

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 11th December, 1940.

The Council met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR WILFRID JACKSON, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.

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

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

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

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, 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. G. O. Case, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

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

The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E., (Georgetown Central).

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

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).

MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 10th December, 1940, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

GRATUITIES TO MARRIED FEMALE OFFICERS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.) communicated the following message :—

MESSAGE No. 5.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

Members will recollect that when the Bill (now the Pensions (Amendment) Ordinance, No. 14 of 1939) to provide for the payment of gratuities to pensionable female officers who resign or are required to retire on marriage, was debated in July, 1939, the question of granting marriage gratuities to female employees holding non-pensionable posts was raised and Government undertook to consider it.

The question has been considered, and it is recommended that Council approve of the payment to a female employee, who has served the Government for at least seven continuous years and resigns or is required to retire for the reason that she is married or is about to marry, of a gratuity at the rate of one-eighteenth of a month's pay for each completed month of service, with a maximum of one year's pay; provided that at the time of such resignation or retirement she held :—

- (a) a non-pensionable post named in the approved list appended to Governor's Message No. 21 of the 14th of August, 1940; or
- (b) a pensionable post but is not eligible for a gratuity under section 5 of the Pensions (Amendment) Ordinance, No. 14 of 1939.

It should be explained that proviso (b) above is necessary for the reason that the minimum period of service required to qualify for a marriage gratuity under section 5 of the Pensions (Amendment) Ordinance, 1939, is five years in a pensionable office, irrespective of the length of previous service in a non-pensionable appointment.

W. E. JACKSON,
Governor.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

GRATUITIES TO MARRIED FEMALE OFFICERS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motion :—

THAT, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 5 dated 9th December, 1940, this Council approves of the payment to a female employee, who has served the Government for at least seven continuous years and resigns or is required to retire for the reason that she is married or is about to marry, of a gratuity at the rate of one-eighteenth of a month's pay for each completed month of service, with a maximum of one year's pay: provided that at the time of such resignation or retirement she held:—

- (a) a non-pensionable post named in the approved list appended to Governor's Message No. 21 of the 14th of August, 1940; or
- (b) a pensionable post but is not eligible for a gratuity under section 5 of the Pensions (Amendment) Ordinance, No. 14 of 1939.

EDIBLE OIL.

MR. JACOB: Sir, I crave your indulgence to refer to a matter of very great importance to the community. I refer to the question of edible oil.

THE PRESIDENT: Under what rule is the hon. Member bringing up this question?

MR. JACOB: A matter of importance to the community.

THE PRESIDENT: But there must be some rule of debate. Is it a question of personal explanation?

MR. JACOB: That is so, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Is it to correct a mis-statement?

MR. JACOB: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member will understand that if that is so no debate will be allowed; he must just make his statement.

MR. JACOB: Yes, sir. The hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) made the definite statement when the question was discussed last week that there was no shortage of oil. These are his actual words:—

"I think I have said sufficient to justify the statement I made yesterday, and to further justify it to-day, if the hon. Member for North Western District would like to place an order for any quantity between 10 and 15 drums I would see it delivered to him."

I made the statement that there was an inadequate supply of oil and the hon. Member made a lengthy speech in which he stated that there was no shortage of oil.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: To a point of order, sir. The hon. Member is only entitled to explain his own statement.

THE PRESIDENT: Is the hon. Member explaining his own statement or is he trying to controvert what the hon. Member for Western Berbice said? If he disagrees with what the hon. Member said he has no standing here to-day; he is out of order. If he wishes to correct his own statement he is at liberty to do so, but he is not at liberty to enter into an argument.

MR. JACOB: The hon. Member contradicted my statement.

THE PRESIDENT: He is perfectly entitled to contradict the hon. Member. It is a matter of a difference between two opinions. I cannot allow the argument to be re-opened now. If it is a question of a personal explanation the hon. Member is entitled to make it.

MR. JACOB: I have stated that it is a matter of personal explanation on a matter of interest to the community.

THE PRESIDENT: The question of the interest to the community does not arise.

MR. JACOB: On a question of personal explanation I am submitting that the hon. Member contradicted my statement and I should like to have an opportunity to—

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is completely out of order in doing that. If he was misrepresented he would be entitled to make an explanation.

MR. JACOB: The hon. Member has misrepresented the facts to this Council and the community.

THE PRESIDENT: That is not the question. The hon. Member said he was

contradicted; many hon. Members are frequently contradicted.

Mr. JACOB: Well, sir, I shall have another opportunity to raise it.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BILLS—FIRST READING.

The following Bills were read the first time:—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to prescribe the method to be adopted in computing the Taxes and Rates to be levied and collected by the Mayor and Town Council of Georgetown in respect of the year nineteen hundred and forty-one.

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to establish the Drainage and Irrigation Board; to define its duties and prescribe its powers and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid.

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to provide for the immediate vesting of certain lands in the Colony and for purposes connected therewith.—*(The Attorney-General.)*

Notice was given that at the next or subsequent meeting of the Council the Bills would be read the second time.

ESTIMATES, 1941.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the estimates of expenditure to be defrayed from revenue during the year ending the 31st December, 1941.

MEDICAL—HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I would like to refer to an item on page 38.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the hon. Member is about four pages out of time.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The last three pages under this head are really blank. I wish to refer to item 29 on page 38—Renewal of bedsteads at Public Hospitals, \$720. I am making an *ad miseri cordiam* plea.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member ask for a recommittal of the item? I have no objection to his doing so.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I ask that the item be recommitted. I had no idea that we had completed the head.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the Council has no objection item 29 will be recommitted.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I observe that the item is put down at the same figure for 1941 as was voted for 1940. I would like to invite Government's attention to the conditions existing at the Public Hospital, Georgetown, and to make a comparison with the conditions existing in 1939. I do not know whether Your Excellency is aware of it, but those who go around know that there are what are known as floor patients at the Public Hospital, and I think the situation is far more serious today than it has ever been, probably due to the fact that "Colonna House" has been closed down and more patients are going to the Public Hospital. It is difficult even to provide sufficient beds for paying patients. I understand that at the present time the admission of poor patients averages between 40 and 60 per day. I know that prices are high but I am wondering whether we should not provide a little more money in order to meet the serious situation that has arisen at the Hospital. Perhaps after an investigation it might be found possible to increase this item so as to provide a larger number of beds at the institution.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I had intended to raise the same point with regard to the Alms House. A considerable number of patients in the pauper wards at the Public Hospital are really the overflow from the Alms House.

Dr. MACLENNAN (Director of Medical Services): The hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) has really given the answer to the question raised by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar). The point is that there is not sufficient accommodation at the Alms House, and some of the old cases are sent to the Public Hospital where accommodation has to be found for them. The question is undoubtedly one of lack of accommodation at the Alms House. With regard to the provision of more beds at the Hospital there is not sufficient room for more beds, and sooner or later we will have to extend the Hospital.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will the position be relieved in any way when the Best hospital is ready?

Dr. MACLENNAN : Yes, sir, to some extent. The Best Hospital will accommodate about 90 patients, and in that way it will relieve the Georgetown Hospital.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : Some time ago at a meeting of the Town Council I suggested that perhaps Government might acquire the eastern portion of the street in order to extend the Hospital, and might also join the two blocks of buildings by taking over that portion of Newmarket street which passes between them.

Mr. DIAS : The question of floor beds at the Hospital was raised in this Council 20 or 25 years ago and the answer has always been the same. The accommodation at the Hospital is all right. It is at the Alms House that increased accommodation is needed. The cases which are sent from the Alms House to the Public Hospital are not hospital cases at all. That is what I was told by the late Dr. Rowland.

Mr. DE AGUIAR : I think there is something in what the Director has stated, but on investigation I think it will be found that there are also cases which do not come within the orbit of this discussion.

THE CHAIRMAN : The Director says that the position would not be helped by a small addition to this item.

MILITIA.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : During my peregrinations in Berbice some time ago I was informed, and I think my information is correct, that there was no club-room for the Militia in Berbice, and that a great deal of inconvenience was caused when the Militia were called out on the last occasion. I am wondering whether Government cannot see its way to insert an item under this head in order to make provision for a barracks or some temporary accommodation for those men.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : The matter has already been represented to Government and was considered in connection with the draft estimates. Government feels that this is not the time to spend money on a recreation club. There is a certain amount of accommodation for the Militia in New Amsterdam. I admit it is very limited indeed but this is not considered the time to spend money on a large club-room.

Mr. WIGHT : I am informed that when the Militia were called out there was no accommodation for them.

THE CHAIRMAN : Where did they go ?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : They went to a school hall.

THE CHAIRMAN : They are not often called out, and the question is whether the matter is sufficiently urgent to justify the expenditure.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 3—Public printing regulated by contract, \$42,240.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I move that this item be reduced by \$840 and carried out at \$41,400. Hon. Members will recollect that at the last annual session I informed them that Government was entering into a contract for one year, 1940, as there was no one in the Colony prepared to enter into a contract for a longer period. A contract has been entered into for 1941 for the sum of \$41,400 which has been rendered possible by a reduction of the amount of printing that will be done next year. It might have been possible to reduce the amount still further had there been any hope of a smaller number of questions being asked.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 22—Crown Agents' charges on store purchases (including commission, inspection and marine insurance), \$5,000.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I know it is the province of the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) and I do not intend to enter into a lengthy debate on this item because he is probably better acquainted with the facts than I am, but I was wondering whether in view of the particular circumstances obtaining at present as regards shipping facilities and the question of finance these charges might not be revised.

THE CHAIRMAN : I do not follow the hon. Member's remarks. Does he mean that the Crown Agents are not as capable as others to arrange shipping, &c ?

Mr. WIGHT : No, sir, I was suggesting

that if purchases of supplies were made by Government from time to time in the Colony as required Government might make some saving on this item.

Mr. DE AGUIAR : This item covers the Crown Agents' charges for looking after imports by Government. I think the hon. Member is making the point that in view of the present circumstances those charges will not be as high, but I think I would be right in suggesting to him that it is difficult to estimate what the charges for 1941 will be.

THE CHAIRMAN : I think it is a vote which has to take its chance.

Mr. WIGHT : I was rather in favour of the deletion of the item but I am always in favour of paying for work done. The point I endeavoured to make was that perhaps in the future purchases might be made in the Colony and so obviate these charges.

THE CHAIRMAN : There are many other considerations than that at present. It is a very difficult question.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 23—Tourist Bureau and advertisement of the Colony in Canada and elsewhere, \$2,880.

Mr. JACOB : I observe that it is proposed to spend \$1,000 less next year, but I am wondering whether this expenditure should not be suspended altogether until better times come.

Mr. DIAS : I happen to be the Chairman of the Tourist Committee and perhaps I may assist the Council by explaining that it is considered that it would be a great mistake to put up the shutters of the Bureau at the present time. On my way back from England last year I travelled *via* New York and I made it my business while there to interview some people who are interested in the tourist business, and I was strongly advised to do all I could to keep the institution alive because to close it down would be to wipe ourselves off the map, and then at the end of the war to begin again would cost so much more money. When I returned here I found that the vote of \$4,800 had been reduced

to \$3,800. That was done by the Committee itself, not by Government. When we had to consider the vote for 1941 the Committee came to the conclusion that in order to carry on on the lines indicated to me in the United States we should make a further reduction of \$920 in our demands on Government, and the result was that Government was communicated with to that end. Quite recently we had Mr. Collier down here and in a conversation with me, and also at a meeting he had with the Committee, he informed us that arrangements were being made in the United States to start a line of steamers to bring tourists to the West Indies and British Guiana, and that he was also of opinion that it would be a fatal error at this time to sever our connections with business there.

