

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Tuesday, 10th December, 1940.*

The Council met at 11 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. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E., (Eastern Berbice).

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. Maclellan, Director of Medical Services.

The Hon. M. B. Iaing, 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. Gonsalves, O.B.E., (Georgetown South).

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

The Hon. H. C. Humphrys, K.C., (Eastern Demerara).

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 the 6th of December, 1940, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

### ANNOUNCEMENT.

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

EX GRATIA PAYMENT TO MISS. A. M. ARCHER.

#### MESSAGE No. 4.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

The Council is invited to approve of an *ex gratia* payment of \$120 to Miss. A. M. Archer, for 7 years a part-time Wardress, Georgetown Prison, whose employment was terminated on 31st May, 1940, on the ground of age. Throughout the period of her employment Miss Archer's services have been satisfactory.

2. The system under which Miss Archer was employed as a Casual Wardress came under review last year when the estimates of the Prisons Department for 1940 were being considered, and Council approved of the creation of an additional post of whole-time Matron from 1st January, 1940, in substitution for the post of Casual Wardress. As Miss Archer had already attained the age of 60 years she could not be appointed to the new post, and as she is not eligible for a gratuity under existing authority, approval is now sought to pay her the compassionate gratuity recommended above.

W. E. JACKSON,  
Governor.

6th December, 1940.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

## EX GRATIA PAYMENT TO MISS A. M. ARCHER.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motion :—

THAT, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 4 dated 6th December, 1940, this Council approves of an *ex gratia* payment of \$120 to Miss A. M. Archer, in respect of her services as Casual Wardress, Georgetown Prison.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Pretheroe) gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills :—

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.

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

## 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, which have been laid on the table.

## EDUCATION—SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. JACOB: Before the vote is further discussed I crave Your Excellency's indulgence to refer to a matter of very great importance to the community. I refer to the shortage of oil.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Council is in Committee on the Education Vote. This is not the time to raise that question. It has been raised before. The hon. Member is out of order, if it has nothing to do with the Education Vote.

Mr. JACOB: I was craving your indulgence to refer to it before we start.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, the hon. Member is out of order. It should be done before we got in Committee.

Mr. JACKSON: When the Committee adjourned I was making some comments on some strictures made against the Education vote by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys). I would like to refer to his opposition to the items he named as a wanton attack upon a vital principle—the education of the masses—his pious asseverations notwithstanding. This attack apparently was studied and I am inclined to think that, whatever may be the opinion of the hon. Member regarding the votes to be passed in this Council, he could not have selected a worst subject upon which to make his strictures. The items selected, as I stated before, although they are regarded by him as non-essentials are really of very great importance to the community. It seems to me that the vote was attacked in that carping spirit which was exhibited by some men of old when that woman in Biblical history anointed the Great Master with a box of alabaster ointment; they thought it was a great waste and the money that secured it could have been given to the poor. To my mind the spirit which actuated the opposition is a kindred spirit to that, and while I admire the subtlety of the hon. Member in not stating as his reason that the Colony cannot afford to pay the amount, yet in his endeavour to show that the amount could be allocated to some war effort he said in substance: "Let the children who cannot get into the schools stay out and let the additional teachers that are required be kept out. No matter how pressed mentally are the teachers who have to impart instruction to a large number of children—in many cases greater than one man can reasonably be expected to be occupied with successfully—let them go on and be overworked." Perhaps he thought if the teachers are overworked and suffer from mental strain possibly they may end their days somewhere in Berbice. I would like the hon. Member to visit some of the schools—not necessarily in Georgetown but in the country districts—so that he may see the conditions under which the children work and also the conditions that obtain for

the teachers who have to train them. I have known cases where as many as a 100 children have to be overlooked and trained by one teacher.

There is no doubt about this fact. A good many of the schools are understaffed, and now that an effort is being made to relieve the situation it is surprisingly strange that there can be any objection to supplying the teachers needed. May I remind him, sir, that the additional teachers required will in no way satisfy the conditions of the Code. The hon. Director of Education will be able to inform this Council that he is applying for a number of additional teachers so that some of the schools, possibly a few, that are understaffed will have some relief. I am quite sure that in preparing his estimates the hon. Director of Education and his committee took into consideration the fact that the Colony is passing through strenuous times, and that is the reason why the estimates in this direction are so conservative.

Your Excellency, it would be a pitiful day when we deny to the children the advantages of education. "Primary or Elementary education", the hon. Member said, "is non-productive and perhaps the results may not be seen for 200 or 300 years." But this Colony has not been 200 or 300 years in British possession. It is just a little over 100 years, and I would like the hon. Member to substantiate his remarks in this connection that the Colony has not progressed educationally and that no results have been obtained from the education of the children of this country all those years. The results may not be spectacular, but I am positive that no one will return to the days of the early occupation of this country; no one would like to see the crass ignorance which stalked the land at that time obtaining to-day, and I venture to say that the remarks of the hon. Member were made without due consideration.

The hon. Member in a spirit of unjustifiable bravado declared that he would oppose the vote even if he stood alone. I am positive that if he carries out his opposition to that extent he will stand alone and if that will contribute to his honour and glory let that be so, but I am positive that this Council will not oppose

the items he suggested for the reasons he advanced. Especially at this time no one would like to say anything that by the greatest stretch of imagination may be distorted into disloyalty to the Throne. Consequently I will not say much on the point but if I am allowed to venture an opinion, I think the Imperial Government would not accept such a gift at the expense of the poor children getting into school and being educated and also at the expense of the teachers who have to train them. I think I have said enough to convince this Council that the opposition is unwarranted and ill-timed, and I have no doubt that it will be consigned to where it properly belongs—the waste-paper basket.

Mr. LUCKHOO: Following the remarks made by the last speaker, I would like to express my concurrence in part with the views he has expressed. With respect to this vote under Education it has always been a matter of controversy among Members of this Council as to what should be the policy of Government in respect of this particular vote. This vote undoubtedly has been increased from year to year, and at the present time it stands at a fairly high amount. I am not so much concerned with that point at the present, but will refer generally to the administration of this particular department in order to point out to Government what I consider the adequacy of the staff in the fully-aided schools as well as those schools under Regulation 95. We have in this Colony approximately 240 schools fully-aided as well as partially-aided by Government, and the number of children on roll is a little over 53,000 and the average daily attendance, I think, is about 39,000. One can therefore see at a glance that it is a very important department. The utmost care, therefore, should be exercised in the administration of that particular department.

I do feel, sir, in the first place there is not sufficient supervision of the teachers in the various districts, and that is on account of the inadequate staff of Inspectors. Sufficient time cannot be given to the Counties of Berbice and Essequibo where, I advocate as a proper measure, there should be some divisional officer in charge of those localities. As a member of the Education Committee, it has been my misfortune at times to consider charges

made against teachers who have been guilty of falsifying their books (the attendance registers) in order to earn a little more money, and it has always been a matter of great difficulty to me to understand why that course should be resorted to by them. There are certain Inspectors whose business is more or less to visit the outlying districts from time to time, but those visits are not sufficiently regular in order to ensure a proper supervision of the books of those schoolmasters. We have about 178 fully-aided schools in the Colony, and it is a very difficult task indeed for the Director of Education or for the staff of Inspectors at his disposal to make a proper and careful enquiry into the working of those schools. It is very difficult for them to make surprise visits to the different schools because before they get to the other side of the Coast their whereabouts are known, and therefore it is a very difficult matter for the surprise visits to achieve any good purpose. I think, sir, that in view of the large expenditure under this Head we should have proper and efficient supervision of these different schools, and the only way that difficulty can be overcome and so relieve the Director of Education of a great deal of routine work and give him an opportunity of paying personal visits to the different schools is, as I have indicated, by the appointment of additional Inspectors in order that he may not sit at his desk day by day without looking after the administrative responsibility of that particular department. I do not know what the hon. Director of Education will say on that point. I suppose he would welcome the addition to his staff so as to give him relief to go about the country. I think that in the best interest of the Colony the Director of Education should visit the schools in the different parts of the Colony in order to have a personal acquaintance with the activities of the different schools, particularly those in the country districts.

Your Excellency, the average attendance of the schools has increased remarkably. At one time when there was that well known circular, known as the Swettenham Circular, advising the Department not to prosecute in certain cases for non-attendance at school particularly with reference to East Indian girls, there had seemed to be a little bit of opposition, but in later years there was a great deal of opposition

to that circular and as a result of that opposition conferences were held in Georgetown. I was invited to attend and also many other leading East Indians in the community. The conference was held under the chairmanship of the Governor himself and this matter was fully discussed and it was eventually agreed that in the best interest of the community that circular should be withdrawn. It was withdrawn and subsequently appeals were made by the Education Department to the Managers of sugar estates and others to take an active part in appealing to the East Indians of the Colony to send their children to school in compliance with the law. I know that at that time there were about nine Attendance Officers, but that number has been considerably reduced so that we have now only three of them. At times we have prosecutions before the Court and one thing I do deprecate in respect of that—I think I have mentioned it before—is that the cases are taken in the Magistrates' Courts in the ordinary way which, I think, is a very wrong procedure. Offences of that sort should be dealt with privately rather than having the parents and children taken there where you have a congregation of people for all sorts of offences to be mixed with them and their cases heard in open Court. Juvenile offenders are now dealt with in the Magistrates' chambers and these prosecutions may be so dealt with. Surely the atmosphere of the Criminal Court is not conducive to the best interest of the little ones who have to attend with their parents. Sometimes the children are over age or are ill, and it is necessary for their presence with their parents at Court. I would advise Government that in future all these matters should be dealt with on a special occasion and probably at a different place rather than as at present under the auspices of the Police Court with the Police and prisoners loitering about. I think that with respect to the procedure there should be some improvement in that direction.

With respect to the Education vote as a whole, I should think that Government would be well advised to pass these items as they stand. I know there has been considerable agitation in respect of the condition of the school buildings. Some of them have got into such a state of disrepair and dilapidation and the latrines in



such a horrible condition as to be a disgrace to a civilized community. It is essential that some definite improvement be made in respect of the accommodation afforded by these school buildings and latrines. I do not know if it is the idea of the hon. Director of Education to have a good water supply for the children attending the schools. At some times we see the little tots going to school carrying their drinking water which is sometimes taken from a trench. Some adequate provision should be made for a proper drinking water supply for the children attending school, some of whom have to travel two or three miles to the nearest school. If that is done it would greatly assist, and from a medical standpoint it should be very much supported. I have not overlooked the question of the medical inspection of school children. That seems a very necessary matter. We have these children attending school with no regular organised medical examination being held. In all probability the hon. Director of Medical Services, who is a very able man indeed in his department, would certainly look into this matter and give it his best attention.

