied. I was told in the letter that the Auditor has just completed the audit and it was satisfactory. I do not place much value on that at the moment. He may have completed the audit up to a period before these things complained of were being carried on. These things occurred in September and I would be very interested to hear that the Auditor has reported that the audits are satisfactory while these omissions are there on the cash bills.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I have no evidence—I am not in the fortunate position of the hon. Member who has just taken his seat—nor have I the authority to say that there are irregularities or discrimination going on at the Depot as referred to by him, but I have risen to remind Government of the criticism that was levelled in this Council when the project for the Depot was mooted and of the warning that was given then with regard to the working of the Depot. For myself I think any criticism of the working of the Depot at this stage is premature and, therefore, I am prepared to wait until a report is issued on its working. I took a very keen interest in the matter when it first came up in this Council and, I think, I pointed out at the time—I am quite prepared to repeat the opinion I expressed then—that this Depot would certainly be run at a loss unless certain business principles were adopted. I am surprised to learn from the remarks of the hon. Member, who has just taken his seat, that those business principles are apparently not being carried out. I am going to agree with him on the one question of the issuing of bills for the sale of merchandise. It is very important. He is quite correct in stating that you cannot merely issue a bill for the amount of the sale of oranges without details, because any person who has to go after and check the proceeds of sales would undoubtedly find himself in a quandary if he wants to be accurate in his checking.

If up to the present time the Depot is being run at a profit—I hope it is—I would want to be satisfied that a fair return is being given to the producers who supply fruit and so on to the Depot. If an institution of that kind is improperly managed it would be quite easy to say it is being run at a profit and at the same time giving starvation prices to the producer or alternately carrying overhead charges under another head. There are various ways in which one can manipulate the accounts to show how the Depot can be run at a profit. I can tell you one way in which it can be run at a profit. Not very long ago when the Government controlled prices of coffee were 10 cents per lb. wholesale and 12 cents per lb. retail, the Depot sold 200 lbs. of coffee at 12 cents per lb. It was strikingly strange they did not fall outside the order of the Control Authority and therefore be

liable to prosecution, because I can hardly conceive that the sale of a bag of coffee weighing 200 lbs. is not a wholesale transaction. Yet the sale was made at the retail price.

THE CHAIRMAN: The quantity was put on the bill in that case!

MR. DE AGUIAR: Yes, sir. That is one reason for the Depot being run at a profit. Of course if a merchant in Water Street had done that, immediately you would have had a very lengthy legal argument as to the definition of “wholesale” and of “retail,” and I am positive—and I express the opinion at once—that a Magistrate would hold the view that the sale of 200 lbs. was definitely a wholesale transaction. I am asked whether that opinion is based on personal knowledge. The answer is definitely in the affirmative. If the sale of 100 lbs. of pollock can be termed retail, I cannot conceive 200 lbs. of coffee not being wholesale.

MR. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs): To a point of explanation! Wholesale is for the purpose of affording sale by the retailer. If a man sells 200 lbs. of goods to a retailer it is wholesale trade, but if it is to a private individual, who is not a retailer, it is not wholesale.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I do not want to pursue this matter. I do not want to thank the hon. Comptroller for saying what he did. He has really answered me and told me all I want to know.

THE CHAIRMAN: Government is usually accused of not wanting to tell.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I only mention that as one of the ways in which this Depot can be made to run at a profit, because if they make a sale retail and account for it to the producer as wholesale then you can see at once the gain the Depot would make. As this matter has been brought up by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob), and in view of what was said at the time when the project was first brought before this Council, if it is possible for the hon. Director of Agriculture to give a brief outline as to how things are going on there it would be advisable, because there are certain hon. Members including myself, who are very interested



in this matter and are very anxious to see the Depot run satisfactorily. In spite of the criticism I have levelled at it myself and the view I had at the time that it would be run at a loss, I would like to know that the Depot is serving a useful purpose, because if it is serving a useful purpose I would be perfectly happy. I am going to ask that the hon. Director give us a brief outline as to what is going on there. Though I feel, sir, as we all do believe there are no irregularities—I personally do not believe and I have heard of none, though the hon. Member says he has evidence and will produce it some time—if we are told about it I am sure hon. Members would be very glad to hear.