It is really in the interest of the Colony that the Committee desires to carry on this Bureau and to keep in the forefront as much as possible the name of the Colony both in Canada and the United States. These reductions were made at the request of the Committee because it was considered that at the present time we might achieve the object we have in view by asking for \$3,800 only. I do hope that the Council will adopt the advice given to me in the United States and also the strong suggestion made by Mr. Collier that we should in no way copy what was done in Trinidad. I believe that Trinidad was the only place in the West Indies that closed down its connection with the United States and Canada. Bermuda and Jamaica have extended theirs considerably. Of course, geographically, they are better situated than we are for inviting tourists, but we were making good headway and it is only the war that interrupted the flow of tourists in this direction. It would be a mistake for the sake of \$3,800 to destroy the foundation already laid. I think it should be maintained.

Mr. JACOB : In spite of the explanation which has been given I still ask that the matter be re-considered and a smaller sum be expended next year.

Mr. WALCOTT : I agree with all that has been said by the hon. Mr. Dias and I think it would be a grave mistake to further reduce this vote. The Tourist Committee of its own volition went into the matter and decided how far it could go

without actually cutting off everything. It would be impossible to keep a Secretary and our representatives in the United States and Canada unless we have as much as this. This sum is the least the Committee could possibly do with, and I agree with Mr. Dias when he said it would be a grave mistake to abolish the Bureau or to so deprive it of funds as to make it cease to function. Personally I think we will see a good deal more people coming down here during the next year than we have in the past, because they are looking for places to go now. The resorts in the Bahamas and Jamaica are becoming well filled up and I am sure tourists will come here next year in much greater numbers.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: In support of what Mr. Dias and Mr. Walcott have said I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) to an article which appeared in a recent issue of the magazine *Parade* in which gross ignorance of this Colony was displayed by the writer and should be controverted in some way. Perhaps his knowledge of the Colony was not obtained from the Tourist Bureau or any Government Department, but if the hon. Member read the article he might see the advisability of increasing this vote instead of deleting it.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 7—Operating and maintenance costs of sewerage service—Government properties outside the northern boundary of Georgetown, \$13,000.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to take this opportunity to thank Government, and the Colonial Treasurer particularly, on having arrived at the decision to make this contribution to the Municipality. Perhaps the amount is not as large as might have been expected, but I think in view of Government's position the Town Council is pleased to accept it.

I would also like to draw attention to item 1—Estimated rates on Government properties, \$61,693. I do not know whether Government anticipated certain increases in the estimated rates on its properties but I take it that Government will take advantage of the Bill before the Council to exempt certain properties from rates on account of improvements. I do

not think hon. Members will dispute the fact that some of the Government buildings are in a disgraceful condition, and perhaps Government will set an example by taking advantage of the provisions of the Bill.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Nobody is more anxious to improve the condition of Government buildings than Government itself, but we have not got the money to do it.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I wish to assure the hon. Member that we are not so happy over item 7 as he wants to make us to believe. Certainly I am very unhappy about it and as a matter of fact I had intended to ask Government to give me some reason which led to this decision to give the Municipality of Georgetown a gift—in my opinion it is nothing short of a gift—of \$10,000, and I take it that the decision was taken to give the Council \$1,500 a year. Frankly I do not know what the Town Council are going to do with the money, because I do not think they know themselves. (Laughter). I am wondering whether Government was wise in being so generous. I would certainly like Government to tell this Council what were the reasons that led up to such a generous contribution to the Town Council.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ten years' arrears.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Government was under no obligation to pay this sum.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not know if the hon. Member is a resident of Georgetown, and if he is I do not know if he subscribes to the daily newspapers, because there has been a rather heated controversy over this matter for some years, and I think it was fully explained at a meeting of the Town Council which was fully reported in the newspapers. I do not know whether the hon. Member was residing elsewhere during that period or was on a holiday for the benefit of his health.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The hon. Member is quite right; I hardly ever read the reports of the meetings of the Town Council. I do not consider them interesting enough. I repeat that I look upon this contribution as nothing short of a gift to the Town Council.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): It is quite a new experience for me to have to defend the Town Council; it used to be the other way around. I would like to explain that the payment is in relation to the connections at Eve Leary and other properties outside the Municipal boundaries. The Town Council put forward the claim that Government had not been paying anything at all for the service—the operating cost and maintenance, apart from the cost of the connections to the general sewerage scheme—to those properties. That is quite true. Government did pay the cost of the actual connections but has not been paying anything towards service costs ever since the year when the connections were made. We have had certain negotiations which have ended in a compromise—that Government pays a lump sum of \$10,000 in respect of the arrears of service costs from 1929 to 1939, and in future will pay \$1,500 a year in respect of the service and operating costs. I may add that that covers service for any extension of the connections which Government may make in that area. I agree with the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) that the Town Council has made a very good bargain. Nevertheless, Government feels that it ought to be generous to the Town Council.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: This amount is due by the Colony to the Town Council. The matter cropped up annually on the Town Council who had been holding out for a sum of \$20,000. I am rather surprised at some of the remarks made here this morning. It has been appearing as a debt due to the Town Council for several years and I must pay a tribute to the Colonial Treasurer for his handling of the matter together with Mr. Seaford. We arrived at a very amicable settlement which was put before the Town Council, and I as Mayor endeavoured to get the Council to accept that settlement. One hon. Member made some remarks about the Town Council not knowing what to do with the money. If that gentleman has any means he should certainly give the Council some money to help to reduce taxation. Government has benefited by the settlement and has saved a good deal of money. It is a debt due to the Town Council and the Council has recovered it.

Mr. WALCOTT: When the hon. Mem-

ber for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) rose to speak I thought he was going to suggest the abolition of the Town Council. I do not mind telling the Council that recently I have been speaking to several members of the Town Council who have told me that they would welcome the abolition of the Council. One of them told me so only half an hour before I came to this Council. I feel that the Town Council has neglected its duty consistently during the last few years, in one case on the question of the valuation of City properties. Three years ago the Council had to approach this Council for an enabling Bill, and the same thing is happening again this year.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member. It is true that he is allowed great latitude in debating in Committee of Supply, but that latitude is generally extended to the doings or misdoings of Government and anything pertaining to that. I do not think that latitude can be extended for the purpose of bringing in other bodies whose affairs are not under discussion at all. If the hon. Member is moving the deletion of this item he is entitled to give reasons—

Mr. WALCOTT: That is just what I am about to do. (Laughter). I move the deletion of this vote on the Town Council, and having done that I think I am in order in speaking on the Town Council which is an institution to which we are voting money, and it is Government's money which is being given to the Town Council for a certain purpose. If as a member of this Council I feel that that money is not being properly used then I have every right to say so.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member moves formally the rescision of this vote it gives him the right to give his reasons.

Mr. WALCOTT: I would move the deletion of the whole page. (Laughter). I do not know what Your Excellency's ruling is.

THE CHAIRMAN: I quite agree that if the hon. Member moves the deletion of the whole page he is at liberty to give reasons for so doing.

Mr. WALCOTT: As I have mentioned, the Town Council has not been functioning

properly for the last three years. The property valuations are in the same position now as they were in 1938. I do not think anyone would gainsay that. Last year we had a terrible exhibition of incompetence in valuation. We met here and passed an enabling Ordinance on the distinct understanding that the Town Council would put its house in order for this year's valuation. The Council has not done so, and Government made it pretty clear that if it did not it would have to take bold action under the Statute of the Council. The Town Council has been discussing such measures as a bus service for the City. One cannot call what exists to-day a bus service. In fact the Town Council has not done anything to justify its existence for the past three years, except levying taxation and squandering money.

The Town Council acted very wrongly, and I am not singular in my opinion, in a matter I consider very disgraceful. I am referring to a matter in connection with item 4—Contribution towards King George V. Municipal Welfare Centre, \$1,680. The Council wrongfully dismissed the person who was receiving this amount without giving any reason whatsoever. They could not give incompetence as a reason because the death-rate among the babies in the City was considerably reduced last year. The Council have refused to give any reason for her dismissal. They even tried to avoid paying the lady's passage home; the matter had to be referred to an eminent King's Counsel from Trinidad before it was paid. If that is not a disgrace to the Town Council I do not know what is. You may think that the Town Council have the sympathy of the public but they have not; far from it, and it is the coloured people of the Colony who feel it most keenly. They are the people who have lost by the action of the Town Council, and we will wait and see whether the death-rate for this year will be any lower or any higher than that of last year. I think the sooner Government takes over the Town Council and appoints Controllers to run the City the better for everybody. I may be in the minority but I am quite satisfied to be there. I want to see whether Members of this Council who agree with me, and some of the Councillors themselves who think the Town Council should be abolished, will have the "guts" to support what they told me.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I have always had respect for the hon. Nominated Member and his intelligence, acumen and interest in the community, but he made one or two statements in respect of which I would like to join issue with him. With regard to the incident he referred to the Town Council acted on legal advice; it has its own legal adviser. As regards the Council not having the sympathy of the public I would draw the hon. Member's attention to the fact that the Council has for the last three periods of its existence been returned practically unanimously. Whether that shows the confidence of the ratepayers in the Council or not I do not know, but the fact remains that at the last three periods there were three contests in one Ward and the result was that the Council remained unchanged. Surely the Councillors are not all elected, and I do not know whether the Hon. Member's criticisms would not be more beneficial if they were made at the Council meetings. After all the members of the Town Council are not all elected; some are nominated by Government, and Government would have to abolish those appointments. Perhaps the hon. Member might accept one of those seats if offered by Government, and the Council would have the benefit of his suggestions and criticisms which are mainly constructive.

Mr. DIAS : The hon. Mr. Walcott has fallen into error in his statement in connection with the passage money. There was never at any time any refusal to pay that passage, and the notice given to the lady of termination of her services contained the information that the Council would be prepared to pay her passage under the contract. I prepared that contract and I know what was written in it. It is only fair to the Council to explain that this employee was under contract to serve the Council for a period of three years. That contract is identical in terms with that used by Government in respect of officers who come to the Colony on time service. It contains a clause that either party may determine the contract by giving a certain period of notice, and the Council in the exercise of that right terminated the contract under that particular clause which provided that on determination the employee was entitled to a return passage. The notice contained the intimation that the Council was pre-

pared to pay the passage, so that the statement that the Council did not want to pay the passage is incorrect.

I think the hon. Member rather referred to the doubt which arose on the contract as to whether the officer was entitled to salary until her return to England. There was some doubt about that and counsel's opinion was obtained on the matter and he advised that she was entitled to that payment. The Town Council as a corporation cannot pay money out just because somebody demands it. It has to be satisfied that it is legally liable to pay it. Whatever time was taken up in obtaining counsel's opinion the Council cannot be blamed for it. As a matter of fact there was no delay whatever; the money was paid before the month when the employee had to quit the Colony had expired. The hon. Member has made a mistake which, if not corrected, would rather make it appear to the public that the Council had made an agreement with the officer and had broken it. The Council was well within its right in terminating the contract. There was no obligation to give any reason at all. The employee had a similar right to terminate the contract without giving the Council any reason at all. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

Mr. WALCOTT: I appreciate the very specious argument of the hon. Mr. Dias but it is not correct. What I said was 100 per cent. correct. The fact remains that a cheque was sent for one month's salary in lieu of notice, but the passage money was not paid until the 28th of the month, after the date of her dismissal. That is fact and not fiction, and I would suggest to the hon. Member to refresh his memory by looking up the records of the Town Council. I think that above everything else it was disgraceful action on the part of the Council to force a woman to go home at a time when destruction and the campaign of bombing and torpedoing was at its worst, while they would not bring their wives and children out here. I think it was a disgusting and disgraceful attitude for any Council which considers itself self-respecting to take up. I would speak on any such occasion for anybody to whom I thought a wrong had been done. I see there was a contest the other day in one of the Wards of the City

and I had hoped that the contesting undertaker would have got in. (Laughter).