As I came in the train this morning I looked through the old draft of the Education Code, which I think was passed as printed, and in Part X there is a clause on "Training of Character" which states:

All reasonable care shall be taken during the work and conduct of the school to impress upon the pupils the importance of cheerful obedience to duty, of consideration and respect for others, and of honour and truthfulness in word and act, to bring them up in habits of punctuality, and regular attendance, of good manners and language, of cleanliness and neatness, and to impress upon them the dignity of labour, and the necessity for hard work as a condition of life.

If that is in the present Code, I hope the Director of Education would see to it that that particular section is fully carried out. Sometimes it is very disgusting to find that those responsible, some teachers, do not come up to the standard mentioned in this section. I do not think that in some cases they act according to the spirit of that particular section. It must be remembered that the children are in the schools not only for the education of their minds but for the development of their character, for training in a sense of duty, self-sacrifice and all the qualities that make a noble citizen worthy of our great

Empire, which has never had greater need for trained characters than in these dark and difficult times. I should certainly like to see this section of the Ordinance carried out and due regard paid to it because after all, though it is not only the responsibility of the teachers to do as the parents have an equal responsibility, the teachers themselves can help forward the building up of the character of these young ones who are entrusted to their care. These little ones are of that impressionable age - they go to school between the ages of six and seven when their minds are very plastic—that whatever good is sown will certainly be reaped in later years. I do wish that strict attention and due regard be paid to that part of the Ordinance. Teachers' salaries have been increased in some measure. They have always been clamouring for it and there have been substantial increases in their salaries and, therefore, there can be no grouse on their part if they are called upon to do additional work in this direction.

With respect to the Agricultural Bias Scheme in Schools, I believe provision has been made for it in these estimates. The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has always taken up a stand against this particular item and unfortunately through illness he is not here this morning. In any event I think this agricultural bias should be followed up with something more substantial. I feel that after the course has been gone through the Government may consider the establishment of Farm Schools to be followed up later with Agricultural Settlements. I know these are big questions. I take it that the object of creating an agricultural bias is to give an opportunity of displaying those qualities which are practically inherent in the children. This Colony is an agricultural country and on agriculture depends its growth and prosperity.

With respect to the other parts of the estimates under this head I think there is justification for the introduction of the new items. The hon. Director of Education will certainly put his views to this Committee on the question. Education is a matter of very great concern to me. I have always expressed that. The schools are severely understaffed. It is necessary to have them properly staffed to an

appreciable extent. In a good many of the schools the children are huddled together in very insanitary surroundings. Steps are now being taken to remedy that, and Government should be congratulated for taking this advanced step for the benefit of the children of this Colony.

Mr. DIAS: The question of education is nothing new in this Colony. It has been debated year after year, certainly to my recollection for the last 30 years. What is felt here is not that the people should not be educated as the State is responsible for the education of the young ones, but the question is whether the State is spending money wisely in educating the children along the lines on which the work is proceeding at present. It is regrettable that when a Member attacks a vote of this kind he should be attacked in turn, as I have listened most regretfully to the speech by my hon. friend, Mr. Jackson. If a Member here is not independent to speak without being assailed in the manner in which the hon. mover of the motion was, then I say it is better not to belong to the Council at all. Sir, I remember when the Education vote stood at a sum less than one-third of what it is to-day. I think it was in the year 1913; I speak subject to correction as to the exact figures. In other words it was \$200,000 as against \$610,000 to-day, so that hon. Members are entitled if they feel that the Colony is not getting full value for the proposed expenditure to complain about it. I have always been of the opinion, that this vote should be revised and that the system of education should be revised and the boy be taught to work with his hands as well as with his head. What is being done to-day is only educating the boy's mind. You are only teaching him to use his head and not to use his hands as well. That cannot be contradicted.

It has been mentioned here times without number that what you want in this Colony, in addition to the sort of work done in the schools, is to have an Agricultural education. But, sir, apart from a couple of kitchen gardens behind the schools which are not worth a penny as they stand, what education can a youngster get from being taken to the back of the school compound between twelve and one o'clock in the day and shown a few growing ochroe trees, some of them withered?

That is not good enough to educate anyone. That is how, I contend, money is being thrown away. The children want education, but I suggest with every confidence it is very unfair to the child if he gets this form of education only instead of being also taught to use his hands. He is neglected and badly treated. That is not the way to educate the children. Educate them so that when they grow up they will have a chance in the world. You develop his education along the lines of reading and writing in which there are no opportunities unfortunately for everybody, and if he wants to turn his hands to do something else he is not educated and knows nothing about it; if, however, he makes a start he seldom rises to anything. Why despise agriculture in this Colony? It is preached day after day that this is an agricultural country and yet nothing is done to educate the people along agricultural lines. Government is not to blame for that but those responsible for the children. They want more teachers to teach the three R's, but I do not know how much further that will take us. That is the kind of education I came and met and I find is growing all the time without anything being brought to the child's mind so as to enable him to do some other work in future life. That is the general complaint and, I take it, that is what the hon. mover of the motion for striking out the items had in mind. If this thing is continued you are not doing justice to the children. Educate them by all means, but educate them in more than one way so that they can make a choice when they grow up.

The hon. Member on my right (Mr. Luckhoo) read a passage from the Education Code. I regret to say if that is demanded then that provision of the Regulations is not observed in the schools. I have every reason to believe that. I see the children passing my office daily from the school over there (S. Andrew's Scots) and hear some of the filthiest language used by them on the road. I invite any hon. Member to come to my office when that school is dismissed and hear them. They leave the road and go into the yards and steal the people's fruits. I have had to chase them out of my place times without number. If they are educated to be honest, with the school but fifty yards away they would not go into yards to steal. These are things which

happen now. I am advocating for better protection for the children. Train them when they are young so that when they grow older, having been taught agriculture and something else, they can easily earn a livelihood. To-day they have no choice and so in the end become croppers. That is the misfortune. Therefore when a Member rises to speak on education, I do not think it should be thrown at him that he wants to deprive the masses of education. This vote has been mounting up year after year until it has reached an enormous sum. I am glad to see that one section of the Press has maintained that attitude. This is the wrong system of education that we have. It is a part system not the whole. Every Director of Education who has come here within recent years I have spoken to about it, and the present Director knows my view that we are not educating the children along the best lines for their future existence.

Mr. SEAFORD: I would like to preface the remarks I am going to make by saying that I am in sympathy to a large extent with the remarks made by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys). That, does not mean I do not believe in education nor in tuition, but I do believe that at the present moment conditions are such—a war is going on and no one can foresee what the future has in store for us—that it is the duty of Government wherever possible to conserve and save whatever it can to meet whatever may crop up this year, next year or some years to come. I am not against education and, I am quite sure, the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara is not against education. Perhaps the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, would like to include me in the orbit of his strictures, but I am not surprised as I know the hon. Member so well. Education is his first love, education will be his last love I am sure, and I am not too sure that it will not be his only love. I am certain that what he did say was said in the interest of education, and not that he wished in any way—to use a common expression—“to get” at the hon. Members.

We are not against spending money on education, none of us, but it must be remembered that there has been a very large increase in the Education vote in this Colony. I use the word “education”

because that is at the head of the estimates, although I am afraid there is often not only in this Colony but everywhere a rather wrong interpretation of education. What we do in the Primary Schools is more tuition than education. To my mind the Government of this Colony has done its duty. Within the last five years this vote has increased by practically \$200,000 and in that amount I am not taking into account the amount of \$25,000 as the result of the ten per cent. Temporary War Bonus. The vote has increased by 45 per cent. in the last five years. I do not intend to vote against this vote nor am I in opposition to it. It would ill-become me to speak against it because I know from this memorandum and the estimates of two estates I am connected with that both are building new schools. From that it will be seen that we are not opposed in any way to education. What is worrying me more than anything is that I am afraid that tuition is out-stripping the care of health condition and social welfare. I feel, sir, it is no good sending a child to school and teaching it to read and write, which after all is the duty of the State to do, unless the body of that child is fit. There is an old Latin saying which I remember from my school days: *Mens sana in corpore sano*. I think, sir, that is applicable to-day and always will be. I feel, sir, that it is no good sending children to school and cramming their heads with a certain amount of knowledge and no attention paid to their health condition. I am sorry that a certain portion of this money is not being spent on Medical services for the children than on cramming their heads.

We must remember that education is not only obtained in the schools but to a great extent also in the homes, and unless we can see that the conditions in the homes are fit so that the children can get education there all we do in the schools will be to my mind of very little value. It is for that reason I feel that the money spent on tuition is out-stripping the money spent on health conditions. I am sure the hon. Director of Medical Services will agree with me that our health and housing conditions are very much below the standard they ought to be and which everyone would like to see. Therefore, I appeal to Government that before we go on spending money on tuition to try and consider the housing conditions and the social welfare



of the people. We are told that if you fill your schools you will keep your Courts idle. I do not believe that. If you fill your schools and do put the homes in a proper condition it would do so, otherwise I do not believe it. Our Prison accommodation in the Colony shows that the more you spend on tuition the more work there is in the Courts. The Criminal Session at this time is longer than it has ever been. I am not saying that education will not affect that. What we have to-day in this Colony is not education. Were you really to educate the children I would be prepared to ask Government to spend a great deal more than at present.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: We have heard about the considerable amount of the Education vote. It is a subject upon which a great deal more can be said, but I would like to hear from the hon. Director of Education whether he considers the increase or the vote as it stands at present sufficient for the purpose of carrying out the system of education which he is there to carry out. We are told that this increase may be large, but according to the answer by the hon. Director of Education it may be small in his opinion. If he is not satisfied with the vote as it stands at present, then it means that he himself realizes that there is more to be done for those who are carrying out a system advocated by himself. In other words, those who are employed by him are being made to pay the price of the Exchequer. We may not be in a position to contribute more as he would like. Why, therefore, should we turn round and suggest to make the employees of that system pay for that deficiency? No one can gainsay the fact that education is a necessity. I think it has been decided in this Council that it is. If we turn to certain instances we see a refresher course for teachers. That refresher course, as we are told, is to modernize those persons in the art of teaching. On the other hand we also see the hon. Director of Education is fully aware of the fact that certain teachers are placed in an interregnum. Those teachers are not in a position to go through a refresher course as they are beyond examination age. I take it that the hon. Director agrees with that. We are also told that to grant certificates where examinations are not taken and a refresher course is difficult to be taken it will entail

further expenditure. We have there an admission that the vote is not sufficient. We are also told on a supplementary vote that a sum has to be provided for substitutes for teachers granted leave, but it is known to the hon. Director of Education that in many cases teachers are granted three months' leave, one on full pay and the other two months on half pay. That is because, I presume, the vote is not sufficient.