Mr. ELEAZAR: In spite of age and infirmity or both, notwithstanding the words of the wise man that it is wiser to sit down sometimes and keep your tongue between your teeth and look wise than to open your mouth and make yourself a fool, I rise to say this Depot was not established for the purpose of selling goods to “middle” men to be sold again. It was definitely established to save the farmers from those very “characters” by buying their produce at reasonable prices and re-selling to the public. But these “vampires” that you cannot keep out, like to go to the Depot, purchase goods and make profits off them from those people who should go to the Depot themselves. These men, who cannot get goods now from the farmers because they will not pay reasonable prices, want to go to the Depot and obtain the goods at prices less than what they would pay the farmers. The Depot does not stand for that. I had a talk about it with the Governor and pointed out that the Depot would be run at a loss, but the Governor said that even if they gave the farmers more than usual it would be helping them. I replied: “If that is the idea I have no more to say.” It is not a profit-making concern. It is put there to save the farmers from those “middle” men who buy their goods at next to nothing, who keep the farmers until late and pay them little or nothing or take the goods and do not pay at all. The Depot is put so that those unfortunate farmers coming from the country can take their produce there and get a reasonable price for it, but the “middle” men will not be kept out.

My hon. friend talked about the number

of oranges sold not being placed on the bill. There is a specie of oranges known as “Tangerine” which are very little bigger than a bird’s egg and are sold by the basket. Do you say they must be reckoned when a sale is made? Cassava, also, is sometimes sold by the basket. The man, Mr. Morgan, who is in charge of the Depot had to do with the first Government Produce Depot which was established at the building now occupied by the Commissaries. He had also been in sole charge of a similar depot at New Amsterdam. He knows more about the working of a Depot than any of the people who are talking about it, and to say he must put down the number of oranges sold on a bill is all nonsense. It is not like in the case of a man who goes to buy a half pound of goods.

It seems to me that the grievance of those people who are complaining is that they cannot get the goods at a margin to go back and sell at a profit to those persons who should go to the Depot in the first instance and make their purchase. That, however, is what Government is trying to prevent, and that is why this Depot is established. I told Government here that the Depot will lose money because you have about 500 farmers and the Depot can only purchase the produce of 300 and the other 200 farmers will therefore undersell the Depot. The Governor replied that he did not mind that as it would still be helping the farmers. What is the contention now? Is it that the Depot is not making money, or is making money? The people for whom it has been established to serve have no complaint as well as the people who go to sell their produce to the Depot, but it is the “middle” men who want the quantity that they get checked.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not intend to repeat what has been said by hon. Members. I would just like to make reference to one matter which the hon. Member for North-Western District referred to and which has given me some concern. That is the fact that Government has learnt the business methods, perhaps, of certain characters described by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) in making 100 per cent. profit. I hope that Government is observing none but good business morals in making that 100 per cent. profit at the Government Pro-



duce Depôt, which should be run on mutual co-operative lines. I have heard one hon. Member state in this Council that he buys for as little as he can and sells for as much as he can. I hope Government is not going to adopt that method of business relation between the farmers and itself in the running of this Depôt. I would like to hear from the hon. Director of Agriculture about that, because it is a serious matter and I feel sure that if these questionable methods referred to continue the hopeful results expected of the Depôt would not materialize.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): Before Professor Dash speaks, I would like to clear a point which the hon. Member for North-Western District raised. The vote the Depôt was given in a supplementary estimate of 1940 was \$4,960 of which \$4,000 was to provide for what he himself called "a revolving fund," and the other \$960 was for the operating expenses. The revolving fund of \$4,000 is intact. That is represented by stores, cash in hand, stock and book debts. That is the Capital. The \$960 is paid out in salaries, wages and other ordinary expenses, and that is the vote that has been overspent by \$14.31. That is to say, the operating expenses for the last three months of last year during which the Depot operated amounted to \$974.31 and this vote of \$14.31 is the excess.

I repeat that the capital of the Depot is still intact and is represented by various assets in hand. No vote for operating expenses has been given for this year, and Government will place before this Council on one of the supplementary estimates for 1941 a vote for this year's operating expenses. I am pleased to state that the last statement I looked at showed that the Depôt is working at a reasonable monthly profit. I would be very disappointed if the profit for the year is less than \$3,000, which amount will be paid into revenue against the operating expenses of the year.

Mr. JACOB: Will the hon. Colonial Treasurer state what is the amount of the monthly operating expenses? I do not see any vote of \$960 passed in any of the supplementary estimates. I remember \$4,000 was voted.