Mr. DIAS: I wish to say that I had more to do with this matter than the hon. Member had. Every document passed through my hands and I know all about it. The lady was entitled to a return passage and we bought the passage ourselves. All the Council had to do was to make sure that she left the Colony. The cheque was paid because her solicitor gave an undertaking that she would leave the Colony. We were bound to give her a return passage but not the cash. She had a month to leave the Colony. We did not make her go.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think this is a matter which does not concern this Council at all, and the discussion is quite out of order.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to support my hon. friend on my right (Mr. Walcott) 75 per cent., not 100 per cent. I must say I agree with him on the question of the valuation. It is within my personal knowledge that several properties are not properly valued and the appropriate taxes are not paid. I know of a property worth not less than \$5,000 but taxes are paid on it on a valuation of \$2,150, and that state of affairs has been going on for over 10 years. That is a fact and I would like the representatives of the Town Council here to dispute it. Government is contributing taxpayers' money, but the Town Council is not spending that money properly. The rate of taxation should be reduced, and if there was a proper valuation of the properties in Georgetown that rate would have been reduced. I see from the records that \$10,000 was spent in 1939, \$5,000 in 1940 and a further \$5,000 is proposed to be spent in 1941 on the valuation of properties. My hon. friend, the Legal Adviser (Mr. Dias) is smiling. In addition to that the ratepayers are mulcted in costs to the extent of thousands of dollars. I estimate that the expenditure of the ratepayers during the last three years was \$30,000 to \$40,000 in respect of those bogus property valuations. It is time that the Law Courts have something to say about these things.

I also notice that for the supply of water to public institutions Government

contributes \$5,000 to the Town Council. Is Government satisfied that that money is properly spent? The Town Council is actually giving people sewage to drink in Georgetown. The present supply of water is most insanitary. It is time Government take a serious view of these things. The entire water system should have been changed years ago, but nothing has been done. The Town Council seems somewhat incompetent to handle these matters. The bus service has also been referred to by my hon. friend. Some excuse might be offered for that but we want to bring tourists to the Colony, yet nothing is done to remedy this standing disgrace. I think arrangements could be made for a proper bus service without any additional cost to the Town Council, or not very much cost. I would not say that the Town Council should be buried, but I disagree with my friend that an undertaker might have done the job, but I think something ought to be done, and that representatives of Government on the Town Council should take a keener interest in the affairs of the Council. The Town Council is a clique and it is time that something be done to break that clique. It is a close preserve for certain people and their friends, and the whole community is suffering. I support very strongly the statement made by the hon. Nominated Member, one of Government's representatives in this Council, and I hope Government will take a serious view of what is happening.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The hon. Member has referred to the Town Council as being a close preserve for certain persons and their friends.

Mr. JACOB: Let me add—and their relatives.

Mr. WIGHT: The hon. Member forgets that under the Town Council Ordinance certain persons are eligible for seats on the Council. The hon. Member is so well aware of that fact that he has made several attempts to get on the Council but he has been rejected by several of the Wards of the City. That is what democracy stands for. We are entitled to free expression of opinion, and no doubt when the hon. Member was seeking the suffrage of the electors of the various Wards he placed those criticisms before them, but he was rejected, and only quite recently. Per-

haps the hon. Member's memory is quite short. He said he was in support of the motion 75 per cent. I do not know whether he is in favour of the abolition of the Council or not.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: It is not my wish to make this Legislature a cockpit for any personal battle between individuals, but I must say that statements made here should be proved. This Council can take it from me that the valuations cost the Town Council nothing like between \$30,000 and \$40,000; nothing near it. The figures were published. The hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) certainly makes wild statements, but of all I have listened to this takes the cake. He is a disappointed member of the community; he sought election and was rejected. I cannot see why he should use this Council for this kind of discussion. The hon. Mr. Dias has fully explained the position with regard to the dismissal of the person in question and there is no necessity for me to reiterate the facts. The facts as stated by him are 100 per cent. correct.

I am rather surprised at the hon. Mr. Walcott's statement with regard to the valuations, because he regards himself as an expert valuer. As a member of the Town Council I will not make the statement here that the City is properly valued. I agree that it requires a proper system which should not be hastily dealt with. I have discussed the matter very carefully and I claim to be an expert. I am satisfied that the propositions put up to the Town Council by other persons are worthy of consideration and that we should take time to go into the matter. I consider the present system a very good one if we can get three honest appraisers to do the work, but this is not the time to enter into such a discussion. A Bill will be brought before the Council and I thought that would have been the opportunity for these remarks to be made. I think I will reserve what I have to say for that occasion.

The hon. Nominated Member used to be a property-owner but I see he has relinquished his claim to be even a voter. From my knowledge of him I place a very high value on his ability; I think he would be a very useful member of the Town Council, and if at any time he sought election in

my Ward I would be willing to retire, having served so many years, and let him have my seat. I think the remarks made in the Council this morning were uncalled for. I shall deal with the matter when the Bill is presented for the incorporation of the 1938 valuations, because I think that would be the proper time to do so.

Mr. JACOB: I wish to confirm the statement I made here about the cost of the valuations. The valuation of City properties cost the Town Council \$10,000 in 1939, \$5,000 in 1940, and in 1941 it is estimated that the Council will spend \$5,000. That will make a total of \$20,000. Then there are the legal expenses by ratepayers which will amount to at least another \$10,000, so that between \$30,000 and \$40,000 of ratepayers' money will be spent in connection with the bogus valuation of properties. I said further—and let the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight) listen to this very carefully—that there is a certain property in Georgetown worth over \$5,000 which has been assessed at \$2,150, and that state of affairs has been going on for 10 years. Let him deny that statement. The figures I have given are absolutely correct and I challenge the hon. Member to disprove them. I invite Government to investigate that property valuation in Kingston.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: The last speaker's figures are entirely wrong again. The sum of \$10,000 is the entire cost to the Municipality in that year, and when the hon. Member refers to \$30,000 or \$40,000 it is in keeping with all the figures he submits to this Council. With regard to the valuation of a certain property referred to by him I do not know whether he referred to the property of a company of which I am Chairman, but he is at liberty to take the matter to the Supreme Court. I had nothing to do with that valuation. It is a block of buildings which had been over-valued, and the valuation was reduced on appeal.

Mr. JACOB: That again I deny; it is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I would like to go back to item 7 and say that having heard the Colonial Treasurer I am somewhat convinced that the Town Council has this time made a very good bargain with Gov-

ernment, and that Government was exceedingly generous in agreeing to pay \$10,000 for something which, up to now, I honestly do not think it was liable. Anyway Government in its generosity felt it was under some obligation to the Town Council in connection with the sewerage of its properties at Eve Leary. I also agree now—I did not at the time—after hearing the Treasurer, that \$1,500 per annum is not too large a sum for Government to contribute towards the cost of the service to those properties.

As regards the motion by the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Walcott) I would like to say that I am not prepared to condemn wholesale a body that has been created by Statute in the way the Town Council was condemned to-day. I have a very high regard for statutory bodies created by a Council of which I have the honour to be a Member, and I am not prepared to criticize such bodies in that way. I do not think the hon. Nominated Member seriously intends that we should by a stroke of the pen abolish that body. What I think he has in mind is that now that Government's attention has been drawn to the various matters he referred to—the bus service, a pure water supply scheme and so on—Government might take more than a passing interest in the affairs of the Municipality. It must be remembered that apart from the fact that Government itself is a large property-owner, it has more than a paternal interest in the inhabitants of the City of Georgetown. As at present constituted the Town Council is comprised of nine elected Councillors representing nine Wards, and there are only three Councillors nominated by Government. Perhaps that aspect of the question might be examined, and it might be considered that Government's nomination on the Council might be so strengthened as to ensure a more satisfactory working. I do not use the word "satisfactory" in any derogatory manner at all. I think it would remove some of the criticisms, and perhaps Government might consider it from that angle.

I refer to what has been said about the valuation system merely on account of what was said by the hon. Member for North Western District when he referred to the legal expenses. It is because of the system of valuation that the Town

Council was involved in those heavy expenses. After all it must be remembered that if a ratepayer is aggrieved as a result of the valuation fixed by the Town Council he has a right of appeal, and I know from my own knowledge that in 1939 a large number of ratepayers of the City felt aggrieved at the valuations fixed by the Municipality, and I submit they were within their right in appealing against those valuations. That is what the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) referred to as democracy. When a Member made the flourishing statement that a large sum of money was spent on legal expenses as a result of those appeals I submit that he did not give the question the consideration it deserved. Had the Council not made errors itself in fixing what I consider enhanced values on properties there would have been no trouble at all. As a matter of fact I have no recollection of such a large number of appeals engaging the attention of the Courts before. The whole thing was a very serious matter, and if the Council was mulcted in costs the Council itself should enquire how it all came about, and in the interest of the ratepayers it should make every effort to remedy the complaint made by the hon. Member. After all the Council cannot prevent ratepayers appealing against its valuations.

I do suggest that the question of Government representation on the Council might receive some consideration because I feel myself that if something is done in that direction—I do not say that Government would provide the only talent available—it would tend to strengthen the Council.

Mr. JACOB: It is difficult to hear the hon. Member very clearly from this end of the table, but I gather that he says that it is not within our right to question what is being paid to the Town Council. I submit that it is within every Member's right to question that.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I excuse the hon. Member; he says he did not hear me.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must have misheard the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar).

Mr. JACOB: It is within the right of every Member of this Council to criticize the expenditure of taxpayers' money.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I never said anything to the contrary.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is a statement which the hon. Member is entitled to make or even to repeat.

Mr. JACOB: This Council is asked to vote \$61,000 for rates on Government properties, and I invite Government to see that the rate of taxation is fair, and that there is nothing wrong in the valuation of certain properties. I have referred to one particular property, but that is not the only instance; there are several.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member does not suggest that Government is responsible for the rating of any other properties than its own?

Mr. JACOB: I have not gone so far as that. I am suggesting that Government should investigate the valuation of properties in general. I referred to one particular property in Kingston which has been valued in the town books for over 10 years at \$2,150. At present anyone would pay \$5,000 for that property. As a matter of fact I think Mr. Crane, Stipendiary Magistrate of Georgetown, valued it at over \$6,000.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: The hon. Member repeats figures that are absolutely incorrect.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is quite impossible for Members of this Council to know which is correct and which is not correct; we have one statement against another. I do not think any Member would be influenced by those statements. They have little to do with the matter.

Mr. JACOB: I am definite about my facts. I have not looked at the Town books but I verily believe what has been told to me and what has been written in a certain section of the Press—that that property is greatly undervalued and paying about one-third of the taxes it should pay. It is in Government's interest—

THE CHAIRMAN: It has nothing to do with Government.

Mr. JACOB: I am submitting, sir, as one of the guardians of the taxpayers' money, that it is within Government's right

—Government may not want to exercise that right—to investigate whether such a state of affairs is continuing.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me say at once that Government cannot accept responsibility for the correctness of the rates on all the properties in Georgetown. That is a matter for the owners of the properties and the Town Council.

Mr. JACOB: I agree that Government cannot assume responsibility but I am suggesting that the matter should be investigated by Government's representatives on the Town Council. Whether they have investigated it in the past or not I do not know, but I am making the special request that Government's representatives on the Town Council should visit that property.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is not the proper place to make that request as to what instructions should be issued to Government's representatives on the Town Council.

Mr. JACOB: I am very jealous of my privileges here. I am making the statement that Government should investigate the matter, but whether Government will do so is another matter. I am submitting that this Council should not vote one penny towards rates and taxes based on a system of valuation which results in paying increased taxation unless it is satisfied that that system is correct. I am submitting that the system is wrong. Certain members of the Town Council close their eyes to lots of things that are going on there. How must the taxpayers know what is going on? The general taxpayers cannot know unless the matter is investigated and ventilated here. It is a gross injustice to the general taxpayers and a great benefit to those persons who have their properties undervalued.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I cannot allow the hon. Member's reference to the three Government nominees to go unchallenged. This matter was thoroughly threshed out and decided. The three Government nominees were present and heard everything. I do not think the hon. Member is correct and fair, especially as neither of those gentlemen is present here. It is not fair to attack them in their absence and suggest that they are not doing their duty.

Mr. JACOB: I have not suggested that.