Government will have to face the fact if it has not already done so. If the system which is being adopted is the correct one, then there is no doubt as to its being continued. If it is correct, then Government will have to face the fact and say whether money will be forthcoming to develop that system to its fullest. Is Government satisfied that the money will be forthcoming? If Government is, then it is their duty to see that the money is forthcoming to develop the system to its fullest extent; if not, I am suggesting that Government is admitting partial failure of its own system. Government is admitting that the system obtaining at the present has not filled the needs of the community. I suggest that is one for their consideration. If Government is merely going to use this partial increase of the vote as a "Sop to Cerebus," then perhaps the system may be revised or reconsidered. It would seem that is the fundamental principle which Government will have to decide and which Government will have to face.

I would also like to hear from the hon. Director of Education whether the process of the amalgamation of schools is satisfactory, whether that is not in itself being done in order to save expense by the curtailment of additional staffs. I would like to hear what he has to say about the system of vocational training, whether he considers to train the youths in three years Government has done its duty to the community, and whether he considers the State should there end its duty to the citizens of the future. There are several other points that can be made, but again I suggest that no one at least no hon. Member here—would gainsay the fact that education is a necessity and that necessity must be fulfilled by the Exchequer of the Colony, which is a matter of serious consideration for Government so as not to sustain, as my hon. friend, Mr. Jackson,



has stated, the strain on the teachers. Government is admitting that there is such a strain but that it is not in a position to relieve it because of lack of financial means. It is the duty of Government in such a case to find that money in order to staff the schools. If Government cannot, then it finds itself on the horns of a dilemma as regards what has been brought about not by the present régime but by previous ones.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The view has been often expressed in this Council and also outside of it that an Elected Member would be bold indeed if he ever rises from his seat to attack this particular vote. How that view has come about is of no concern at the moment, but I have risen to express myself not exactly in the same terms as the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) but partly so. I share the views that were so ably expressed by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias, and also by the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford). I agree, and I think every right-thinking person would agree, that it is an obligation on the State to educate the children of the community, but I think it must be agreed also that the system that we have been trying in this country for so many years has broken down. As a matter of fact I venture to suggest it is not a system at all. As a Member of this Council for the past ten years, I have noticed several Members from time to time rise from their seats and make suggestions which they thought would improve the system. Some of those suggestions have been adopted and others rejected. To my mind it seems that our system here is nothing more than a mere patchwork. I gather from the remarks made by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara, that what this Government should consider is whether the community is getting the maximum benefit for the large amount that we are spending. I venture to suggest that it is a warning which has come at the right time. It is not only a question that we, as a community, have to carry ourselves for the duration of the war, but, if I understand the position correctly, the vote this year is \$610,000, next year it will be \$650,000 and the following year \$700,000. In other words the vote has to keep on rising under the present system, and apparently there is

nothing to stop it. That is what I would like this Government to consider. I am not saying that we should not spend \$500,000, \$600,000 or \$700,000 on education but what I do say is that when spending such a large amount we are to be sure that we are obtaining the maximum benefit. It is also not a question as to whether there are sufficient schools in the country, or whether there are sufficient teachers, or whether the amenities of the schools are sufficient for the pupils attending them.

I was very disappointed to hear the remarks of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, but, if I may use the term, I excuse him. As one hon. Member stated, education is his first love and his last love, but I go further and say the hon. Nominated Member thinks of education, sleeps with education and lives with education all the time, and whenever a Member attacks education he must expect—I personally do—the hon. Nominated Member to rise from his seat in noble defence of it. Speaking for myself I feel, sir, the same as the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara that the children of this Colony must be educated. It is the duty of the State and therefore it will not be asking too much that the whole system be very carefully considered and revised because, as I have said before, the expenditure is not stopping at the high figure at which it is at present. Some hon. Members have referred to it as being usual. Our obligations under the Code will make these figures keep rising and, as I said, I will not be at all surprised in another year or two to find that under this particular head Members have to agree to a vote of about \$700,000. I am going to ask hon. Members whether in view of that, they still think the matter is not one that should be raised at this time with the view of asking Government to go into the whole system so as to afford the maximum benefit to the children of the Colony.

Mr. JACOB: The debate to-day has taken a somewhat different turn. I think when the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara raised the question on Friday last he referred to certain increases, but the education system generally is not being discussed. I do not intend to say very much, but just to remind those hon. Members who have made comparisons and

to say that to my mind there has not been that constructive thought on the whole question. It is all very well to compare the expenditure of thirty years ago with what it is to-day, but the population has increased tremendously during that period and the plain fact remains that there is still 40 per cent. of the children of school-going age who are not in the schools. If that is a satisfactory state of affairs, then it may be advisable to attack the system and refuse the vote. But there are other things. It has been stated and brought out by the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) that the Swettenham Circular prevented large numbers of children from going to school, but that has been removed and the result must be increased expenditure. Then with the advancing times there has been better payment for teachers, and that has resulted in an enormous increase of the vote.

I do like to say that I am somewhat against the present system, but if a Commission were to enquire into it I do not know that we can go any further. A Committee was appointed quite recently and, whilst certain members suggested that several subjects on the curriculum should very well be placed under secondary education, the majority were in favour of their remaining on the primary education curriculum. Those are very controversial matters. The plain fact is, and I want to stress it, we want more schools, more teachers and better supervision. I am inclined to agree that the teachers are not doing their very best. I think they are being very well paid to-day and want better supervision so as to get more out of them. It must be borne in mind that it is an obligation on this Government to see that the ordinary child goes to school and gets what education is given there. There are certain Members here who feel that this additional expenditure for additional teachers and a refresher course for teachers should not be voted. I feel, sir, that more money should be voted, as it is the duty of the State to see that all children of school-going age are kept in school.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I do not want to speak again on this subject. I had rather hoped the hon. Director of Education would speak before I replied. I do not feel in the least disturbed by the

criticisms, witticisms and attacks by the hon. Mr. Jackson or any other Member here. I knew perfectly well when I raised the subject that I would be attacked and that any Elected Member who raises the question of education is going to be attacked. I object at having been represented as saying things I did not say or at suggestions that I mean things I did not mean. I made it perfectly clear, and it must be obvious to everyone except the feeble-minded, that I did not oppose the principle of primary education as I thought it was the duty of the State to educate children. I also made it perfectly clear that I was not attacking those responsible for directing education nor attacking the schoolmasters who, I thought, are working quite conscientiously. What I was attacking was the increased expenditure at this time. If the hon. Member did not understand that was the purpose of my attack, then I say to him that is what I said, what I meant and what I will continue to say.

It has been said by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob), if his figures are correct, that 40 per cent. of the children of school-going age are not being accommodated in the schools. We cannot meet an expenditure of that kind, and yet here we are frittering away another \$13,000 and not solving the problem at all. I entirely agree with the remarks of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias, that expenditure on this sort of education which we have is to a great extent useless. That has been urged and argued in this Council over and over again. At present we have not the money for vocational education or for full primary education. At this time we need to conserve every half-penny we have for war effort. I say it is absolutely wrong to go spending money which should not be spent at this time. The hon. Member for North Western District said there were two items under the Colonial Secretary's Office vote and the Audit Department vote which should not be there. Why did he not attack them? If the hon. Member knew there were new additions and could be omitted, why did he not attack them? He was not doing his duty. I did not see them, and if they are brought to my notice now and I think they should not be there I would certainly ask Government to re-commit those items and attack them.

What I am attacking is unnecessary expenditure.

The hon. Mr. Jackson has said it is a necessary expenditure I have attacked under this head because the schools are in need of repairs and the children have no where to go and the poor schoolmasters are going to get brain fever from mental strain and die in the Asylum. Why in this particular year when we have a war on are we told that in 1941 the teachers are going to get brain fever unless another \$13,000 is given for their relief? Why should another \$600 be spent on refresher courses for teachers? Why bring it up now? I have no doubt as regards the hard working capabilities of these schoolmasters, but another couple of years of hard work will not send them to the Asylum nor give them brain fever. I admit this expenditure may be necessary to some degree. It is all a question of degree. Is it of a greater degree of necessity than conserving funds for war effort? That is the whole purpose of my remarks. Which is more pressing, to use this money in order to help war effort or for the relief of the poor and those suffering from want, or to spend it on education. Which is more necessary? I am not going to deal any longer with this matter. I have made my position perfectly clear.

I am entirely in favour of primary education within the limits of the country's finances. But we have gone beyond that point now, and even then we cannot fulfil what is thought necessary to be done. I say this is not the time to make any increases at all either under this vote or any other. If the hon. Member points to me any item under any head the expenditure on which it is thought is unnecessary I promise him to oppose it vigorously. Government is ill-advised to press these items at this time. Here we are spending \$13,000 for two more schools and a number of additional teachers, which money can be more usefully spent in one thousand and more other ways in trying to beat the enemy. If that enemy succeeds there would be no primary education at all. I want hon. Members to think about that. Primary education for the children can only go on if Great Britain conquers her enemy, and not if she loses. It is our duty to see that she conquers. It is no good frittering away five cents much less \$13,000 in this way.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before the hon. Director of Education speaks I would like to say just a few words. Perhaps I feel myself at liberty to give more information on one or two points than possibly he can. I am not going to attempt any comment on the general question of the education system, but only to remind hon. Members that quite recently we have had a very comprehensive—I may call it expert—review of the whole education system of this and other Colonies by the Royal Commission to the West Indies. Although their full report is not yet published, a full summary of their conclusions has been made public and is in the possession of hon. Members, who are therefore able to judge from what the Commissioners found that there was a great deal they thought should be done to improve the system. We cannot therefore regard the system as being altogether satisfactory.