Mr. McDAVID: What I said was a vote of \$4,960—\$4,000 as a revolving fund and \$960 as operating expenses for the last three months of the year during which the Depôt was operating.

Mr. JACOB: I am not too certain that I have not seen the \$960 in any of the supplementary estimates up to the present.

Mr. McDAVID: It was voted on the First Supplementary Estimate for 1940. The vote was \$4,960.

Mr. JACOB: I want to understand it clearly. \$4,960 was voted of which \$4,000 is charged to Capital Account and \$960 to Expenses Account. The \$960 has been spent and \$14.31 in addition to that. Will you kindly say what are the running expenses per month?

Mr. McDAVID: I thought that Professor Dash would deal with that when covering the general position of the Depôt, and therefore did not refer to it. I have an estimate which shows the working expenses for the current year as \$4,500 and the approved estimates for 1942 show an increase of that amount to \$5,500. There is an explanation for that increase. I will not touch on it as it will certainly come up when the vote is before the Council.

Mr. JACOB: I do not know if it is possible to say what salaries are paid monthly to employees. The total number of employees is fourteen according to a statement I have here, but it must be understood that any statement made by anyone not directly connected with the Depôt is not correct. I have a statement showing the salaries of Mr. Morgan, Mr. Forte, Mr. Rickford which amount to \$441. I should like to be advised if the monthly wages and salaries are really anything like \$441.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that the hon. Member wishes to find out whether the present manager, who is a Superintendent in the Agricultural Department, is having his salary charged against the Depot or against the Agricultural Department vote. If that is what the hon. Member wishes to know, I think I am correct in saying that at present the Manager's salary is charged against the vote of the

Agricultural Department. If I have made a wrong statement I should be glad if the hon. Director of Agriculture would correct me.

Mr. JACOB: If that is so, what about the others? There are thirteen others, I understand.

Mr. Mc DAVID: If the hon. Member wishes to see the estimate I can let him have it. I have an estimate of the working expenses including the monthly emoluments and weekly emoluments. I suggest that he look at the estimate himself.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): I am grateful to the hon. Colonial Treasurer for answering the first point the hon. Member enquired about with respect to the charges on the supplementary estimate. Coming to the Depot itself, at the outset I do not like this Council to think that we ourselves feel that the facilities at the Depot are all in a highly efficient state. That, I do not think, can be expected at this stage but that is not due to the fault of the staff in any sense. I think the hon. Member would recollect that when the Depot was started, it had to be started in a rush arising out of war conditions and the "Grow More Food" campaign and there were a number of things to be done which could not be done at the time if the Depot was to start to function early. Take for example: there was a lack of facilities in connection with the grading of produce at the Depot and, I think there can be much improvement in regard to the layout of the buildings and the dispatch of the public, but especially in connection with grading because that has a bearing on some of the points raised by my hon. friend.

On the question of grading I think any Member who had been to the Depot would have seen the difficulties that had existed in the initial stages when all sorts of produce were sent down to the Depot. The only way to correct that is by controlling and collecting the produce at its source. That is what is proposed to be done in due course. We shall have buying depots in the rural districts where the produce will be graded on the spot and the good stuff brought to the Depot. The poor quality stuff will be taken back by the farmers to be used as feed for pigs instead of the whole lot coming down to the Depot.

We have been trying to check it and that is one of the directions in which there is considerable room for improvement.

My hon. friend apparently lives in an atmosphere of fraud. He dreams fraud, thinks fraud, and he must not be surprised if unfortunately there are repercussions in respect of his own views by his throwing about the word "fraud" like a cricket ball as the hon. Member does in this Council. Dealing with this complaint of the oranges, I think hon. Members are aware that at this time of the year there is a shortage. The old crop is going out and the new crop is coming in. Oranges have gone up in price and there is a general shortage. The Depot has contracts for supplying Government Institutions and in the general course of business. No business can exist without contracts and so it has been able to make favourable buying arrangements in regard to supplies of oranges. When these demands are met and there is a surplus it is naturally sold to the public. Those ladies and gentlemen who have made complaints are not the usual hucksters and traders who do business with the Depot, but whenever they think they can get something from the Depot which they cannot get elsewhere they turn up. They were displeased because they could not get what they wanted. Certain things are sold in lots and there are mixed lots. In their case there was no necessity for the numbers sold to be put on the Bill. It is not the general practice to give bills which do not contain the numbers. Apparently the custom is to put down the numbers whenever there is reasonable chance of an accurate count. There again I am at one with him in thinking the numbers should go on all bills but at the moment it is impossible as in this particular instance. When we have grading in the country districts and all the stuff comes to the Depot graded, the question of counting will be an easy matter. The same thing applies to weight. At times it is not easy to sell by weight.