Motion for the deletion of the entire head put and lost.

MISCELLANEOUS—(b) SUBVENTIONS, ETC.,
OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL.

Item 4—Grant to Infant Welfare and Maternity League—\$15,324.

Mr. JACKSON: The explanatory note on this item states that a sum of \$500 is to be expended for the purpose of providing free issues of milk in necessitous cases. A short while ago the Committee of the Infant Welfare and Maternity League appointed a sub-Committee to go into the cases of infant and maternal mortality in this Colony. That sub-committee went into the matter very carefully and made several recommendations to the Central Committee. The sub-committee felt that one of the many causes was the lack of proper feeding of the infants especially, but that owing to the economic stress through which the Colony is passing Government might not be in a position to advance a larger sum of money to assist poor parents and their offspring by providing free milk for them. I am wondering whether Government would not be willing to increase this vote by \$500 so that instead of \$500 being allocated to the provision of free milk a sum of \$1,000 might be provided.

I am making this appeal to Government because I am satisfied that the cause is an exceedingly worthy one. There is this about it—that great stress is properly laid on the proper feeding of infants by their mothers. Breast feeding is said to be the best, but the sub committee found that many of the mothers had to return to their work before their infants could do without breast feeding. While the Committees in the various districts are endeavouring to do their best in that connection the funds they can raise are not sufficient to do all that is necessary for those mothers. I do not think I need say much more on this question because everyone realizes the importance of pure milk to these babies. If Government could see its way to increase this vote by \$500 I am sure the mothers would be grateful, the babies would benefit considerably, and the Central Committee of the League would have a very great load removed from their heads.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I have risen to support the appeal made by the hon. Member. Like him I am associated with the work that is being done at those clinics, and I know that many times during the year the Committees are hard-pressed to provide the babies with milk. As a matter of fact I do not know whether Government would be surprised to know that sometimes the Committee has to go around and appeal to the goodness of some people to assist in providing sufficient quantities of milk. At the clinic with which I am associated there is one person who contributes two pints of milk per day for the purpose. I have mentioned that because I want Government to know that the Committees are not entirely dependent on the assistance received from Government. They make their own efforts but their resources are so limited that they cannot do as much as they would like to do.

Dr. MACLENNAN: As Chairman of the League I must say I have great sympathy with the remarks made by the two hon. Members who have just spoken. The League is doing excellent work in the Colony and my own feeling is that I would like to see its activities extended very much more and a much larger subvention given by Government. I sympathize with the view that the vote might be slightly increased, and if Government could see its way to grant it I would be very grateful indeed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I suggest that the particular item might be held over in order that Your Excellency might consider it, or that the item be passed on the understanding that consideration will be given to the appeal made by hon. Members.

THE CHAIRMAN: The item will be passed as it stands, but an undertaking is given that it will be recommitted after investigation.

Item put, and agreed to.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: What is the position in regard to the various grants that are being provided here? I am wondering whether all of these institutions are functioning.

THE CHAIRMAN: Such information

as we have indicates that they are functioning in the normal way.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: We have been asked to continue these grants.

THE CHAIRMAN: The only one I am doubtful about is item 12—(Contribution towards the Imperial Economic and Shipping Committees, \$519), but generally speaking I think the votes should stand as they are because our general information is that all of these institutions are functioning quite normally. I am making special enquiry with regard to item 12.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is a note of explanation with regard to item 12 which says that if the Committee is not functioning after March, 1941, the money will not be spent.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I was also thinking of item 62—(Contribution towards expenses of Aggrey House, \$480). There was something about it in the Press not long ago.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The contribution with regard to that item is being held over for the time being.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I wish to make a suggestion in respect of item 21—(Grant for expenses of management and administration of New Widows and Orphans' Fund, \$720)—and in that connection I may have to refer to item 58—(Payment to New Widows and Orphans' Fund of difference between 6% on permanent investments and actual interest earned, \$8,500—because they are closely related. I gather from the explanatory note that the investments of this Fund have increased, but the rate of interest is low and therefore Government is under an obligation to make good the difference. That is quite clear, but I thought this Fund was functioning as a separate institution, in which case it would carry its own accounts. Yet now we see that Government has to provide a certain sum of money annually for payment of expenses of management. I am tempted to ask whether there are any other expenses incurred in connection with this Fund, and how they are met? I would suggest that perhaps the Fund should carry its own accounts, and if there is any deficit the Directors could apply to Government for assistance. I do not like

the idea of a separate item being put on the estimate as a grant towards the expenses of management of this Fund. It seems to me that we are making two bites at the cherry. I am not quite clear why it is that we should provide a certain sum every year to cover the expenses of management of the Fund. I do not know what it means.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT : With regard to item 58 there is nothing included for expenses of management. It all concerns the question of interest. The law provides for the payment by Government of the difference between 6 per cent interest on the permanent investments and the actual interest earned.

Mr. McDAVID : I think the hon. Member has referred to this matter on a previous occasion and has been given the same explanation which I will give now. This Fund has been framed on the actuarial basis. The pensions which it provides are calculated on the basis that the Fund shall earn a fixed rate of interest. That rate was up to some time ago 8 per cent., but has since been reduced to 6 per cent. Under the Statute by which the Fund has been established this Council has undertaken to provide the difference between the yield of the actual investments of the Fund and 6 per cent. By subsection (3) of section 3 the Treasurer has to pay as a statutory right the difference between the actual rate of interest earned and 6 per cent.

As regards the cost of management the Fund is not chargeable with cost of management because, by section 13 of the Ordinance, this Council has undertaken to provide a sum not exceeding \$720 to defray expenses of management. Those charges are not to be borne by the Fund. That is the basis on which this Fund has been established and accepted by the Council and put into law. Therefore it is not a reasonable suggestion that we should make a change in that arrangement.

THE CHAIRMAN : Does that answer suit the hon. Member ?

Mr. DE AGUIAR : Yes, sir.

OFFICIAL RECEIVER.

Mr. JACOB : I would like to know if the Crown Solicitor draws fees for private

practice in addition to his salary? I have raised the question of fees on several occasions and I think it has been established that fees should not be paid to legal officers of the Government by the public.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I do not know whether the hon. Member is referring to the amount paid to Mr. King as Commissioner of Income Tax, as shown on page 34, Appendix D.

Mr. JACOB : I do not wish to say anything which might be regarded as a reflection on this very conscientious officer. As a matter of fact if he would lose in any way by not being allowed to draw fees in connection with his work as Crown Solicitor I would recommend that his salary be increased to meet that, but I think it is bad in principle for an officer of Government to do outside work and receive fees from private clients.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : That remark is absolutely incorrect ; the Crown Solicitor does not do outside work. I do not know if the hon. Member was taking a sojourn abroad on the last occasion the matter was referred to by me. When the officer does work for Government he is entitled to draw fees. I do not know what the hon. Member means by fees.

Mr. JACOB : I do not know why the hon. Member was so anxious to interrupt me. I was trying to explain that if an officer of Government receives fees for private work those fees should be paid to Government and he should be given an increase of salary. If the officer does not receive any fees it is another matter.

The CHAIRMAN : Will the hon. Member explain what fees he is referring to ?

Mr. JACOB : I am enquiring whether the Crown Solicitor receives fees from private individuals? If so I think the practice is undesirable. As a matter of fact the Assistant Attorney-General was allowed private practice at one time but his position was changed quite recently. I was under the impression that it had been decided that no officer of Government, whether the Crown Solicitor, Crown Counsel or Assistant Attorney-General, should be allowed the privilege of private practice.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Again I must ask the hon. Member to make a definite statement; let him state facts. The Crown Solicitor is not entitled to private practice in the sense known to lawyers.

Mr. JACOB: I do not pretend that I am conversant with everything that is in these Estimates. I was merely enquiring whether this officer receives fees—if he is entitled to private practice. Is this gentleman entitled to private practice, and does he receive any fees in connection with that private practice?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Crown Solicitor is not entitled to private practice.

Mr. JACOB: Very well, when I come to the item I shall raise it again. I am not satisfied.

THE CHAIRMAN: The item is here now.

Mr. JACOB: I have to ask Your Excellency's permission to refer to the matter again. This is an appendix and it does not come within our scope.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I suggest that if the hon. Member will see me at the adjournment I will investigate the point he wants to know about.

POLICE.

Item 9—Prisoners' rations, \$2,000.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to know whether this item includes the amounts paid to fugitives under the Fugitives Ordinance?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I take it that the hon. Member is referring to the feeding of French fugitives who are rationed under this item. At the moment they are being rationed from the War Emergency vote.

Mr. WIGHT: I take it that it is expenditure we will be able to recover.

THE CHAIRMAN: From whom?

Mr. WIGHT: I was hoping that at some time later we will be able to recover it.

THE CHAIRMAN: We may be able to recover it under the Peace Treaty.

Mr. JACOB: I observe that some of those unfortunate people have been going around the City in a very disgraceful condition collecting money. I was wondering whether something more could be done for them. I do not share the view that the money might be recovered, or that we are spending too much on them. It may be an indirect contribution towards the war effort. I hate to see strangers coming into the country under circumstances over which they have no control and walking about the streets in a disgraceful condition.

Mr. WIGHT: Is the hon. Member aware how some of those fugitives come into this country?

THE CHAIRMAN: The position of some of these fugitives is not clear. Their status is very indeterminate, and if anybody can suggest a solution of the problem I would be extremely grateful.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 20—Courses at New Scotland Yard, \$140.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Will these courses be held during 1941?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Very unlikely, but the money will not be spent if no course is held.

Mr. WIGHT: Couldn't we delete the item now?

THE CHAIRMAN: Of course we could, but after all it is a very small amount.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The suggestion has been made to me by several members of the community that Government should be asked to consider the insertion of a sum of \$1,000 under this head as a contribution towards the Orphanage at Plaisance. My information is that this Orphanage was established several years ago and has assumed a great deal of the responsibility formerly borne by the Orphan Asylum which was run at the Colony's expense. It is wholly voluntary and an entirely charitable institution. The number of boys cared for at the Orphanage is 63, and I observed when we were dealing with another item that Government is actually

contributing towards the upkeep of a boy at the institution. The cost of the upkeep of a boy at the Orphanage is about \$3.50 per month, and one wonders how it is done at such a low figure, but it is done ; I have an assurance that that is the correct figure. In further support of my suggestion I would point out that as a result of institutions of this kind Government is relieved of some of its responsibility to care and provide for the orphans of the Colony as it previously did.

The Orphanage is entirely dependent upon contributions of a voluntary nature from persons in the community, and the authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to continue to run it as cheaply as they are doing with the present contributions, especially in view of the demands being made on certain members of the community in other directions.

The Royal Commission in its report suggested the urgent need of certain social reforms. Of course it is a question of finance, but I do not think a grant of \$1,000 per annum would impose too great a strain on the finances of the Colony having regard to the good work being done by this institution. It performs a public service which I submit should really be performed by the Colony itself. My request is made for the insertion of a new item—17—under item 16—Grant to Ursuline Convent (for Orphanage), \$1,000—of a similar sum to that contributed to that institution which does work of a similar nature. Certain hon. Members are aware of the good work done by this institution at Plaisance. In fact certain members of the community subscribe monthly to the upkeep of a certain number of boys at the institution.

THE CHAIRMAN: Consideration of the hon. Member's suggestion will be resumed after the adjournment.