Some hon. Member, I think it is the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight), has put it succinctly to Government that if it is not satisfied that the system is all it should be then it is Government's business to reform that system, and if it would cost money then it is Government's business further to find the money. He does not suggest how the money is to be found. I cannot by any means accept the suggestion that whatever the educational system may require for its perfection the money must be found for it war or no war. I think I tried to explain to hon. Members that we have to do without a great many things on account of the war, and improvement to the education system and many other improvements are counted among those things. The Royal Commission did not take the "whole hog" view of the hon. Member for Western Essequibo; they recognized that there was a limit beyond which the Colony could not be expected to go in financing education. They planned to set up very large funds from which these additional requirements may be financed, but these things we have to postpone or do without on account of the war. I would like to point out that although a great deal has been said in criticism of the present education system and the Royal Commission have criticised it practically, I think I can safely say that the improvements which they recommend involve the expenditure of more money in



that direction, more money for the social welfare side, more money for equipment, teachers and change of curriculum.

Several hon. Members referred to the great desirability for changing the method of education and introducing a much greater element of technical education or manual training. I would not call it vocational education. Government as usual would entirely agree with that, but one great obstacle to that kind of training is that it costs much more money and we simply have to postpone these things at the moment. The information I want to give in reply to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) is that one of the things recognized in considering the system, one of the first requisities, is the strengthening of the Inspectorate considerably. That is among the proposals put forward for consideration before the war. There were other proposals—medical examination of the children and a number of other things—all of which cost money, and we were depending upon and hoping that the Welfare Fund would have come to the assistance of the Colony in providing that money. All these things we have to postpone on account of the war.

I may mention something *en passant* that perhaps hon. Members do not know. There has been a great deal of discussion on the quality of technical training and a good deal of criticism of what is known as the Agricultural Bias Scheme. I am saying nothing either for or against that scheme, but it was an interesting fact that although it does not appear in the summarized report it was picked out by the Royal Commission as being among the most helpful things in West Indian education. They are supposed to be an expert body and their opinion may be of interest.

These small increases which have been the subject of discussion of are matters which, I agree, there is room for difference of opinion upon, though at this time it is a very difficult line to draw between what is absolutely necessary and what is not absolutely necessary. I think the hon. Member will find it difficult himself, as some things may be necessary but not absolutely necessary. It is a difficult line to draw, and most of these things recommended if Government formally commits itself to them it would only be in

principle. After the war there is no doubt that there will be far reaching reorganization of the educational system.

Mr. CREASE (Director of Education): Much has been said about education as the result of the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara moving the deletion of certain items on the estimates. I do not wish to detain this Council for any length of time because many of the points I had in mind have been covered by previous speakers. In reply to the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara I would like to point out that primary education is compulsory in this Colony and, so long as this is so, Government is under an obligation to supply the funds to provide as far as it possibly can adequate accommodation, equipment and teaching staff. I would like to assure hon. Members of this Council that before these estimates were submitted great care was taken to see that in case of any increase only the absolute minimum was inserted. We could have asked for much more, but on reviewing the present situation it was decided that only the absolute minimum should be asked for. Further, these estimates were gone through by the hon. Colonial Secretary with the view of seeing whether they could be further reduced.

With regard to item 9—"Refresher Course to Teachers"—the amount asked for here is \$600. Some two years ago with the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies supported by the advice of the Advisory Education Committee in the Colonial Office the Teachers' Training Centre was extended, the number of students for training being increased from 30 to 40 for a two-year course, and a full-time Principal was appointed. It has always been felt that the activities of this Centre should not be confined entirely to the training of 30 or 40 students during a certain period. That is a very small number when compared with the number of teachers on the roll of the Colony. It was considered very necessary indeed and most essential that the activities of the Centre should be extended beyond the training of that number of students, and for that reason Refresher Courses were instituted by the Principal and first carried out in Georgetown. These courses gave instruction in the principles of teach-

ing and modern methods of teaching to various grades of teachers, especially the uncertificated class. As a result of these courses teachers in Essequibo and Berbice, who were not able to participate in them have been pressing the Department to hold refresher courses for them. It is for these teachers principally that we are asking for what is to my mind not a large sum in order that they may have an opportunity of coming to Georgetown and attending the courses along with the other teachers. I would like to add that it is impossible to carry out the refresher courses in any other place than in Georgetown. This \$600 will be earmarked to pay their travelling expenses—return fare—and also to give them a very small subsistence allowance while in Georgetown.

With regard to item 10 (2)—“New Schools to be established in 1941”—we have received several applications for new schools. These have been carefully considered not only by the Department but by the Education Committee, and these two instances are the outstanding ones. In one case—Skeldon, Corentyne, is a place which has grown tremendously during the last four years; at present there is only one primary school there which has accommodation for about 880 children. As the result of our investigations we find that there are at least 1,500 children of school-going age in that vicinity, and therefore it is thought very necessary that we should supply additional accommodation in that locality. The same thing applies to the other case of De Kinderen, West Coast, Demerara. The Church of England school there does not provide adequate accommodation for the school children in that area.

With regard to item 10 (3)—“Additional Teachers”—the sum asked for is to provide for 25 Assistant Teachers and 25 Pupil Teachers, but here again that number is totally inadequate to meet the number of teachers required in the schools throughout the Colony. The average attendance for the year 1939–1940 has gone up by 1,197, and the increased number of teachers asked for will only provide for the increased average attendance. The schools are still very much understaffed and the number of teaching units short at present is somewhere in the vicinity of 70. I would like those hon.

Members, who oppose the increase in the number of teachers, to pause for a moment and consider if they can—I do not think they can; only those who have taught in schools are able to sum up the position—what it is for a teacher who conscientiously does his work throughout the year to tackle day in and day out such large classes as I am going to enumerate. This is a summary of a paragraph we find in the 1938 report of the Director of Education. During that year there were no less than 129 classes with 50 children in each, 89 classes with 60 in each, 80 classes with 70 in each, 33 classes with 80 in each, 15 classes with 90 in each. I have had a considerable amount of experience in teaching and I say quite frankly that I do not want to teach at any time a class of more than 30 pupils. With the large classes which I have enumerated it is grossly unfair to the teacher, for he is being taxed beyond his limitations.

With regard to item 10 (4)—“2 Janitors Colonial Schools”—I think the hon. Member suggested the deletion of this item. This I may point out is not a new item. It has occurred on the estimates since the establishment of Government Schools—one in Broad Street, Georgetown, and one one in Essequibo. These are very large Government buildings.

At this stage the Council adjourned for the luncheon recess until 2 p.m.

2 p.m.—

Mr. CREASE (resuming): When the Committee adjourned I had concluded my remarks in reply to the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys). After the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, had spoken other hon. Members followed, and the trend of the debate took rather the form of a discussion on the educational system of this Colony. Your Excellency dealt with that matter and therefore I do not propose to touch on it myself, but with your permission, sir, I would like to make one or two observations with regard to the remarks made by various hon. Members. The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) stated that the average attendance at present was 39,600. The latest figure is over 40,000, and incidentally I would like to mention here that during the past 10 years the average attendance has risen from

27,000 odd to over 40,000. I agree with the observation of the hon. Member that the Inspectorate should be increased. I think those figures support my contention because, during that period of 10 years, the number of Inspectors has not been increased. The hon. Member also made a request to Government that something should be done to see that a decent water supply is available in most of the schools. He said he had seen children going to school with small bottles of water. A considerable amount of progress has been made in that direction during the past five or six years. I think I am right in saying that almost every fully aided school on the East Coast and on the main roads in Berbice and Essequibo is now supplied with water from artesian wells. The water which children take with them to school in bottles is not for drinking purposes at all. They take the water to school for the purpose of cleaning their slates. (Laughter).

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias, suggested that more handwork should be done in the schools. The hon. Member is not present now, but I would like to point out that under the new Code which came into force on the 1st of July, 1940, provision has been made for the extension of handwork in school. Neither has the matter been lost sight of by the Education Department. This is evident by the Domestic Science Centres and the Handwork Centres which have been established. I can safely say by the results shown by the girls who attend the primary schools sound progress is being made. These girls, for instance, make their own uniforms. A special feature with respect to Handwork Centres is the Trade Centre, Kingston. I am convinced that everyone who has visited that Centre will agree with me that excellent work is being done. I do not say, of course, that we have reached the peak in the establishment of such Centres in connection with primary school education.

With regard to the remarks made by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) I think I am right in saying that he referred to examinations in connection with the refresher courses which we propose to carry out. I would point out that no examination is included in these courses; they are simply practical courses arranged over a period of three or

four weeks according to the subjects taken. The hon. Member also referred to the question of leave regulations. In this respect the new Code has made a tremendous advance on the question of leave regulations for teachers.

As regards the remarks of the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar), Your Excellency dealt with them in your observations before I spoke. There is, however, just one more point on which I would like to have some information, and perhaps the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) might supply it later on. He said that 40 per cent. of the children of school-going age are not attending school. I have not been able to check up on this figure, but I would very much like to discuss the matter with him at some future time so as to find out where these children are to be found.

The Committee divided on the motion for the deletion of the items, and there voted:—

*For*—Messrs. Humphrys and Walcott.—2.

*Against*—Messrs. Jacob, Jackson, Peer Bacchus, Crease, Case, Laing, D'Andrade, Austin, Seaford, McDavid, Luckhoo, Dr. MacLennan, Prof. Dash, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary.—15.

Motion lost.

Item 10—Primary Schools.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that sub-item (5)—Temporary War Bonus, \$25,280—be reduced to \$23,270 and transferred under sub-head 11—Other Charges—because several persons are paid from that sub-head.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Something has been brought to my notice which might render it necessary for me at a later stage to ask leave to recommit this head. The matter is under consideration by Government at the present moment.

Mr. JACOB: With regard to the British Guiana Scholarship I take it that Government will give favourable consideration to



any application that may be made for increased allowances to students now abroad in view of what is happening at the present time, particularly as regards air raids and so on. Representations have been made to me in the matter but they have not been of such a nature as to enable me to put forward definite proposals.