We have a Working Committee looking after the affairs of the Depot on which I am Chairman. The Deputy Colonial Treasurer is on that committee and I must say, he is very keen and anxious that all the accounting should be top-notch, and the question of staff arises there—how much you can afford to keep a lot of books

which very often from a business point of view may be redundant. We also have on that Committee Mr. Mahood, who was at one time in charge of the Trinidad Produce Depot and has brought a wealth of information in connection with the running of that depot which he passed on to us and we were very grateful to him for it. There is also Mr. Cleare. We four constitute the Working Committee of the Depot and all matters in connection with finance and management are referred to us. I can assure hon. Members of this Council that there is no partiality at the Government Produce Depot, and as far as I can see no irregularities. An officer may make a genuine mistake but that is no reason to impute irregularity or fraud. In this case I think the hon. Member went wide of the mark in making a charge of that kind. If, however, he has proof that there is fraud at the Depot and submits it to me or to Your Excellency, Government would be very glad to go into it and put it straight. So far we have had no such complaint from the people who are using the Depot from time to time, either farmers, traders or consumers.

My hon. friend, the Member for Central Demerara (Mr. DeAguiar) touched on the coffee incident. I think he knows as much of it as I do, and I am glad to see the matter cleared up to the satisfaction of all concerned. We have no intention to break regulations and the Supervisor is in touch with the Comptroller of Prices. That the Depot is serving a useful purpose I have no doubt, and I only hope and wish that the volume of trade will grow. There is room for that, and when it grows I will not be surprised to see the position completely balanced all round. At the present time, as the hon. Colonial Treasurer has pointed out, we are making a small profit—not an unreasonable profit by overcharging or underselling. On particular items we are evidently still losing and will continue to lose but on many others we are making that up, and the net result is we are showing a profit. We are not completely paying the operating expenses but that will come in time when the Depot is turning over a larger volume of produce. This year one of our Assistant Superintendents has had charge of the Depot, and it is due to his energy and knowledge of conditions here that we have been able to get the Depot running as

well as it is. Next year we hope to make other arrangements and bring the Depot into line so that the revenue and expenditure will be shown quite clearly and the Depot put on its own footing. There is one other point. One person who is a regular customer of the Depot—I have her bills from the 25th August to the 25th September—has an account of \$49.45. In fact she is so keen to get stuff from the Depot that she pays in advance for it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am not sure what that point is. Will you just explain?

Professor DASH: The hon. Member made the statement that someone had taken away stuff without paying for it. That is definitely untrue. That covers one of the main points arising out of the running of the Depot and I am glad in a way that it has been brought up as it gives me an opportunity to say something about the operation of the Depot. The operation of a Government institution of this kind is fraught with great difficulty, because everybody is trying to get his own back, trying to go behind the Depot and undersell it or to get produce which the "middle" men can handle and compete with the Depot. That is to be expected. We do hope and ask for the indulgence of members of the community in respect of the difficulties we have to put up with. It may be said that if we are going to be faced with all these questions and criticisms, some of an ugly nature and very few pleasant, why start this thing? I do not share that view, but I am prepared to go through and face all those difficulties. In the long run the Depot will prove an excellent thing for the farmers in outlying districts, and I hope the business will grow and become a shining light.

Mr. JACOB: I am glad to know that the hon. Director has completely contradicted the letter of the 2nd October in his speech here to-day, and I am glad that the matter has been ventilated here to some extent. When I raise these questions here it is not that they should be answered satisfactorily. I am going to ask in this case that the detailed charges made be replied to in detail. I think, as I said before, the Depot can be properly run, and if criticisms are accepted in the spirit they are offered the Depot can be made a success. My hon. friend, the Director, had

brushed aside certain questions and to-day he has had to admit them. I maintain that the system having been changed so as not to put 200 oranges on a bill for \$6, there is some object in view. That was communicated to me and I believe it. All the bills I have quoted here were for 200 oranges and not as one hon. Member made out they were rotten fruits and small and were put together. If hon. Members are not fully informed they should not attempt to speak. I think it will be admitted that a case has been made out by these complainants, and I am still going to ask that detailed replies be given so that these people can cooperate with the Depot. The suggestion that the Depot caters only to a certain class of people is absurd.