2 p.m.—

The Committee resumed. Mr. Seaford was present.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: During the adjournment I took the opportunity of enquiring whether Government had received any request from the Authorities of the Plaisance Orphanage for a grant towards this institution and found that none has been received by Government. I

think there may be other institutions equally deserving of some consideration from Government, as one hon. Member pointed out. It is therefore advisable not to make any change in the Estimates today, but Government will undertake to consider the point raised by the hon. Member.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I do not know whether, as I understand the remarks of the hon. Colonial Secretary, it would be a better procedure if the Authorities concerned should make the application to Government rather than the matter should be raised in this Council. I would like to be informed as to whether that would be the correct procedure. I thought the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) merely drew the attention of Government to the deserving need of this institution. I think, most of us—if not all of us—think it is an institution deserving of some assistance. Too much cannot be said in support of it. If it is felt that representation should be made in the first instance by the Authorities concerned, then perhaps that may be done.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not so much the procedure of representation being made by the institution itself. Hon. Members must realize that when requests of this kind are made in Council, it is almost impossible to give an undertaking at once that they will or will not be acceded to. The question has to be investigated, its cost, etc., and also we have got to make sure there are no other institutions that have similar claims to be considered. What is really wanted is time to investigate a question of this kind. It cannot be expected that Government will undertake right off when a request is made to say "Yes" or "No" without being given time to investigate all the circumstances. As the hon. Colonial Secretary has said, we will investigate the matter.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I rather fancy the hon. Member thought that by bringing the matter up hon. Members will have an opportunity of expressing their views in this Council and those views may be taken into account by Government when considering the matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: As long as that is understood, then it is all right.

Mr. JACKSON: I would like to give my support to the question brought to the notice of the Council by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo. I quite appreciate Your Excellency's remarks on the matter and I am very glad for the opportunity of expressing here my thorough appreciation of the work done in connection with the Plaisance Orphanage. I became acquainted with that institution for more than a generation. I remember that in 1887, when I first launched out as a school-master, that Orphanage was in existence under the Rev. Fr. Cassati who at personal sacrifice did the best he could for the boys. I know that many of those who have passed through that Orphanage are now filling responsible positions in the community, and I am quite sure that a work of that kind, done quietly and well, will receive the support of Government. That work has been carried on all these years without any attempt to receive Government aid, but now that the work has become very much larger than it was in previous years the need certainly exists for sympathetic consideration of the case. I am satisfied that Government will do its best after considering the matter and will certainly assist that noble institution. I give my unqualified support to the project, and I have no doubt there are other hon. Members of this Council who have perhaps come into contact with the work of that institution and who will also tell Government of the support that it needs and of the good work that it has done in the community.

Mr. WALCOTT: I would like to say that I am entirely in favour. I know the work that has been done by that Orphanage. I think it relieves Government of certain liabilities and therefore the proposal has my hearty support.

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot go any further than say that investigation will be made. Until that investigation is made Government has no reply to make, as it is not in a position to give any definite undertaking.

POST OFFICE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are one or two minor alterations to be made owing to changes in the staff since the estimates of the Department were

made. They are set out in the notes hon. Members have.

Item 1 (7)—15 Class III. Clerks, \$10,800.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the amount be reduced to \$10,540. It is due to a change in the staff.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item 1 (13)—4 Typist-Clerks (\$288 by \$24 to \$480), \$1,241.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the item be amended to read—“ 4 Typist-Clerks—1 at \$450 by \$30 to \$600, 3 at \$288 by \$24 to \$480 ”—and the amount carried out at \$1,396. A corresponding reduction is made in the Savings Bank Branch. One clerk is transferred from that branch which is under a different head.

Question put, and agreed to.

POST OFFICE—TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR'S BRANCH.

Mr. JACKSON: I would like to make a few general remarks in connection with the telephone service as it obtains in West Demerara. One experiences considerable difficulty in getting a call through to Georgetown. I lay no charge against the telephone-operators. They in my opinion endeavour to do their best but they are the victims of circumstances. On enquiry I find that the number of lines is not sufficient to carry on the work of transmission. As a matter of fact one sometimes has to wait hours to get a call attended to, and the cost of the service in the country districts is exceedingly high. Naturally one would like to have efficiency throughout the service, but through the difficulty mentioned the service is correspondingly poor, and I hope Government may look into the matter and see whether anything can be done to remove the difficulty. One naturally expects to get through his communication quickly, and when one is continually being told “Engaged” it gets on one's nerves. Perhaps Government may see a way of improving matters so that communication may be less laborious and work less hampered.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The position on the West Coast, Demerara, is gradually becoming like that on the East Coast Demerara. I am speaking as one of those who have to use the West Coast line. It is extremely difficult to understand why one cannot obtain more rapid communication there. I suppose I will be told we are short of lines. That is the old trouble, and in these days when the District Commissioners live on the telephone, the Police live on the telephone, and other people like them live on the telephone, it is extremely difficult for the commercial man to get through. I know that Government offices must have precedence and I am not saying that they use the telephone without good reason, but it is a fact that the West Coast line at the present moment is congested and I have every reason to believe the District Commissioner's office is always on the telephone. The Police naturally must be on the telephone at all times, but I am connected with some very important work which is going on there at the present time and sometimes I cannot get in touch with the parties on the telephone. I do not think people should be placed in that position. If anything can be done to relieve the complaint I am sure Government will be doing a service to the community. I do join in the request made by the hon. Nominated Member for the remedying of the situation in the new year. I know there is some difficulty in the matter, but perhaps the technicians in the telecommunications branch may be able to solve the problem.

With Your Excellency's permission I am sorry to ask your indulgence to refer to something which escaped my attention at the time. I desire some information about it. It is in respect of item 5 on the previous page (60) under head "Post Office"—Conveyance of Mails. I notice that there is an increase of \$38,000. The figure put down for 1941 is \$73,000 as against \$35,000 provided for 1940. The increase is a very large sum. I know there is a lot of reasons for it, but that is not the point. What I do not understand is you are going to spend \$38,000 more for the conveyance of mails and, while I know you are going to get it back, there is nothing in the Estimates to show that. I have in mind the increased taxation which is going to follow. The Revenue side under Post Office is \$3,000 less for Postal, so I cannot see where you

are going to account for the increase. The revised estimate for 1940 under sub-head "Postal" is \$173,300, the general revenue from stamps—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member is looking at the wrong column—Revised Estimated Revenue for 1940—and is taking that as the estimated expenditure for 1940. I think it is fair to take the total estimated revenue for 1940, \$239,000, and the total revised estimated revenue for 1940, \$268,000. I do not think Government can be expected to show an addition of \$38,000 over and above the revised estimate for 1940.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Of course not, but what I do expect is this: The approved estimate of expenditure for 1940 is \$35,000 and the proposed estimate of expenditure for 1941 is \$73,000, an increase of \$38,000. The revised estimate of revenue for 1940 is \$173,000 and the proposed revenue for 1941 is only \$170,000. My figures are quite correct. There must be some explanation about that.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I think the hon. Member is confusing himself. The hon. Colonial Secretary is quite correct. Under the head "Post Office" you have sub-head 1 "Postal" \$135,000 estimated revenue for 1940, \$173,000 revised estimate for 1940 and \$170,000 estimate for 1941. The hon. Member has been trying to compare the amount of \$135,000 shown in the approved estimates for 1940 with the estimate for 1941. These two things are not comparable. The actual expenditure for 1940 is not shown here. The revised estimate for 1940 is probably much higher than \$135,000. It is quite wrong to compare \$135,000 in the expenditure side with \$173,000.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am going by the figures put before me. The figures state clearly that the approved estimate for 1940 is \$135,000 and I am justified in making comparison with the revised estimated amount of \$173,000.

Mr. McDAVID: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member. It is quite simple. The figures show that the approved estimate for 1940 is the original estimate passed by this Council at the beginning of the year.

THE CHAIRMAN: We do not show the revised estimate of expenditure.

Mr. McDAVID: If the hon. Member looks at the first supplementary estimate passed by the Council he would see under "Post Office" an item—"Conveyance of Mails, \$26,000." That was approved by this Council as a supplementary provision but it is not shown in the estimates at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: I see the hon. Member's point. If I understand him correctly, if experience for this year has shown that this considerable increase in revenue has taken place during the year then it is reasonable to anticipate an equivalent increase next year rather than a falling-off. It is just proportion.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: There is still a difference of \$12,000 to be accounted for. The correct revised expenditure is \$161,000 and it is estimated to receive \$173,000 in revenue. I do not want to press the point any further except to say that it seems to me that we prepare our estimates of revenue on such a conservative basis so as to justify additional taxation. It is a very hard criticism to make. I am speaking on the general question. If we are going to submit estimates of expenditure on the grand side and our estimates of revenue on the low side, obviously this Government will always be faced with the possibility of having to introduce new taxation.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has got on to something which can be better dealt with when we come to Revenue.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Unfortunately I never have a chance of dealing with the question of revenue. At the present moment the Committee is only dealing with expenditure and one only brings up a particular point when such a case occurs.

Mr. McDAVID: A general survey of the financial position is given after the consideration of the Estimates.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Under Revenue—Postal—the hon. Member is taking all the revenue of that Department whereas under Expenditure—Head XXIX (Post Office) he is dealing with one specific item. There is going to be loss of revenue on the sales of postal orders and other

things as a result of the war. It might save time if I get from the Postmaster General the revised estimate of expenditure under this head. The hon. Member would then see why the revenue is not increased by any sum. All the revenue is lumped under one head "Postal."

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I quite appreciate that. It just gives one an opportunity of referring to the high air mail charges. I do not want to raise that here.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member may do so.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am very grateful for the opportunity afforded me to do so. If that is Government's answer to my question, then I have to raise the question of the exorbitant air mail charges from this country. Those of us who use the air mail, which is the only thing can be used with safety in these days, find it very expensive especially when comparisons are made with the charges in other places. On letters coming from North and South of this place the rates are very much lower than our rates. It is a matter which has been discussed over and over again, but the Postmaster-General has never been able to convince me and those of us who have taken it up with him. I was hoping I may have been able to obtain some figures to work on, so as to convince Government that a case has been made out for a reduction in the air mail rates.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Dealing with the point raised by the hon. Mr. Jackson and the last speaker, conditions will be greatly improved in 1941. If hon. Members turn to Head XLIV—"Post Office—Extraordinary"—on page 83 there are several items inserted which will enable improvements to be carried out throughout the Colony in regard to the telephone service. Besides that, within the last few months a Satellite Exchange has been erected at Vreed-en-Hoop which will improve the telephone communication on the West Coast.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: If Government would undertake to go into the question I raised about the air mail charges, I would leave the matter as it is.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it suggested that

we make a lot of money out of the air mail charges?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No profit is made.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I do not want to contradict that.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the best information I can give at the present time.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I do ask that the matter be gone into.

POST OFFICE—SAVINGS BANK.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: With regard to item 1 (c)—“8 Class III. Clerks, \$6,951”—I move that the amount be increased by \$260. This is due to the change in the holder of one of the posts. The amount will read \$7,211.

* Question put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that item 1 (d)—“3 Typist-Clerks (\$450 by \$30 to \$600), \$1,453”—be amended to read: “3 Typist-Clerks—2 at \$450 by \$30 to \$600, 1 at \$288 by \$24 to \$480—\$1,298.”

Question put, and agreed to.

THE CHAIRMAN: Has the Council any objection to taking head XLIV—Post Office—Extraordinary—on page 83 now, as the Postmaster-General is present? I have no objection if hon. Members are agreeable.

Question put, and agreed to.

POST OFFICE—EXTRAORDINARY,

Items passed without discussion.

PRISONS.

Item 1 (r)—Casual Warders, \$2,738.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: May I enquire if the policy is to keep on extending this item? In 1940 the amount was \$1,095 and for 1941 it is \$2,738. It seems to me that if we need the services of these warders we should make some of them permanent.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is more economical to increase the vote

under casual warders. If the prison population goes down, as one hopes it will, the vote will be reduced.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is very difficult to say whether the circumstances which cause this increase would be permanent. I think, it will not be.

Item 3—Dietary, \$10,300.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Is the increase here due to the increased number of prisoners it is proposed to have during next year?

THE CHAIRMAN: It is based on the numbers there now and not on the number of people expected to be there.

Item 9—Bakery—Georgetown Prison, \$20,000.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I hope my question would not meet with the same answer as my previous one. I am afraid of these supplementary estimates. For the purpose of guiding Government, the approved estimate for 1940 is given as \$13,000. I do not know whether Government had to ask for an additional vote in respect of that amount. I cannot say, but if you had not to ask for an additional vote in 1940 the figure \$20,000 appears to be high.