THE CHAIRMAN: As far as I know Government has not received any representations on that subject. Is the Director of Education aware of any?

Mr. CREASE: No, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: When representations have been received I shall be prepared to consider them.

#### INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 16—Passage of Headmaster to England, \$288. The Headmaster will return to England on the termination of his agreement early next year.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Headmaster has given notice of his desire to return to England on the termination of his agreement. He will return to his regular post in England. The question of replacing him remains to be considered.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### LABOUR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Item (5)—Secretary, District Administration, \$2,880.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be deleted and that sub-item (7) which will be re-numbered (6) be amended to read—3 Class I Officers, \$5,652. The intention is to abolish the post of Secretary to the District Administration at the end of this year when the present holder of the office retires, and instead of replacing him by another individual, to increase the number of Class I clerks. The duties of Secretary will be allocated to one of the clerks in the Department.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to preface what I have to say under this head with a quotation from the recommendations of

the Royal Commission 1938-39, on page 25 under head 7.—Constitutional and Closer Union, paragraph 26 :—

... More and not less, participation by the people in the work of government is a real necessity for lasting social advancement.

For several years the Local Government Board or District Administration came in for a great deal of criticism from Elected Members. I was very sympathetic—in fact I think I am quite safe in saying that if I criticized the Department I did so very constructively. To-day I find myself in the position that I consider that this Department is not filling its desired place in the community. I say that for many reasons. If we are to have constitutional progress here I think it has to begin in the villages, and I feel that the people in the villages are not given the necessary encouragement and help to govern themselves. I have in mind representations made to me during the last six months from all parts of the Colony. Unasked and unsolicited, villagers have come to me and made various requests, and I have advised them from time to time to approach their representatives, the District Commissioners, or the Commissioner of Labour. In some cases I have looked into the matter myself when it was not convenient to find the representative of the division. In one or two cases the representations have been so extensive that I found it very difficult to go on with them. I propose to refer to a few cases to show that there is a general desire on the part of the villagers to look after their own affairs, and I think it would be a very good gesture on the part of those responsible to allow those people an opportunity and to encourage them so that in every way they will be able to look after their own affairs. Whether that is done or not I do not know, but I am left with the distinct impression that those people are not encouraged in the way they should be.

I went to a few places, the Demerara River district, for instance, and I am sorry that, the hon. Member who represents that district is not present, but I have discussed one or two matters with him. While the villagers were anxious to make representations they felt that representations made by them would not be considered in the light that they have a right to make those representations. They feel

that it would be like trying to suggest things which would not be welcome. At the last Village Chairmen's Conference I suggested that it was the duty of the villagers to see that matters affecting the villages were conducted in a proper way, and that it was their business to look after those representations and make them to the proper quarters. I do not know whether they are doing so to the extent they should, but the fact remains that in some cases they are not encouraged. Representations were made recently on the West Bank of Demerara to the District Commissioner there, and I think those representations were not welcome. I do not think the matter is quite settled. I think the Commissioner of Labour knows something about it, but I think I can safely say that the parties concerned are very anxious to help in the good government of the district.

As regards the Corentyne Coast the representative of that division is here. Several representations were made to me which I referred to the District Commissioner and the hon. Member concerned. I have had something to do with Western Berbice, too. Representations were made to me which I referred to the hon. Member representing the district, and I also wrote several letters to the Commissioner of Labour. But the worst case of all was that of Eastern Demerara—the Golden Grove-Nabaclis incident—where I understand the village council has not functioned for the last nine months. I have not been able to find out exactly why the council has not been functioning. Section 39 of the Local Government Ordinance, Chapter 84, reads as follows:—

39.—(1) In the event of the chairman of a village council or country authority not being present at the commencement of any meeting of the authority or any committee thereof, the members present may elect one of their number to act as chairman of the meeting.

I think the complaint of the villagers is that owing to some legal difficulty the Chairman was unseated some time in March and up to the present the village council has not been functioning. I drew their attention to that section of the Ordinance and they said they were advised that they could not hold a meeting, so they could not make representations as a body.

THE CHAIRMAN: Who were they advised by?

Mr. JACOB: By the District Commissioner. The district is now administered by the District Commissioner and the overseer. Recently they made representations to the Chairman of the Local Government Board, who is the Colonial Secretary, by letters dated the 29th of October and the 5th of November, about one or two matters, the chief being that of a piece of land on which they are paying an annual rental under licence of occupancy and on which dams were made up at a cost to the village of a sum of \$5,000. They said they wanted that land for the purpose of growing provisions under the Grow More Food Campaign to supply the district with ground provisions. The land is at the rear of the village. I do not know the extent of the area but there is a letter in my hand dated the 29th of October and addressed to the Chairman of the Local Government Board, in which it is specifically stated that they wanted the land for the purpose of growing more food. They are short of land in the village where there is good deal of unemployment, and they require the land for the purpose of extending their cultivation. They were told that a scheme was being carried out there with the object of giving them the land for cultivation purposes, but the curious thing was that a wire fence was put up on the Golden Grove-Nabaclis western dam running from north to south of the Crown dam. They feel that it is unnecessary to fence land that will be used for growing ground provisions, but they were not able to get any direct reply to their letter, nor were they told that the land would be used for any other purpose. The fact remains that they asked that someone should visit the site and advise them as to the reason why a trench running from west to east was being dug right across the land because, in their opinion, it would interfere with the object they have in view. It was not until I made strong representations and suggested that if a proper explanation was not given some of the villagers would take legal proceedings to prevent the digging of that trench, that something was done in the matter. I am pleased to be able to say that the Director of Public Works and I left Georgetown to see the land, but owing to heavy rain that day we could not go to

the site. I am, however, glad to be able to say that the Director explained the position to the villagers that day and he is re-drafting the scheme for submission to Government with the object the villagers have in view. The Director mentioned that when the scheme was first drafted it was not done with the object of affording the villagers the use of the land for the purpose of growing more food. It is a long story. I am not making any charges, but the villagers have been left with the distinct impression that the land will not be given to them for the cultivation of ground provisions. A scheme will be submitted, but whether it is within the capacity of the Government to put it into operation is another matter.

The point I wish to lay stress on particularly is the fact that this village is not being allowed to govern itself. It has not functioned as a village council during the last nine months as a result of some technicality. Even if there was some flaw in the Ordinance I think there was sufficient time to pass an enabling Ordinance to allow a village chairman to be elected. I cannot imagine that Government would allow a village to carry on without a council meeting from month to month. That is what has happened at Golden Grove and Nabaclis. I have brought the matter to the notice of Government with the hope that, as recommended by the Royal Commission, villagers will be given every opportunity and facility to govern themselves so that in future they may be well fitted not only to govern themselves and their villages but be able to help in the government of the whole Colony.

Mr. LAING (Commissioner of Labour and Local Government): The hon. Member for North Western District in making criticisms of my Department has not been hampered in any way by the facts. Of course that does make criticism much easier, but at the same time it does not enhance the value, if there is any value in such criticisms. He says that the villagers have not been encouraged to govern themselves. As a Member of this Legislative Council I think he should know that in 1935 an Ordinance was passed by this Council which gave to the villages a two-thirds majority on their councils. That means that the voters in

a village district are entitled under the existing law to elect two-thirds of the membership of the village council. The Local Government Board nominates one-third. If that does not give them an opportunity to govern their own affairs in the villages well I do not know what would. The hon. Member has referred to representations not being welcome from the Demerara River and West Bank districts, and also from the Corentyne and Western Berbice. What those representations happen to be I do not know. It appeared to be a secret and he has not let us into the secret.

In regard to the position at Golden Grove and Nabaclis the hon. Member spoke to me on the matter and he also received a deputation from the villagers, so that I think I am entitled to say that he made very close investigation and enquiries into that matter before he made his remarks in this Council. That being so he would know that in the month of July the villagers met me after having previously met the District Commissioner, and we went very carefully into the whole matter. The whole scheme was explained to them. It was carefully explained to them that if they wished the land for agricultural purposes they would have to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the soil and whether adequate drainage was available. Following upon that discussion the villagers held a meeting in the village, and if the hon. Member wishes to refer to the report in the local Press in July he will see exactly what transpired. But I say this must all be within his knowledge although, of course, he omitted to tell the Council. The hon. Member says that the scheme was for the cultivation of ground provisions. I think he knows perfectly well from his discussions with me and with the Director of Public Works, that the object of the scheme was to collect surplus water in the particular area so as to prevent damage being done to the Crown dams of the villages and estates in that area. The scheme was not designed for cultivation purposes whatsoever.

The hon. Member expressed surprise that new dams should be protected by fencing. He knows as an old colonist the damage that is done to dams by cattle. If he does not I submit he should know,



and I think the Public Works Department was perfectly correct in fencing those new works, having regard to the expenditure of money involved. The hon. Member further states that although he made strong representations nothing was done in the matter. The hon. Member knows perfectly well that I received more than one deputation from the village and that everything was explained to them. He knows also that I told him over the telephone everything that had been told to the villagers, and to come here and say that nothing was done although he made strong representations is not in accordance with the facts.

Mr. JACOB: I should like to join issue with my hon. friend on his statement that it is right and proper to have a new dam fenced. The villagers have no cattle in the area; it is not intended to put cattle there, and it seems particularly strange that a very costly and well erected wire fence should be put up in that area. That has not been explained at all. The letter of the 29th of October addressed by the villagers to the Chairman of the Local Government Board stated exactly what the land was required for, but it has not been answered up to now. From their point of view the whole thing appears to be a secret also.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are they paying for the fence?

Mr. JACOB: No, sir, but their land has been fenced and they have a distinct feeling—

THE CHAIRMAN: It is very hard on them!

Mr. JACOB: They believe the land will be used for cattle-grazing purposes while they want it to grow more food. That is their contention, and I do not think the explanation offered has been very satisfactory.

Mr. LAING: Perhaps the hon. Member did not hear me when I said that deputation was received by me and that a the whole scheme had been explained to them. They said they wanted the land for agricultural purposes and I told them that was possible if the soil and drainage were suitable.

Mr. JACOB: I am glad to think that the villagers can expect to plant food on that land.