THE CHAIRMAN: I never heard that suggestion.

Mr. JACOB: Oh, yes! It was said by one hon. Member. It was stated that goods should not be sold to "middle" men. I do not know who you are going to call "middle" men and who are consumers. I do not know how you are going to differentiate between them. I do not want to make any further reference to that. The Depot has been run at a profit. I understand the Supervisor's salary is charged here as \$120 for 1941, but he receives \$2,160. His whole time is being devoted to this business in 1941, but only \$120 is estimated for 1942 according to this paper before me. There is nothing there for the Supervisor but other expenses are shown. The Supervisor having been given such a wonderful credential, I think it is a mistake to have him removed. If he is to remain the whole of his salary should be charged against the Depot. That will be cost accounting. I understand the Government Cost Accountant gives valuable advice—

Mr. McDAVID: To a point of explanation! This item of expenditure is not charged to the Depot. As I had said, all this Council was asked to provide was a vote of \$960 for the working of the Depot for the last three months, and I intimated that it will be asked this year to provide \$4,500 for this year. I said also that any profit the Depot makes will be placed against the amount which has been provided by the Council as working expenses. No question of cost accounting arises at

all. The expenses are provided by the Council.

Mr. JACOB: I am not at all thankful for the explanation. I do protest strongly against an explanation like that. There you have a person in charge of something and his salary is not being charged to that thing. I do not know what you call cost accounting. I have been looking after cost accounting since I was fifteen and I do know something about cost accounting. When Government expert advisers get up and state it is proper not to charge the salary of the Supervisor of the Depot to the Depot—

THE CHAIRMAN: I did not understand the hon. Colonial Treasurer to make that statement.

Mr. JACOB: The fact remains, sir, I am not going to have this matter confused. I am making a clear and definite statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to remind the hon. Member that I myself said that the Supervisor's salary is charged to the Agricultural Department's vote. Government is not trying to hide anything.

Mr. JACOB: I am not saying that. I accept all that you have said, but from what the hon. Colonial Treasurer said the matter is confused. I am not having you drawn into this matter at all. (laughter). I am making a statement about the hon. Colonial Treasurer. I am not going to confuse his statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has misinterpreted what one hon. Member has said and it is my duty to point that out.

Mr. JACOB: I am going to say something about cost accounting. I am, however, so ignorant and so uneducated that whatever I say here has no effect on anyone. \$960 has been voted as expenses. \$974.31 has been spent and \$14.31 is to be voted to-day to clear that expenditure, but a statement has been handed to me in which the Supervisor's salary is charged as \$120 and the total estimated expenditure is given as \$4,500 including that \$120. But that amount is absolutely incorrect. The person who does the job gets a salary of \$2,160 per annum and not \$120 and the whole of that person's time is spent there



at the Depot, therefore that \$2,040 should be charged to the Depot. I do not see how, therefore, it can be said that the Depot is being run at a profit.

Professor DASH: I think the hon. Member is confusing the issue entirely. No one said the Depot is being run at a complete profit covering its working expenses. What was said is that on the business side of the Depot there is a profit. Your Excellency made it clear that the salary of the Supervisor is met from the Agricultural Department's vote, and I myself made it clear that it is hoped in the long run as soon as the volume of business has increased to meet the whole working expenses. I think I also mentioned that next year it is contemplated that the present Supervisor will not carry on at the Depot but will resume his substantive post. The whole of the expenses has been estimated, and as the hon. Colonial Treasurer mentioned, it shows a \$1,000 increase on the 1941 figures.

Mr. McDAVID: May I add to that explanation? The hon. Member is confusing himself and the Council. None of the expenses of the Depot is to be provided by the Depot. The expenses are provided by a vote of this Council. The profit which I referred to and the hon. Director of Agriculture agreed with, is the ordinary trading profit arrived at by merely taking the sales and the purchases. I hope that profit will be equal to the amount of expenditure this Council has provided for running the Depot. It is quite a simple matter.