Mr. JACOB: I think, I am inclined to agree with the last two hon. Members. The approved estimates for 1940 are \$13,000 for Bakery and \$7,100 for Dietary. The estimates for 1941 in respect of those two items have increased to such an extent that it makes one think Government intends to put more people into the prisons.

Mr. SEAFORD: The note relating to the Bakery states: “Owing to increased orders for bread from Institutions including Georgetown Prison and possible rise in prices of flour and fuel.” What are those institutions?

Dr. MACLENNAN (Director of Medical Services): The institutions concerned are the Public Hospital, Georgetown, the Alms House, and the Leper Hospital.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I wonder whether the hon. Member for Central Demerara from his knowledge of the commodity can

give us some idea as to the possible rise in the price of flour.

THE CHAIRMAN: I should like to have it, if he can.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The possible rise in the price of flour is governed by supply and demand.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: My profession unfortunately does not permit me to charge a fee as the hon. Member who has just taken his seat can do. I certainly can give the information and will most gladly do so. It is from my knowledge of the subject that I think an addition of \$7,000 for 1941 is high.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not an addition of \$7,000. There is a large supplementary vote for this year.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In the Second Supplementary estimates to be placed before Council it will be seen at page 5 under "Prisons" item 9—"Bakery, Georgetown Prison"—that a supplementary vote of \$2,680 is being asked for. I have not got a copy of the the First Supplementary estimates in front of me. The numbers are still increasing in the prisons, and there is no sign of decreasing.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I know that the Estimates are printed early, but Your Excellency would agree that the figures as presented are confusing. I am going to suggest that these figures might be more carefully gone into. I do not want to harp too much on the subject, but it is difficult for a Member to follow them and offer any constructive criticism.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The prison population has considerably increased—from 360 to 433, an increase of 73.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am not thinking of the prison population at all. What I am saying is that on this paper before us we have that the approved estimate of an item is so much, and when one offers some helpful criticism on that one is faced with the answer that there was a supplementary estimate in March, another in June and another is to follow. It seems that the position can be more clearly

stated. It is extremely difficult to make comparison with the previous year's expenditure.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not quite sure what the hon. Member is getting at. If he wants the revised estimate of expenditure in respect of every item, it is going to be a big undertaking. The revised estimates of all the heads are on page xi, but to provide hon. Members with another column in the Estimates for every item will be a tremendous undertaking. We have to begin the preparation of the Estimates in June or July, but if that is to be done a start will have to be made earlier than that.

Mr. JACOB: I do not support the view that we should get additional information. I do not know that the majority of us look at all the information we do get now. Three-fourths of the Elected Members do not look at some of the figures at all. I do not share the views expressed by the last hon. Member. On the question of dietary, I make out from the supplementary provision before us that the expenditure for this year is \$9,600 as against \$10,300 for next year. I do not think there is much to cavil about. When it comes to the question of the bakery the total for this year is \$15,680 as against \$20,000 to be provided for next year. I think the explanation offered is fairly satisfactory. If it is not spent it would remain. I do not think any useful purpose is being served in questioning the amount.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am surprised at the hon. Member's remarks. He himself had to call for assistance to find some page at the back of the Estimates.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not expect all hon. Members to find their way.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The hon. Member touched slightly on the revenue side of the Estimates. After taxation has increased and the amounts voted are not spent, does the hon. Member suggest a supplementary estimate? If the money is not spent it would decrease the vote but I know there would be no refund.

Mr. JACOB: I was wondering whether any revenue is derived from the work some of these prisoners do. I have to

agree partly with the hon. Member for Western Essequibo. I am not very well informed on this point. I do not know if he is. I was wondering whether with the number of prisoners increasing some productive form of work could not be started around Georgetown and revenue obtained from their services.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the hon. Member takes a stroll by the Botanic Gardens he will there see 10 acres under cultivation by the prisoners. They provide their own vegetables and it is hoped to provide enough to send to other institutions.

Mr. McDAVID: The actual cash revenue earned by the Prisons is small. Under Head IV. in the Estimates of Revenue it will be seen that the amount of \$275 is provided.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Item 1 (8)—1 Class I. Clerk, \$2,004

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the number of Class I. Clerks be increased by one, and that the item be amended to read: "2 Class I. Clerks" and the amount carried out at \$3,720. This is to give effect to one of the recommendations of the Reorganization Committee. This item has been actually approved on a supplementary vote for 1940 but these estimates were prepared before that vote was passed by the Council.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item 1 (6)—Accountant (\$2,640 by \$120 to \$3,120), \$2,920.

Dr. SINGH: I understand that this post of Accountant is being filled by a person who is an outsider. When I say "Outsider", I mean the person has never been employed in the Government Service of this Colony nor in that of any part of the British Empire. It is for reasons like in this case, that some time in last year a motion was moved in this Council asking the Government to consider candidates for employment from among the officers of the Civil Service and the people of the Colony. I am sure that this post could have been filled by a member of the Civil Service or perhaps by a local man. The requirements for entering the Civil Service are that a

person must possess a Senior Cambridge or Oxford University certificate or a London Matriculation certificate, be of good health and within a certain age. I wonder whether this person possesses all these qualifications. What about his age? What special qualification he possesses to warrant his being given priority to other members of the Government Service? Government should consider the appointment of local candidates before that of others, provided they have the necessary qualifications.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to support the hon. Member and to go one step further and ask the age of this officer who has been appointed. I understand a considerable amount of stringency is attached to persons entering the Service. The question is whether an accountant could not have been found in this Colony for the post. As the hon. Member has stated, we have passed here a motion that wherever it is practicable and possible persons born in the Colony should be given appointment. I beg to move the deletion of this item.

Mr. McDAVID: I was on the Committee which made the recommendation for this appointment to which reference has been made. One of the chief points the Committee discussed was the lack of any real effort at cost accounting. Cost accounting is a very specialized branch of accounting and requires specialized training. The Committee did recommend to Government that they should try to get an officer who had that specialized training, and the selection of this officer was recommended and made because first of all he had spent many years in this Colony as Accountant of the Sewerage Scheme throughout the whole of that work in this Colony. After the completion of the Scheme he obtained employment on the Trinidad Water Scheme. It seemed to Government at the time that as this officer was seeking a permanent post he was a very suitable choice indeed. I plead guilty to having recommended him. I am second to none in my desire to see local men get preference of employment all the time, but seeing that there was very great need in the Public Works Department for a man with a specialized knowledge of cost accounting I supported the selection of this officer. The selection was made by

Government, but it went before the Committee and the Committee made the recommendation. So far as I am aware the officer is giving every satisfaction, and I hope as a result of the appointment there would be great improvement in the Public Works accounting and economy in expenditure.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not know whether this Accountant was a Senior or otherwise in the Sewerage Scheme. All I know, however, is that the accounts there got into a muddle.

Mr. McDAVID: I supervised the accounts of the Scheme at a later stage and they were never in a muddle.

Mr. JACOB: The question of age and other questions asked have not been answered. I am sorry the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) did not carry the story of the muddle further. The Sewerage Scheme cost this Colony over \$5,000,000 and I do not know whether this officer was a junior clerk there or he held a responsible position. On the whole the position was very unsatisfactory from the point of view of the residents of this Colony. I am not in favour of certain appointments in the Service, particularly Senior positions being filled by local men. I think, however, that a suitable candidate could have been found here for this post. It would be interesting to learn what connection this gentleman has in the Colony, what is his age, and what is his health qualification. The charge has been made that the appointment is due to favouritism and nepotism, and we have not got the information we desire. We would like to know whether he is physically fit, what is his age, and what is his actual qualification. We are just merely told that he is a cost accountant, that he was employed with the Sewerage Scheme here for 5 years or so and that he was engaged by the Government in Trinidad. I do not think that is sufficient.

THE CHAIRMAN: On a large Water Scheme.

Mr. McDAVID: I said he was Accountant of the Sewerage Scheme here, he was chief; he was Accountant and Secretary of the Trinidad Water Board Service and did cost accounting there for seven years.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Why is the salary carried out at \$2,920 when the minimum salary is \$2,640, which is even more than that of the Senior Clerk in the Audit Department and comparing the onerous duties of that officer with his?

Mr. McDAVID: The salary of the post has been already passed by this Council on a supplementary estimate. It is exactly the same salary.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I have risen reluctantly to offer my contribution to the debate. I am labouring under a certain amount of difficulty in trying to follow the Estimates as they are put before the Council, and I do not know whether these estimates include the entire recommendations of the Committee which sat to consider the reorganization of this Department. This much I have been able to gather from a perusal of the Estimates, the total expenditure is liable to be an excess of something like \$43,000. I may be wrong as I am only taking the figures as they appear before me and there may be a number of variations which have taken place since the figures were printed. On the face of it this reorganization will cost something like \$43,000 more on the figures I have quoted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to point out that on page 71 there are several items which have been transferred from different heads—Public Works Annually Recurrent, and Sea Defences—to the new sub-head of the Public Works Department—Consulting Engineer's Branch. There is no additional expenditure; that money is coming from some other head.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The difficulty of the hon. Member is just the same as mine. Item 1 (7) has "Senior Clerk, \$2,520" and looking at the note thereon we see: "Reduced by one post in place of which the post of Accountant has been substituted, *vide* sub-head 1 (6)." Is it that item, (7) is the outcome of item 1 (6)?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is perfectly clear. There used to be two Senior Clerks. We have abolished one post of Senior Clerk and this Council approved of the post of Accountant being substituted therefor.

*Mr. SEAFORD: I regret that this question of favouritism is brought up here again because the Committee that sat on the reorganization of the Public Works Department recommended to Government that this gentleman be appointed. I think, no member of the Committee except the hon. Colonial Treasurer has ever seen the gentleman and knows anything about him other than his qualifications and ability to do the work. I do not think the Government can be accused of favouritism and nepotism in this case. It is a great pity hon. Members, if they wanted to learn about the matter, did not attend the meeting they were asked to attend. Practically none turned up. Had they done so they would have got the information they are now trying to get. They seem to have forgotten that at the last meeting of the Council this post was agreed to by this Council.

Mr. JACOB: My hon. friend who has just taken his seat would exclude me from the absentees of that meeting. I was present. I am going to repeat the point I have raised, and that is when questions are asked satisfactory answers are not given and therefore they have to be raised again. Three hon. Members including myself have asked here the age and other qualifications of this officer, and although replies have been given from the Government side we have not got an official reply as yet. We are hoping to get the information, however, in the printed book (British Guiana Civil Service List) which is to be issued for next year and then the matter may be raised again. On the question of cost accounting I think I know something about accounting and cost accounting.

I have raised two specific matters with Government—one in regard to certain works done on the East Bank, Demerara, where the estimated cost was given and the work was not done in accordance with the specifications and estimate. I certainly would like to be informed whether the amount paid was in accordance with the estimate and what the Cost Accountant had to say about it. The other matter is in relation to some works carried out recently on the East Coast, Demerara. I would like to know whether the works were carried out in accordance with the specifications, whether all the

details were carried out and what the works cost. I think Government is fully aware of all the circumstances, if not I am willing to give Government further information. I asked if I would be privileged to see the pay-sheet and was told that it is not within my privilege to see it. I was further told that if a letter is written about it a reply will be given. These things are not satisfactory.

I would like the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) to bear that in mind, as I may raise it again. I take a keen interest in the expenditure of public funds, but I am sorry to say and would like it placed on record that I have not been assisted by Government at all. In fact I am hindered; so many obstacles are put in my way that I am getting fed-up and disgusted. (Laughter). I believe that is what Government wants. Government does not want certain Members to know all about the expenditure of public funds. I do not want the information for personal reasons but for the purpose of safeguarding the taxpayers' money. I have two specific cases in respect of which I can get no information. I make bold to say that the explanation is deliberately being kept away from me. How then can we be satisfied if it is not possible for us to get information from Government—correct information and details? Is it expected that we should not get up and say something about it in this Council? Every time Government puts up any proposition it is carried through as having been agreed to by the Legislature. I would like it to be recorded that I am not in favour of the present votes of the Public Works Department. It is not going to make any difference, however, as they are going to be carried, but I conscientiously have to record my dissent. I certainly want to find out what is the age of this individual and why a person from this Colony was not appointed.