Item (21) renumbered (20)—9 Rangers—1 at \$450 by \$30 to \$600; 8 at \$288 by \$24 to \$480—\$3,996.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be amended to read:—7 Rangers—1 at \$450 by \$30 to \$600; 6 at \$288 by \$24 to \$480—\$3,228. The reason for this is that the Department of Lands and Mines is going to take charge of the supervision of the timber operations on the Essequibo Coast. It is for this purpose that an additional Ranger has been asked for to be shown under the Department of Lands and Mines.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (25) renumbered (24)—Crews and Boathands, \$7,322.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be reduced to \$6,842 so as to link up with the items to which I have just referred.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (35) renumbered (34)—Temporary War Bonus, \$2,310.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be reduced to \$2,186 consequent on the reduction of the number of Rangers.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 7—House rent, \$420.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$570 to enable the Land Officer at Bartica to rent quarters for 10 months. It is impossible for him to occupy the present quarters.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 21—Purchase of a calculating machine, \$140. This machine is required as a labour-saving device and as a means of ensuring accuracy.

Item agreed to.

## LANDS AND MINES DEPARTMENT.

Item (23)—2 Rangers—1 at \$450 x \$30 to \$600; 1 at \$288 x \$24 to \$480—\$1,020.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be amended to read:— 4 Rangers—1 at \$450 x \$30 to \$600; 3 at \$288 x \$24 to \$480—\$1,788. I have already given the reason for this. It is considered essential that greater supervision should be exercised on the Essequibo Coast in connection with timber.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am asking Government under this head to re-consider the question of the sale of Crown lands. In the *Official Gazette* of August 20, 1939, it was published that Government would re-consider the question of the sale of Crown lands, but I notice from the comparative statement of revenue on page 46 of the Estimate that the amount of revenue anticipated from the sale of Crown lands in 1941 has been further reduced by \$100. I quite appreciate that on the last occasion on which I raised this question the Treasurer referred to the fact that the Colony has been losing a considerable amount of revenue. In these days when we need all the revenue we can get, if Government would revert to the policy of selling Crown lands with the necessary reservations as to oil and mineral rights it would be able to obtain a considerable amount of ready cash. It seems to me to be a rather short-sighted policy, especially in view of the existence of certain lands on the East Coast on which the proprietors have machinery, houses and cultivation, and I am sure that if they were given the opportunity they would be only too willing to purchase the available Crown lands. I think Government should fix the price per acre.

THE CHAIRMAN: What land is the hon. Member referring to?

Mr. WIGHT: Lands on the East Coast from Kitty to Mahaica, extending from the railway line to the public road, on which houses and factories have been built. I am sure the proprietors of those estates would be willing to purchase those lands if they were given the opportunity.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you mean the lands for which rental is paid?

Mr. WIGHT: They are held under licence.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have never had any request for purchase of those lands. It seems to me that the holders are quite content.

Mr. WIGHT: I am making the suggestion in view of the notice published by Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member is referring to sugar estate lands, those lands have been held under title for a very long time. I do not think it has any bearing on these lands.

Mr. WIGHT: I am suggesting that if opportunity was given for the purchase of those lands the holders might be willing to purchase them. I am not saying that they would.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would raise a very large question which would be extremely interesting.

Mr. WIGHT: I am aware of certain negotiations that are going on with regard to certain front lands. I do not think Government gets very much rent from those lands under the licences of occupancy.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do we get any rent?

Mr. WIGHT: I think Government gets rental under the licences of occupancy. I know of one or two places where the proprietors would, if given the opportunity, acquire certain lands now held under lease. Apart from the Pomeroun I know there are other districts from which certain representations have been made. I may take this opportunity to say that the Commissioner of Lands and Mines has been rather helpful in opening certain areas of that kind and granting certain facilities, but if his hands were unfettered with regard to the sale of Crown lands Government would be able to have some ready cash.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think this is the time to go into a very long discussion which would be necessary to deal with a matter of that kind.

Mr. WALCOTT: If I follow the hon

Member correctly he thinks that the front lands of the sugar estates on the East and West Coasts and in Berbice are Crown lands. They are not; they are freehold.

Mr. WIGHT: There are certain areas from Kitty upwards, extending from the railway line backwards, which are held under licences of occupancy. Freehold property extends from the railway line to the public road.

Mr. SEAFORD: I do not think that is quite correct.

Mr. AUSTIN: If the hon. Member is referring to the East Coast estates, there are certain lands held under licence of occupancy for which rental is paid, but most of it is savannah land and badly drained, so much so that even cattle cannot graze there. There are back lands on the lower East Coast and higher lands from Plaisance onwards, but those lands are taken up with cane or farmers' provisions. There is no land on the lower East Coast which could be occupied or bought by any sensible individual.

Mr. WALCOTT: I will go a little further. I think I understood the hon. Member to refer also to titles held in the Colony. The late Sir Gordon Guggisberg went into that matter very closely and I remember distinctly his telling us that he thought the sugar estates of the Colony, whilst holding lots of land under special conditions from the Imperial Government, were not holding them as correctly as they should, and if he had lived I am sure he would have introduced an Ordinance to give them possession of those lands outright. It is wrong that people who have expended so much money for so many years should still have a doubt over their title to the lands they occupy, and I do think it would be well to consider whether they should not be given complete title to those lands. If we tried to sell any of those estates in England they would not be worth anything.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know what was or was not in the mind of my predecessor, but I have never received any representation on this subject since I have been here, nor have I come across any record of such representation. If they were made very careful consideration

would have to be given to the whole position.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: During the last annual session when Your Excellency was away the hon. Member raised this very point. I was not then aware that Government had quite recently considered the policy as to whether lands should be sold or people should take out long leases, and I did give an undertaking that the question of sale would be considered. I discovered that some time early in 1938, or towards the end of 1937, the matter was considered by the Executive Council and the decision was that for the time being at any rate Crown lands should not be sold, but that persons should be granted long leases instead. There had been a great deal of trouble with regard to various parcels of land the owners of which had gone back to India, and Government could not take any action with regard to them. All of that I discovered after the last annual session, and I put the papers before the Acting Governor. It is quite clear that the matter was recently considered and it was thought inadvisable to make any change at the present time.

Mr. WIGHT: I am asking whether Government would not re-consider the matter. It is very difficult to obtain a mortgage on leased lands or to offer them as security. Nobody would lend money on leased land; it is practically impossible to borrow money on a 99-year lease. I am asking Government to consider the advisability of allowing certain people to obtain freehold title to those lands in order that they may be able to borrow money on them and help in the general policy of Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the whole subject goes very much further than the hon. Member has any idea of. I suggest that he should discuss it with the Commissioner of Lands and Mines. It is a matter of very far-reaching policy and has to be gone into thoroughly with the new West Indian Comptroller before any change of policy is adopted. It has nothing whatever to do with revenue. Revenue considerations had no part in the decision. To explain the whole situation would take a very long time.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to be en-

~~the whole scheme had been explained to them. They said they wanted the land for agricultural purposes and I told them that was possible if the soil and drainage were suitable.~~

This machine is required as a labour-saving device and as a means of ensuring accuracy.

Item agreed to.



lightened on one point—whether it is a fact that the lands between Kitty and Ogle, extending from the railway line to the public road, are held under licence of occupancy by the people who now occupy them.

Mr. AUSTIN: That particular block of land is owned by an estate called the Corentyne Sugar Co., Ltd., as freehold property.

Mr. JACOB: I think that is one of the pieces of land the hon. Member was referring to, and I think even the lands behind the railway line for a distance of 750 rods are owned by transport.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest that before matters of this kind are brought up the hon. Members concerned should have it perfectly clear in their minds what they are referring to, because it is very difficult to deal with them in a slipshod way.

Mr. WIGHT: I am clear in my mind; I am referring to the lands behind the railway line and not the lands to which the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) is referring. I have taken the trouble to go to the Department of Lands and Mines and ask to be supplied with a list of the occupants, the licences of occupancy and the leases of the lands between Kitty and Mahaicony. I am referring to the lands from the railway line backwards, not the lands from the railway line to the public road. The lands behind the railway line are not all freehold.

THE CHAIRMAN: Further consideration will have to be given to the matter before any change of policy can be adopted.

Item (25)—Boats' Crews, \$3,500.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$4,940.

Mr. JACOB: The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) is very keen on opposing new items. I notice that we have passed item (10) which is a new post carrying a salary of \$1,716. I do not know whether we can afford three new posts in this Department.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Per-

haps I can save time by referring the hon. Member to the explanatory memorandum where the reasons for these new posts are all set out. The Department has undoubtedly been under-staffed in the past and there has been a leakage of revenue due, no doubt, to the shortage of staff. It is proposed to increase the staff by one officer. I think the reasons given will satisfy most hon. Members that it will be money well spent. This is a revenue-collecting Department.

Mr. JACOB: I am grateful for the explanation but I was simply reminding the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara that he said he was prepared to oppose any new item unless he got a satisfactory explanation.

THE CHAIRMAN: I really do not think that is necessary.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I am also in favour of the increase.

Item as amended, put and agreed to.

Item (29)—Temporary War Bonus, \$700.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$921.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 2—Transport and Travelling—(a) Travelling allowances, \$1,500; (b) Subsistence allowances, \$2,430; (c) Transport of goods, \$500—\$4,430.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be amended to read:—Transport and Travelling—(a) Travelling allowances, \$1,518; (b) Subsistence allowances, \$3,180; (c) Transport of goods, \$500—\$5,198. The reason is that there is bound to be an increase owing to the fact that the work in Essequibo is to be done by the Department of Lands and Mines.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It does seem strange that subsistence should go up by such a large figure. There must be some other explanation than the one given by the Colonial Secretary.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: My explanation is correct. It is in connection with the work in Essequibo. The officers will be away for a considerable period and

they draw subsistence allowances according to the Regulations. There is very little additional travelling to be done, and if occasionally they have to travel it will be by the Transport Department's steamers. Land Officers have to be away from headquarters and they draw subsistence allowances according to the Regulations.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I do not follow that argument. The officers either travel or they do not travel.

THE CHAIRMAN: They may travel without drawing travelling allowances. An officer travelling in his own boat does not draw a travelling allowance. He might be away for three months and not draw any travelling.