Mr. JACOB: I am stating very plainly my own view. You are paying a certain individual \$2,160 per annum for running a Depot and you are only charging the Depot with \$120. If \$2,160 was charged I do not know what would have happened to the \$960 provided. I am not concerned with what happened in the past. The object of initiating this debate to-day is to safeguard the future. I am suggesting that these complaints be thoroughly investigated and satisfactory replies given. If such replies are not given to the parties I shall advise them what attitude to adopt. I have suggested to Government that the North West District is a very fine place for establishing this Depot but since I suggested that in a letter I have not had a reply as

yet. I suggested that grading be carried on there, and I am very pleased to hear the hon. Director say that grading will be carried on in the rural districts. I do not, however, think vegetable products should be graded like rice, particularly in the North West District where steamship connection with the city is so difficult. It will be of great advantage to the Depot, and I think the Depot is really going to succeed. I wish it success and I hope those concerned will face the facts and not juggle with the cost of running the Depot but keep proper accounts.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think there is any juggling with the figures handed to the hon. Member.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I made use of the expression "middle" men. The hon. Member does not understand what I mean. He does not know anything. I am going to meet him on his own ground. I mean the men who buy rice at a certain low price from the grower and producer, sell it at 300 per cent. and put the profits in their pocket. That is what I mean.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed.

#### LAW OFFICERS.

Item—Personal Emoluments, 11 cents.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Is this a fee?

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member propose to vote against it?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: No, sir.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed.

#### Poor.

Item — Outdoor Poor, Essequibo, \$103.53.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I hope that Government would see its way to extend similar treatment as on the last occasion when it increased the relief granted. I hope Government would continue that policy in future, in view of the fact that it is not within the powers of the Colony at least at the present moment to institute universal Old Age Pension.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed.

Statement of supplementary expenditure for the year 1940 passed without amendment.

The Council resumed.

Motion put, and passed.

FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1941.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the following motion—

THAT, this Council approves the First Schedule of Additional Provision for the period 1st January to 31st March, 1941, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the Estimates for the year 1941, which has been laid on the table.

Hon. Members have been supplied with copies of this Schedule. I do not think there is any particular item to which it is necessary to draw attention. The total amount is \$39,844.58 of which Colonial Emergency Measures account for nearly \$30,000. I move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to consider the Schedule item by item.

Mr. DIAS Seconded.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and proceeded to consider, item by item, the First Schedule of Additional provision for the year 1941.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

Item—*Ex Gratia* payments to Government Officers who lost their personal effects when the "S. S. Simon Bolivar" was sunk by enemy action in November, 1939, \$1,920.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Under this Head I wonder if it is proper to enquire whether this Government has under consideration the question of compulsory insurance against war damage to property and commodities in this Colony as the result of enemy action. I may mention that it is a question that is causing some concern at the present time to certain responsible persons in this community, especially those who have the charge of Trust Funds, and it has occurred to me that perhaps under this Head it would be an appropriate question to ask. I know it is one that, perhaps, may require very careful consideration, and I do not propose to press it at this stage, but I raise it in the hope that

Government, if it has not yet given any consideration to the matter, might do so at some convenient opportunity because there is no doubt about it, as I have said before, it is a matter that is causing some concern in the minds of those people especially who are in charge of Trust Funds.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The hon. Member has anticipated me, as I intended to raise the same point. I think some consideration might be given to it in view of the fact that we should not wait to see what happens and after it happens then do something as is usually done with matters in this Colony. We are taking precautions in other directions in instituting preventive measures, and I submit that the point raised by the hon. Member for Central Demerara is very closely related with measures of the kind taken at the present time, otherwise why are we taking them. I think this matter should receive immediate consideration. I think recommendation should be made to the Colonial Office on that score, as it is to meet what may arise at any moment.

THE CHAIRMAN: I regret I have to inform hon. Members of Council that news has just reached me of the death of the Chief Justice. I propose therefore, as a mark of respect to the deceased, to adjourn the Council. I had intended to propose to hon. Members that the Council should meet again on Wednesday next, the 15th, at 11 a.m.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that the Council resume.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed.

THE PRESIDENT: The Council will now stand adjourned until 11 a.m. on Wednesday, 15th October.

Mr. ELEAZAR: As the news has reached this Council, I think Your Excellency may be disposed to allow hon. Members to make any remarks they wish in regard to the lamentable occurrence which has just taken place.

THE PRESIDENT: I would suggest that hon. Members consider that at the subsequent meeting of the Council.

The Council adjourned to Wednesday, the 15th October, 1941, at 11 a.m.