THE CHAIRMAN: There was no one known in this Colony with the adequate qualification for this post.

Mr. JACOB: That is the reason why I say there has been favouritism and nepotism. This matter was represented to me by one or two responsible individuals. I knew nothing about it. It is claimed that there can be found a Cost Accountant in this Colony.

The CHAIRMAN: I am saying that this is a special appointment of a man who has long experience of public works accounting which is a very special branch of accounting, and there was no one known in the Colony at the time who had that experience.

Mr. JACOB: Let it be placed on the Table—the record of the gentleman and his qualifications for the post. Why was the post not advertised? I repeat, that on information I have received this appointment is a favoured one.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am again contradicting that statement. None of the members of the Committee except the hon. Colonial Treasurer had ever seen the man or any relative of his. All we knew was his qualification for the post. How anyone can talk of favouritism in the appointment is beyond me as the act of a sane individual.

Mr. JACOB: I am not accusing every member of the Committee. If my remarks refer to any particular individual, I am sorry.

Mr. DIAS: I happened to be a member of that Committee and I never heard of the gentleman before. I do not even know him now.

Mr. JACOB: Let me assure the hon. Member that my remarks do not refer to him nor to any unofficial member of the Committee but to the person responsible for the appointment.

Mr. DIAS: I accept your kindness. I do not wish the hon. Member to think I was influenced by the request of anyone to agree to the appointment. I knew that the Public Works Department happened to be in dire need of a Cost Accountant and there was no known person in this Colony capable of doing the work. The testimonials and information got in respect of this gentleman satisfied every member of the Committee that he was a fully competent person to be employed and this Government offered him the appointment. There was no question of favouritism, nepotism or anything of the kind, and certainly not in this case as no member of the Committee knew him except the hon. Colonial Treasurer who gave the information for

which we were very grateful. We were quite satisfied with the information we got and recommended him to Government, and Government after investigation found that the information was sound.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I take it that I will be allowed now to continue my remarks. I was labouring under some difficulty in arriving at some understanding of these figures that are before the Council. I would like to plead guilty right away to what the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) has said about the meeting. I should have been there as I had arranged to be present but, I think, the hon. Member is fully aware of the reasons for my absence and so I need not make any public apology in the matter. I think he will accept my explanation that it was impossible for me to be there.

There is something in the point made by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight). We know it is a new post and from the figures before us the commencing salary of \$2,640 by \$120 to \$3,120 per annum is attached to it. It seems strange that the figures for 1941 should be \$2,920. I have been trying to juggle with the figures but I cannot see how the commencing salary of \$2,640 in 1940 can rise to \$2,920 in 1941, assuming that the officer even had already given one year's service, the annual increment being \$120. There may be some explanation, but I think there is something in the point of the hon. Member. Perhaps he did not explain it in the way I have done. If there is an answer and it is given, it will relieve the fears of the hon. Member for Western Essequibo.

I would like to know whether these estimates, as printed and put before the Council to-day, embrace the full recommendations of the Committee that sat to consider the reorganization of this Department, or whether we must look forward to having to foot a larger bill next year or the year after when the complete proposals are put before the Council. I am subject to correction about the figure. It is quite clear that there is increased expenditure under this head. Government hopes—and I would like to share that hope—that this reorganization would result in some improvement. I think we all hope so. There is no doubt that con-

ditions in that Department have reached such a stage as to be bordering on a scandal, and I would be the last Member of this Council to attempt to put any obstacles in the way of Government doing something to improve those conditions. We know that estimates of expenditure even after careful preparation have been very largely exceeded, and we know lots of other things too.

I am quite prepared to assist Government in giving this proposal a trial. I would, however, ask that we should be a little bit careful in creating new posts lest they become millstones around our necks. I do not want to suggest that the appointment of this accountant is wrong. I think it was a very wise step to take, and I congratulate the Committee on making the recommendation. This Department should have always had a Cost Accountant, and I am surprised that it never had. I agree that this is one of the posts that should be filled at once because of the necessity that does exist for it.

I am sorry that when Government accepted the recommendations of the Committee a further pronouncement was not made at the time. I do not know whether Government has it in mind and will make it at some future date or will be prepared to do so to day. As I look upon the recommendations they are all in the nature of an experiment. We are now creating a Consulting Engineer's Branch of the Department. I know that the recommendation was prompted by the fact that in our present Director of Public Works we have a very competent man who is quite capable of giving Government the value of his experience and sound advice in engineering matters. We know also that the gentleman concerned may not be with us for many years more. (Laughter). There are certain works to be undertaken now. Is it proposed that this Branch should continue even after this valuable gentleman has gone? I know that so long as we exist we will have engineering problems confronting us. We will have drainage and irrigation problems too. I do not think that during his life-time and mine we will be able to solve all of these problems. I was hoping that Government would have had something to say on this score.

Let us see what steps we can take to

keep that Department running satisfactorily. It seems to me that at the present moment it is proposed to start with a skeleton staff. Is it considered sufficient? Are we to have further expansion in that connection? I think, if we had answers to questions like those then the most we can do to-day probably is to agree with the proposals being given a trial. One is quite willing to do that. If it fails, though I do not think it will, we want Government to come and say: "We are going back to where we were before." The two branches are so closely associated with each other that I have every reason to believe that the administration of the one by another Director may give more satisfaction and, perhaps, answer some of the criticisms that have been levelled at the Department.

I would also like to enquire from Government whether the new Director of Public Works will be expected to carry out what I consider to be the duties of a Director of Public Works, or he would be only confined to administrative work? There seems to be some gap between the administrative side of Government departments and the actual work required of the Heads as the result of their technical skill. Some time ago in the course of a debate I said that this Department had not got enough watchmen. I may qualify that by saying that if the administrative side of things is not well looked after, then all the watchmen in the world cannot correct the evils we know to exist. I would like to know what is expected of this new Director of Public Works when he does come out. I am not unmindful of the fact that we have been told that we could not—and I agree—reasonably expect the present Director to look after administrative matters as he was busily engaged in matters of more importance. If that is an admission that this Department has fallen down on the administrative side, is this Government satisfied with the criticisms made or is it proposed in addition to the appointment of the Director of Public Works to create another post? I see the post of Executive Engineer—

Mr. SE. AFORD: Perhaps it may shorten the discussion if I say that by the new arrangement it is proposed, that there should be two engineers stationed in the office so that one of them would be free to get around and see the work that is being

carried out, instead of as at present where there is only one engineer and he is tied down in the office all the time by the amount of work he has to do.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I am very glad to see the words "Deputy Director of Public Works" have disappeared from the Estimates. I suppose that is where the other engineer comes in. I am very anxious about this Department as it carries out very responsible work and spends a lot of public money. It is not sufficient for an estimate to be prepared showing that the cost of carrying out work will be \$80,000 and eventually the cost reaches \$100,000 at completion, and no one can give the reason why. If the Director of Public Works is expected to remain in his office and read minute jackets and answer them, then we are not facing the problem as it exists at the present time. I am anxious that these responsible departments of Government should be more carefully supervised, as everyone knows there are leakages. On the whole the Department is not functioning satisfactorily. I am willing to give this proposal a trial. I have risen to make these remarks so that Government will bear them in mind and when the time comes proper steps will be taken to correct the evils of the past.

Mr. JACOB: I was very pleased to hear the hon. Member for Georgetown North say that was decided at an informal meeting held a few weeks ago. I do not think that is Government's view of it. If that had been stated the hon. Member for Central Demerara would not have taken up so much of the Council's time. I would like to know whether the appointment of this Accountant was made by the hon. Colonial Treasurer with the sanction of Government or by the Appointments Board?

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not within the purview of the Appointments Board to make the appointment, neither was it made by the hon. Colonial Treasurer. The appointment was made by me under my authority.

Mr. JACOB: The appointment was recommended by the hon. Colonial Treasurer!

THE CHAIRMAN: It was recommended by the Committee.

Mr. JACOB: We have it from the statements of two other hon. Members that they did not know the individual.

Mr. SEAFORD: To be correct, we have never seen him and it is only his record that we acted upon.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is quite possible for persons to recommend some one with whom they are not personally acquainted.

Mr. JACOB: That is so, but I have information otherwise. This person was in the Colony and was married to some one in this Colony and there are other things said. I do not know the gentleman and am not concerned with his appointment. It does not matter to me who gets it, but the question of favouritism has been raised by responsible members of the community and I only bring it forward for the information of Government. Whether you accept it or not is another matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to explain that these appointments are made either by the Secretary of State for the Colonies or by the Governor, and in this case it was approved by the Secretary of State but made by the Governor. I know no more or no less of this gentleman than the hon. Member. I have examined all his qualifications and record of service, and I am satisfied not only that there is need for such an appointment but that this gentleman possesses the special qualifications for it and seems to promise satisfaction. Also it was not likely to get anyone with the required qualifications in the Colony. If the hon. Member suggests there is any favouritism in that, I am completely unconscious of it.

Mr. JACOB: I am not suggesting that there was favouritism on your part at all. It has been suggested to me that the gentleman responsible for the recommendation to the Committee was.

THE CHAIRMAN: I accept full responsibility for the appointment. I enquired into his qualifications.

Mr. JACOB: I just want to make that point perfectly clear. The other question is: Can I be permitted to see two documents concerned with two points I have raised, so that I may be satisfied in my own mind that this cost accounting is

going on well and the taxpayers are not the losers.

THE CHAIRMAN : Would the hon. Member explain to us what is the information he had that directed his attention to those particular documents? In other words, why does the hon. Member want the documents?

Mr. JACOB : I was told that certain kokers erected on the East Bank, Demerara, were not properly constructed. When I looked at the plans, kindly shown me by the hon. Mr. Case (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences), they gave one dimension and when I measured the boxes myself I found they were of another dimension. I am satisfied in my mind that the money was paid for work which was not done. Government overpaid for the work.

Mr. CASE : That statement is incorrect?

Mr. JACOB : I measured the box on two occasions. I think it was 18 inches and the specification had 2 ft. 6 ins. I do not know what the pay-sheet had.

THE CHAIRMAN : The pay-sheet will not tell you what the dimension of a koker is.

Mr. JACOB : It is there that experience of cost accounting will come in. If specifications were made for a particular kind of work, the pay-sheet or account should have them, if not it would be the duty of the Cost Accountant to get them or he would have to visit the place and there investigate whether the work was constructed in accordance with the plans and whether the whole amount has been properly appropriated.

Mr. SEAFORD : I think it is my duty as a member of the Drainage Committee to contradict that statement. Certain contract work was given out to a man to be done. Boxes were to be made 2 ft. but they were made 18 ins. That is correct, but before the man was finally paid it was found that the boxes were not of the correct size and he was made to do them correctly before the balance of money due on the work was paid to him. The Cost Accountant could not go around

examining and measuring boxes. That is the work of the District Engineer, who has to see that the drawings and specifications are carried out. The Cost Accountant has to see that the correct quantity of materials is used on the job.

Mr. JACOB : I beg to differ. The boxes were erected weeks before I saw them and had been removed and put in another place. When I enquired I was told that the money had been already paid but would be refunded.

THE CHAIRMAN : Refunded by whom?

Mr. JACOB : By the person who drew the money.

THE CHAIRMAN : Was the work done under contract?

Mr. JACOB : I think it was.

THE CHAIRMAN : It is most essential to know if the work was done under contract or not. That information would have been given if it had been asked for.

Mr. JACOB : I have asked for detailed information by letter.