MR. DE AGUIAR: The officers either travelled before and did not receive subsistence allowances, or they are going to do the same amount of travelling now and receive subsistence allowances.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are two new posts. Two more Rangers are going to do the work in this Department.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is an attempt to tighten up the collection of revenue.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I was thinking there was some error in the calculation.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, it is simply that two officers will be there who were not there before.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 3—Maintenance of Water Transport, \$200.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$50 to \$250.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 6—Materials, equipment and instruments, \$2,600.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$450 and carried out at \$3,050. More gasoline will have to be purchased for the transport of the equipment.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is where the increased expenditure on travelling referred to by the hon. Member comes in.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that items 12 and 13 be re-numbered 14 and 15 and that a new item 12 be inserted as follows:—Contribution towards travelling expenses of the Missionaries at Cabacaburi and Moruca for performing duties in connection with Aboriginal Indians—\$260. Of this sum \$180 will go to the Anglican mission at Cabacaburi and \$80 to the Roman Catholic mission at Moruca. Those figures have been arrived at after consultation with the denominations to which I have referred. I also move the insertion of a new item, 13—Rent for quarters, \$400.

Items put, and agreed to.

Item 13 renumbered 15—Geological Survey, \$9,541.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$11,542. This item has been transferred from head XLVII.—Colonial Development Fund Schemes.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 16—Cabin launch and engine, \$6,000.

MR. C. V. WIGHT: Is the launch to be built locally or imported?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It will be built locally. There will be a senior officer of the Department stationed at Bartica and it will be necessary for him and his Ranger to do a great deal of travelling while supervising the timber work up there. I am advised that it is proposed that the launch should be built locally.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I have heard so much about this timber that I looked to see how much royalty Government expects to collect. I observe that it is anticipated that we will collect \$8,000 more, but I think we have gone over \$15,000 already on the opposite side of the sheet.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Government has given very careful consideration to this matter. It is unfortunate that it was not possible to consider the proposals before the annual session and so avoid these doubts in hon. Members' minds. It was felt that the collection of revenue should be tightened up, and this scheme was put up by the Head of the Department who has had considerable experience elsewhere. It is felt that a great deal of revenue would be collected if there was increased supervision. I hope that the increase will be a great deal more than the figure mentioned. Regulations have been provided, and it is hoped they will soon be in force, to enable better control in Georgetown as well as the collection of revenue from timber. The Conservator of Forests explained that at a recent meeting of the Council.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think I am correct in saying that last year we were promised regulations for timber control which have not yet appeared. I think it is with the intention of putting that into effect that these extra amounts are asked for now.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I was hoping to hear whether the engine of the launch will be of British or foreign origin, but I have not heard anything about that.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I am in favour of expenditure when it means increased revenue. I, however, think \$6,000 is quite a large sum for a launch. Is it to have a dining room?

Mr. SEAFORD: I do not think the hon. Member has ever crossed from Leguan to Wakenaam in rough weather. Even so he would not like to travel in a small launch.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Yes, I have. I am not opposing it but I am wondering whether it is not an extravagant estimate.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am not opposing the item, provided the launch is built locally.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If it is built by the Transport Department it will mean that the money will go from one pocket into another.

Item put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 17—Bateau and outboard engine, \$320.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### LAW OFFICERS.

Mr. JACOB: Sir, I have in my hand a copy of the British Guiana Civil Service List published on the 1st January, 1940, and compiled in the Colonial Secretary's Office. On page 125 I see under "Law Officers, Attorney-General's Chambers," provision for an Attorney-General, Assistant Attorney-General, and a Crown Counsel. On page 126 I see "Clerk to the Attorney-General: de Freitas, Iris, B.A., B.C.L. (Oxon), LL.B. (Wales)." I think it is within the knowledge of every hon. Member in this Council that this is not the correct name of this officer of the Civil Service. When I look at the following name I notice "Class III. Clerk: Adamson, Mrs. Elaine Maud (née Kelly)." In the case of the Clerk to the Attorney-General it is well known that Iris de Freitas is not the correct name of that officer.

I gave notice of certain questions at the opening of the session but I have received no reply up to the present. If a reply had been received and it was satisfactory, the painful duty might not have fallen on me to refer to this matter. Replies to questions generally have been very unsatisfactory. I was told here by the Treasurer a couple of days ago that certain questions asked by me were referred to the Chairman of the Rice Producers Advisory Committee in September, and although my resignation from that Committee was dated October the replies were not sent to me owing to a misunderstanding or omission. Up to the present the replies have not been sent, and I do ask Government to expedite the replies to questions so that Members might be satisfied, when they ask questions, that Government has taken notice of them.

I do not think it is desirable, especially where the administration of justice is concerned, that there should be relatives employed in the same office. I do not think a husband and wife, or other persons connected by marriage and otherwise, should be employed in the same office, and more



especially in the office of the Law Officers. The matter having been drawn to the attention of Government I take it that the position will be remedied.

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL:** The hon. Member says that the names of two persons in the Law Officers Department are not correct. I am quite unable to agree that they are not correct. As far as I am aware they are perfectly correct. In one case the lady has always been employed under the name mentioned. I do not know if the hon. Member thinks that a married woman has not the right to use her maiden name. She has a perfect right to do so if she so desires. It is quite obvious in one case that she does so, because her diplomas are in her maiden name.

**Mr. JACOB:** I referred to one name as being correct—that of Mrs. Adamson.

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL:** I beg the hon. Member's pardon for the misunderstanding. I may tell the Council that Mrs. Adamson has always been known in the Department as Miss Kelly, and that caused the confusion in my mind. (Laughter). In the case of the other officer, she has a perfect right to use her maiden name. Her University diplomas are in that name; she was called to the Bar in that name, and she appears in the Law List in that name. Her various other qualifications appear in her maiden name and it would mean a considerable expenditure of time and trouble to have them altered. She doubtless thinks it is not worth the trouble, especially as she is legally justified in retaining her maiden name for professional purposes. As far as I am aware that is the almost invariable custom at the Bar. Female barristers practising in England have, with one exception, I believe, all retained their maiden names.

With regard to the questions asked by the hon. Member I saw them in the newspapers on the second day of the session but, as far as I am concerned, I saw them on my desk in chambers for the first time this morning. I am not saying that they may not have been in my chambers before then. The hon. Member will get the answers in due course. The hon. Member mentioned something about other relatives in the same office. So far as I am aware there are no other relatives in the office. With-

out further explanation I am afraid I cannot answer him. He also referred to connection by marriage or otherwise. That also I cannot answer. I am afraid he is most unhelpful this afternoon. (Laughter).

Finally the hon. Member expressed the personal view that it is wrong that a husband and wife should be in the same office. In fact they are not in the same office; they are in the same chambers but in different offices, and I know of no reason at all why they should not be. All legal practitioners present know that it is a very common thing to have several members of one family in legal chambers. It is rather preferred that way than otherwise, and only this week in a legal practitioners' paper I read of a presentation to a chief clerk and his wife in England who had been in those chambers for over 64 years. What is good enough for England is good enough for us here.

**Mr. JACOB:** In a small community like British Guiana I do not think it is desirable at all. I do not express my personal opinion only. I know that the matter has been commented on very largely in the Colony, but if Government thinks it is desirable then the matter rests there.

Further I have the case of a Mrs. Sargeant who was employed as a nurse in Georgetown between 1919 and 1928 when she was transferred to Mabaruma. She served there until September, 1937, when she obtained leave, came to Georgetown, got married and returned to Mabaruma in October the same year. Immediately as she arrived she was handed her dismissal. Perhaps that is also correct, but both cannot be correct. In the case of nurses and other officers in the Service, immediately after they are married their services are terminated. I wish it to be understood that I am referring to this matter in principle and not from a personal standpoint at all.

I think it will be admitted that in this Colony there are a good many lawyers, qualified men, who would be very glad to obtain a position in the Government service. To say that it is not possible to find someone to fill the place of an officer who gets married I do not agree. Again it is within the Governor's province to say who should and who should not be kept in the Service, and if the Governor rules that

this lady should be kept in the Service we cannot say anything further on the point. On the whole I feel that it is not desirable, in a Colony like British Guiana, that such a state of affairs should be allowed to continue. Comments were made from time to time when Mr. Brazao was acting as Magistrate, that his wife was employed in the Attorney-General's Office and therefore was in a position to know what was going on at the head office while he was a Magistrate directly under His Majesty's Attorney-General. Rather than being improved the position has been aggravated. Perhaps a screen divides them, but the fact remains that they are in the same office. If Government intends to justify that position I cannot say anything more about it.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: If the hon. Member had left out personalities no doubt I would have joined him in attacking in principle the differentiation between certain married women who are asked to leave the Service and others who are allowed to remain. If the hon. Member had approached the question in that manner he would have had my support. He would have my support if he is prepared to adopt the procedure I have suggested, by asking Government why should certain women who are married be allowed to remain in the Service while others are called upon to resign on marriage? A great deal of hardship has been caused. I know of one or two cases but I will not mention individual cases because personalities are better left out in certain cases. There are several instances in which a young man in the Service receiving a salary of a few dollars married a lady in the Service, and their combined salaries might allow them to live fairly comfortably, but the lady was called upon to resign after marriage. There have been cases of that sort, but my way of dealing with such matters is to approach the Head of the Department before making anything public.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have stated many times before but I will state it once more for the benefit of the last two speakers who probably were not in their places on those occasions, that there are certain female officers in the Service who joined it before the year 1928 or 1930—I am not quite sure which is the year—and cannot be called upon to resign on marriage, but they were given the

opportunity last year, if they wished to go within 12 months after the passing of a certain Ordinance, to do so, in which case they would be granted a gratuity. They could not be called upon to retire within that time.

I do not know of the case referred to by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob), but I expect he will find that the person concerned joined the Service after that particular date, and Government has required all female clerks who joined after that time to leave the Service on getting married. I thought I had made that clear on several occasions. Government cannot require the lady referred to by the hon. Member to resign because the new rule does not affect her.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I quite appreciate what the Colonial Secretary has said, but why should Government choose any particular year?

Item 3—Fee to Counsel for prosecuting at Criminal Sessions, \$150.