Mr. CASE : The hon. Member has been given the information already. I told him that the work was done by contract and the man was not paid until the work was put right.

Mr. JACOB : I do not know if we are at cross-purposes. The works were completed, and my information—

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member must be referring to some other work.

Mr. JACOB : It is the same work. A great principle is involved in this matter and I am sorry if I detain the Council. I have it in my mind as clear as noon-day because I was not given the opportunity to get all the information I should get in order to make a specific charge. Some people are under the impression that I make charges which I cannot substantiate; but to make the particular charge I have in mind I have to get certain information from Government, and I am stating definitely that that information is being withheld from me.

THE CHAIRMAN : What information?

Mr. JACOB: The date of payment, the amount paid, and to whom paid.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know of any reason why it was not given.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the hon. Member is referring to something which I refused to allow the Director of Public Works to give. He wanted to go to the Public Works Department and examine the pay-sheets of that department

Mr. JACOB: I regret, sir, when statements like that are made. The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) made specific charges and complaints and asked to see specific pay-sheets. We have no time to see all the pay-sheets. Certain works have been completed on the East Coast, Demerara—a particular dam was paled off and a small house erected. We have been supplied with information that large sums of money had been overpaid.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you put that information at the disposal of Government?

Mr. JACOB: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Subsequently?

Mr. JACOB: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: To whom was the money paid?

Mr. JACOB: We did not say specifically, but there are several individuals. If Government takes us into its confidence and shows us the records we will say who our informant is.

THE CHAIRMAN: If as a Member of this Council or as a member of the public information comes into the possession of someone which leads him to think there are irregularities going on in Government work, his duty is to come to Government and say: "I have information of such and such irregularities. These are the people involved and this is the source of my information." I am quite sure that if that is done the matter would be fully investigated, but to come and say "I have a certain suspicion and want to see this or that document," is not the proper course to adopt at all. That is acting—to use the phrase that the hon. Member

has used—as a private detective. It is not the function of Members of Council to act as private detectives.

Mr. JACOB: That is so. We did what you have pointed out in your first statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: If hon. Members place in my hands details which are sufficient to enable an investigation to be made, I would see that an investigation is made.

Mr. JACOB: I say those details are already in the hands of the hon. Director of Public Works.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member does not seem to be satisfied and that is why I ask him to give me the details,

Mr. JACOB: The details are already in Government's hands. We took the matter one step further. We went to the Police and gave certain information; their investigation is proceeding but not as rapidly as we would like. More than that, certain people will not give certain people information on account of being suspicious. The hon. Member for Essequibo River and I are not at all satisfied with Government's attitude in those two matters. Whether that is something to be taken lightly by Government is a matter for Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member has any information in his possession, I think it is his duty to place it at the disposal of Government. If it is put in my hands and it is sufficient to justify an investigation I would see that a proper investigation is made.

Mr. JACOB: I thank you.

Mr. CASE: All the information given by the hon. Member for North Western District I handed over to the Police, as it was something to be enquired into.

Mr. JACOB: That was after we had taken our own steps.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: In view of what has taken place and the fact that Your Excellency has stated that the responsibility for the appointment is yours, with your leave I wish to withdraw the motion.

I moved for the deletion of the item. I think it should be allowed to stand also in view of the fact that the person referred to is married to a local person of which fact I was unaware then. I do not know if that was known to Your Excellency

THE CHAIRMAN: I must confess that I was totally ignorant of that.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. DeAguiar) enquired if the final figures are placed before the Council. The final report of the Committee is not yet received and maybe Government will have to come back with one or two items. With regard to the duties of the new Director of Public Works, when the motion was passed in this Council for the appointment of that officer it was stated that he will be administrator of that department. Schemes will be worked out by the Consulting Engineer and placed before Government; if it is decided to proceed with them they would be placed in the hands of the Director whose duty it will be to see that they are carried out. Naturally the recommendation for the appointment of the Accountant passed through me as Colonial Secretary, and although I have come from Trinidad and this gentleman has also come from Trinidad I had never heard of him before.

Mr. McDAVID: The hon. Member for Central Demerara asked why the amount of the officer's salary is \$2,920 in the Estimates whereas the initial amount is \$2,640. The reason is that the salary of this officer in the post he held in Trinidad was £600 (\$2,880) per annum and on his appointment here it was decided to give him the salary he was receiving from the Trinidad Government. The officer was therefore transferred at the same salary which he was receiving in the post he held in Trinidad.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am quite satisfied with that. I thought there would have been a satisfactory explanation. The hon. Colonial Treasurer would, however, agree that as the item stood one was entitled to question it. I have risen to make one observation. In view of the reply received from the hon. Colonial Secretary about what the new Director of Public Works is

expected to do, I have in mind the salary of the post—£1,200 per annum. I purposely refrained from referring to it before. We have a Consulting Engineer at £1,500 per annum which, I think, is not an unreasonable salary if the Consulting Engineer is going to prepare plans, work them out and pass them over to the Director of Public Works to see them put into execution and carried to completion. It is true that a certain amount of responsibility is attached to that work, and whilst I do not like to reduce a man's salary it seems to me that the question of the salary of the new Director of Public Works should be gone into.

THE CHAIRMAN: This salary was agreed to by this Council some time ago, and we have already taken steps to get the appointment made. For all I know the appointment may have been made already.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: May I refer the hon. Member for Central Demerara, who was present in Council on the 28th August, 1940, to the fact that the whole matter was then threshed out. There is no useful purpose to be served in going over the whole thing again, as the debates of the 28th August may have been printed by now and hon. Members are in possession of copies.

Dr. SINGH: This part of the Council is very anxious to know the age of this officer.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: If I remember correctly, when the salary of the Director of Public Works was discussed Your Excellency mentioned that you will make enquiries as to whether an officer can be obtained at a salary of £1,000.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is quite right. I did and found it was impossible. I was assured that a man with the required experience could not be got. With regard to what the hon. Member for Central Demerara said about the future of the Department, we are getting a new Director of Public Works and his principal job will be the organization and administration of the Department. That is the work of the Director. I cannot guarantee that when the new Director comes he will not make suggestions for

further reorganization. For that reason it may be a very good thing to wait until he arrives. We are trying to get an experienced man who is well qualified and who has shown some capacity for administration and organization of public works. It will naturally take some time for him to learn the ropes or to get in to conditions here, I say frankly that conditions here are very different—physical conditions. In regard to the Public Works Department there are problems in the nature of the work, and it must take time for a new Director to study them before he can be expected to get an idea of the solution. It is quite possible that the new Director may make further suggestions and I shall regard myself as going too fast at this stage in tying his hands too much by creating new post before he arrives. We have done the most essential things until we get the new Director, and after that we will be disposed to go rather slowly until he has had time to have a good look at the position and to make his recommendations.

Motion for deletion withdrawn.

Item 1 (29)—Duty Allowances, \$720.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the amount be reduced by \$120 and that a new sub-item 43—"Risk Allowance to Paymaster, \$120"—be inserted. It was inadvertently placed under the wrong head.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item 10—Passage to the Colony of the Director of Public Works and Sea Defences and his wife, \$576.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that a new sub-head 10 be inserted—"Passage to the Colony of the Director of Public Works and Sea Defences and his wife, \$576."

Question put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It will be necessary to re-number certain items, and I shall also move in a new sub-head.

Item 7—Purchase of Motor Car, \$1,200.

MR. DE AGUIAR: It is usual for Government to call for tenders and I do not know whether it is contemplated in this instance to do the same thing. I understand the car has been already bought.

I do not think that is correct as it is contrary to Government's policy.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I can assure the hon. Member that it has not been purchased. The Department is very anxious to get a heavy car, one that can stand up to the enormous mileage which has to be done. I do not know what kind of car the hon. Member for Central Demerara wishes to recommend.

Sub-heads 9 to 15 on page 71 re-numbered as sub-heads 11 to 17.

Item 11 (6)—4 Surveyors—1 at \$1,392, 3 at \$1,080—\$4,632.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to make a small reduction in the amount. I have been informed by the Head of this Branch that it will not be necessary to have four Surveyors. He wishes to have three Surveyors and one Surveyor's Assistant. I therefore move that the item be amended to read:—

3 Surveyors—1 at \$1,392, and 2 at \$1,080—\$3,552.

1 Surveyor's Assistant (\$624 x \$48 to \$864)—\$624.

This would mean a reduction of the vote by \$456. The vote would then be carried out at \$4,176. Hon. Members may notice that it is an item "below the line," although the salaries are over \$720. This is purposely done as it is not yet known whether these appointments will be permanent.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item 18.—Passage to the Colony of the Engineering Draughtsman and his wife, \$576.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new sub-head 18—"Passage to the Colony of the Engineering Draughtsman and his wife, \$576."

Question put, and agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS—ANNUALLY RECURRENT.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I merely want to make the annual plea for the roads again and to invite Government's attention to the patch of road on the East Coast Demerara not far from Georgetown. A very respectable colonist drew my attention to it not very long ago and the way he spoke about it! He was nearly involved in an accident in trying to get off one

of the concrete strips. I asked the hon. Director of Public Works to look at it. It is between Beterverwagting and Buxton. Apparently the roadway has gone off completely on account of the rains, and as a result the stripway is very high.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the hon. Member is referring to the East Coast road, that item has been increased from \$36,100 for 1940 to \$39,760 for 1941.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Then I can assure the gentleman that it will be done, if not the hon. Colonial Secretary has not answered me. It may well be that the increase is for another purpose altogether. If he assures me that attention will be given to that very dangerous spot—

THE CHAIRMAN: If it as bad as the hon. Member says, though I drive over it as often as anybody and have not noticed it, I am sure that attention will be given to it. I can quite understand the hon. Member's complaint. There is a difficulty appearing in connection with these concrete strips, and that is the keeping of the level of the road flush with the strips. We want more experience as to the best way of doing it.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: What I am concerned about is that there is a positive danger of accidents.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes; that is one of the drawbacks of this strip system.

SUPREME COURT.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I desire to ask Government to make provision for the more frequent travelling of a Sworn Clerk to the Essequibo district in order to take probates and matters of that kind. I have been in communication with the hon. Colonial Secretary on the question. The expense is offset by the fact that the Clerk in going down to the district to obtain revenue. There are several cases of numerous estates awaiting the arrival of the Judges or perhaps the Registrar in the County of Essequibo to have the probates put through. It entails travelling to Georgetown to have it done otherwise, and some people cannot afford the additional expense as they have to raise money to pay estate duty. The answer has been given to my representation in the matter that there is no fund available, but it is

not going to cost a fortune to send one of the Sworn Clerks in the Deeds Registry down there to pass the papers. Perhaps the Magistrate's Clerk stationed in Essequibo may be made a Sworn Clerk for the purpose. It is only a matter of convenience to the public, and there may be a few cases at one time and many at another time. I would ask Government seriously to consider the point.

I have another minor point to raise. When going through the Post Office estimates I observed an item "N.C.O. Police seconded for duty at G.P.O." There is a policeman, a very competent individual, attached to the Supreme Court Library. I do not know where he is paid from. I raised it on the last occasion and I see that nothing has been done in the matter.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: As far as I know the policeman attached to the Supreme Court is the Judges' Orderly and he is paid from the Police Vote. The policeman at the G.P.O. has nothing to do with the Police Force and is paid from the Post Office Vote as the hon. Member himself says.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did the hon. Member say he is already in communication with Government in connection with the sending of a Sworn Clerk?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Most of the points raised have been done in my own way, by consulting the Heads of Departments and by letter.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would this be a special privilege for the hon. Member's constituents?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The fact is that in Berbice there is a Sworn Clerk stationed there. There is none at Essequibo and when the Supreme Court travels down there a Sworn Clerk accompanies the Judge. If the Judge does not go, everybody has to come to Georgetown to pass their papers.

THE CHAIRMAN: The amount of business done would justify that?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I cannot recollect the particular case the hon. Member refers to and I would like to look up the matter.

The Council adjourned until the following day at 10.30 a.m.