Mr. JACOB: I have questioned this item time and again and I will continue to raise it. I hope I shall not be accused of trying to get a position or wanting to get one of these posts. I have expressed the opinion on more than one occasion that it is highly undesirable for a Member of this Council to be employed by Government to prosecute on behalf of the Crown. When I raised the question in respect of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) I was informed that King's Counsel cannot refuse an appointment, especially from Government. There may be some slight justification for that, and when the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) was appointed to prosecute on behalf of the Crown on a few occasions the same principle applied and no action was taken. Now that principle has been upset. The hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) has been appointed to prosecute on behalf of the Crown. He is not one of His Majesty's Counsel but he has in fact prosecuted on behalf of the Crown, and the question has not been answered again. I say definitely and distinctly, and I hope a test will be made of it in the Supreme Court, that Government ought not to encourage these evasions that occur from

time to time. If a Member represents a constituency he should not be asked to give services to Government for remuneration. In very special circumstances an exception might be made, but in this particular case I can see no special circumstances or any justification for it.

THE CHAIRMAN: That principle would not apply if members of a Board were paid? I understand that a suggestion was made that all members of Boards should be paid.

Mr. JACOB: We are hoping that the Constitution will be changed, but pending a change in the Constitution these things should not be done. If, of course, it is desirable in the public interest,—and it has happened in the past when special legislation was passed enabling certain things to be done,—that is another matter. I am not a lawyer but I have had legal opinion, and I have been told by very eminent lawyers that it is a distinct breach of the Constitution Order in Council. Government has been advised that it is no breach of the law. I hope the matter will be put to the test in the Supreme Court and some ruling given on it. The question is that it is not desirable even if there is legal justification for it. It is not desirable that a Member of the Council should do anything for Government and receive remuneration, whether it is \$1 or \$1,000. I am concerned with the principle. I raised the question the first year I entered this Legislature and I will continue to raise it. The matter is somewhat delicate but it is not right in principle. That is all I am going to say.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to reply to the last question raised by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight). A date was fixed by Circular issued in 1928 or 1930 which stated that female officers joining the Service after that date would be liable to be called upon to resign on getting married.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: With regard to the question raised by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) as regards the employment of legal Members of the Council to prosecute on behalf of the Crown, my humble opinion is that his argument is entirely wrong. I do not

know what legal opinion he has got. The section referred to is section 21 of the Constitution Ordinance, and it has been ruled by this Council that the payment of fees to a Member of the Council for prosecuting on behalf of the Crown does not make him the holder of an office of emolument.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The hon. Member for North Western District is evidently actuated by principle, and one of the principles advocated by him is that hon. Members should be well informed on the subjects on which they speak. The hon. Member speaks on practically every item on the Estimates, and the only conclusion one can arrive at is that he is well informed on every subject on which he speaks. The only point that concerns me at the moment is that if the hon. Member desires to test the question as to whether a Member's seat becomes vacant as a result of prosecuting on behalf of the Crown I can assure him that the process is quite simple. I would suggest that he go to his legal friends, and perhaps those who would not charge him, and he will no doubt be able to institute proceedings in the Supreme Court, but I would suggest that he bring the action in his own name.

Item put, and agree to.

#### MAGISTRATES.

Item 1 (i)—Remuneration to officers acting as Magistrates, \$2,400.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: With regard to this item I would like to ask Government whether there could not be a permanent officer known as a Relief Magistrate, as there is in Trinidad?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is quite obvious that the suggestion made by the hon. Member would increase the cost of the Department. At the moment the amount provided for this purpose is equal to the minimum salary drawn by any Magistrate. Of course anybody appointed would not draw the minimum salary, and it would go on mounting until there would be a considerable sum on the estimate under this head. In view of the hard times and the question of pension it is better to provide a lump sum. It is purely a matter of economy and not necessarily one of efficiency.



THE CHAIRMAN: It is difficult to say whether a Relief Magistrate would obviate the necessity for this item. There would still have to be some provision for temporary relief. At present I think we usually have more than one acting Magistrate.

Mr. WIGHT: There are three acting at present, but that may be due to rather unusual circumstances.

THE CHAIRMAN: For the present I think this arrangement is not only the more economical but the more practical. It is quite possible that in other circumstances the arrangement which the hon. Member suggests might be better, and the fact that it might cost ultimately another \$1,000 a year should not stand in its way when the time comes when it could be effectively adopted.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### MEDICAL.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I would like to draw Government's attention to the fact that the Mahaicony district is still being served by a medical officer who is not a Government Medical Officer. I think it is the only district to which a Government Medical Officer has not been appointed. I think it is more satisfactory to have a Government Medical Officer than a subsidized officer. I think he would serve the community better and give more satisfaction to the people. Recently representation has been made to Government as regards the removal of an officer who had been subsidized, and he has been appointed a Government Medical Officer in another district. I think it would be better if there was a permanent medical officer instead of a temporary officer who, it is said, endeavours to make as much money as he can.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I think that district was given a subsidized medical officer as a trial. About 10 years ago Government decided that vacancies in the medical districts should be filled by subsidized officers, but since the Mahaicony district was given a subsidized medical officer I think that no less than half a dozen appointments have been made in the Medical Service. Therefore I feel that Government is also convinced that the

system of subsidized medical officers cannot work well in this Colony. I support the hon. Member's suggestion.

Dr. MACLENNAN (Director of Medical Services): The question of the establishment of district surgeries was a recommendation of the Medical Reorganization Committee which sat some years ago, and I think the idea was that we would save a little on the pensionable establishment if a certain number of non-pensionable posts were gradually established throughout the country. With regard to this particular post the Mahaicony district was selected because there are no sugar estates in that area, and the work of the medical officer in charge is naturally not so great. Personally this is a legacy which has been left for me and I am not prepared to express an opinion on it to the Council before I have consulted with Government on the question. Certainly we cannot make any changes this year, but if sufficient representation is put forward to make it appear that the position is unsatisfactory I would consider that in due course.

THE CHAIRMAN: We cannot make changes here and now. The matter wants investigation and reference to the Secretary of State before a change can be made. It is quite possible that the change hon. Members suggest might be made later, but for the time being we have to do the best we can with the arrangements we have.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 24—Purchase of Quinine reserves, \$15,000. On a recent supplementary estimate a sum of \$30,000 was voted for the purchase of reserves of quinine. It is impossible to obtain before the end of 1940 the full amount ordered, and only half of the vote will be expended in 1940. This is merely a revote.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is rather a large amount to insert in an estimate like this, but I think hon. Members will realize that it is very important that we should maintain our quinine reserves, and it has been impressed upon us that we must have a year's supply on hand. It would be a serious risk to take to forego that. It is not only the question of the quinine but a question of getting supplies.

Item put, and agreed to.

## ANTI-AEDES CAMPAIGN.

Mr. SEAFORD: Sir, I would like to express on behalf of Members of this Council our appreciation of the very able and satisfactory work which is being done by the members of the Rockefeller Foundation in this Colony. I feel that it well becomes us to show our appreciation because the work is being most ably carried out to the satisfaction of the whole Colony.

Dr. MACLENNAN: I desire to express my thanks to the hon. Member for the remarks he has just made. I am sure they will be very deeply appreciated by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I am sure that the work is appreciated by every intelligent citizen.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am very glad indeed that the hon. Member has drawn attention to the matter. I am sure his remarks will be appreciated by the representatives of the Rockefeller Foundation. As the campaign becomes known and the purpose and aim of it is far better appreciated than it was naturally at the beginning everybody will begin to understand what it is. It is one of the most important steps for the improvement of public health taken for a long time. We may not feel the effects of it at once but it is a very great step forward for which we have every reason to be grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation.

## MEDICAL—HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.

Item 1 (4)—Laboratory Assistant, Leprosy Hospital (\$672 by \$48 to \$960), \$80.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I observe from the note on page 36 that the holder of this post will retire on the 15th January. It has been brought to my notice that he is alleged to be 53 years, but in fact he is younger. I am wondering whether he could not be transferred to some other post. I do not know whether it is voluntary or compulsory retirement.

Dr. MACLENNAN: The retirement is in the nature of abolition of the office, and efforts to find other employment for the officer have not been successful. Unfortunately, this war budget was cut to the bone before it was presented, and there has been no other suitable employment to offer to this officer.

Dr. SINGH: Last year this matter came up for consideration and I believe it was decided to find some appointment elsewhere for this officer because his post at the Leprosy Hospital would be filled by a medical officer.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to correct that statement. I would refer the hon. Member to the 1940 Estimates in which it was made perfectly clear that the intention was to abolish the post.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 16—Superintendent of Nurses and Divisional Sisters (1 at \$1,440; 5 at \$864)—\$5,760.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be put above the line and made pensionable; that it be numbered (3) and the other items be renumbered. The reason is that these Nurses are members of the Colonial Nursing Service and hold pensionable posts.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I have always understood that these Sisters come out here on special contracts. Are we going to change that principle now and put them above the line?

Dr. MACLENNAN: If they remain in the Colony any length of time they become pensionable.

THE CHAIRMAN: Under certain circumstances they do become pensionable.

Dr. MACLENNAN: The position is that the Secretary of State has caused the formation of a Colonial Nursing Service as from the beginning of 1940.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am not sure that it is necessary to show these posts as pensionable when the holders may not be pensionable.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The Director of Medical Services has invited my attention to section 63 of Chapter 186 in which the conditions under which it is necessary to provide pensions for these Sisters are set out, but there is no reason why we should go out of our way to make them pensionable here.

THE CHAIRMAN: It makes no difference whatever to what we have to pay them whether we put them on one part of the page or another.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Except that the Council is very careful about posts being put above the line. We find it extremely difficult to get them put below the line again.

THE CHAIRMAN: These posts will be placed on the pensionable establishment, but the holders will only be made pensionable if they fulfil certain conditions.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: As a matter of fact it is not referred to in the Ordinance as a pension but as a gratuity.

Dr. SINGH: As far as I know these Nurses are brought out under contract and when it is completed they go away.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is wrong; they do in certain circumstances become pensionable. It is a difficult point and I must admit I am not very sure what is the correct procedure.

Mr. JACOB: I take it that the inten-

tion is to put them permanently on the Fixed Establishment.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is already provided for by Ordinance, and where we place these posts on the page is not going to make the smallest difference as to what the rights of these Nurses are and what we have to pay them.

Mr. JACOB: I am just wondering whether by placing them above the line now they will get a sum of money in excess of what they are entitled to?

THE CHAIRMAN: We are not giving them any right that they have not got already.

Mr. JACOB: I think it is better to leave them as they are.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I ask leave to withdraw my motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not going to make any practical difference one way or the other.

Motion withdrawn.

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