

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana  
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)  
Order in Council, 1953)

FRIDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 1955.

The Council met at 2 p.m. His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C., in the chair.

## PRESENT :

His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C.

### *Ex-Officio Members:*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,  
Mr. F. D. Jakeway, O.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney General,  
Mr. F. W. Holder, C.M.G., Q.C.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,  
Mr. W. O. Fraser, O.B.E.

### *Nominated Members of Executive Council:*

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid, C.M.G., C.B.E., (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Member for Labour, Health and Housing).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E. (Member for Local Government, Social

Welfare and Co-operative Development).

The Hon. G. H. Smellie.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj.

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

### *Deputy Speaker:*

Mr. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E.

### *Nominated Officials:*

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

### *Nominated Unofficials:*

Mr. T. Lee.

Mr. W. A. Phang.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

Mr. C. A. Carter.

Mr. H. Rahaman.

Miss Gertie H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dey.

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

Lt. Col. E. J. Haywood, M.B.E., T.D.

Mr. R. B. Jailal.

### *Clerk of the Legislature—*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

### *Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—*

Mr. E. V. Viapree (acting).

### *Absent :*

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.—on leave.

Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E.—on leave.

Mr. E. F. Correia.—on leave.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb—on leave.

Mr. Sugrim Singh.

The Speaker read prayers.

The Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on Tuesday, the 8th of February, and Thursday, the 10th of February, 1955, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MEMBERS ABSENT

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to announce that Mr. Macnie and Mr. Lord have asked to be excused from attending today's meeting.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICE

### DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATES

**The Financial Secretary (Mr. W. O. Fraser):** I beg to give notice of the following motion:

"That this Council approves of the Development Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1955 which have been laid on the table, and of the projects therein being financed from the annual revenue of the year and other resources of the Colony, and from loan funds."

I should have given notice of this motion some time ago but it escaped my attention. I have now risen to rectify that omission.

## ORDER OF THE DAY

### APPROPRIATION BILL—BUDGET DEBATE

Council resumed the debate on the motion for the second reading of the Bill intitled:

"An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current session of the Legislative Council."

**Mr. Farnum (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development):** It is a source of pleasure to me to be able to join those Members who have already spoken, in their congratulations to the hon. the

Financial Secretary on his Budget Statement which is now under debate. He must have had a very anxious time in framing the Budget, because I think the figures relating to expenditure for this year are the highest on record in any Budget in this Colony, and he is to be commended for having found sources of revenue to meet that expenditure without proposing taxation which would impose hardship on what I regard as the small man. In the course of the debate on the Budget the Department of Agriculture has been criticised. I think some of the criticism was rather unfair, because I happen to have had the privilege of being a member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee which functioned during the life of the last Legislative Council, and in that capacity I was able to know some of the plans and some of the work done by the Department.

I do not think that anyone can gain-say the fact that the strain of cattle in the Colony has definitely improved. I have been associated with all the Agricultural Exhibitions that have taken place in various parts of this Colony within recent years, and I can say that the cattle exhibited at all those Exhibitions were of an extremely high strain. That must be placed to the credit of the Agricultural Department. The same remarks apply to poultry. The quality of our poultry today is so high in our villages that many a villager today is able to depend on his poultry production to pay his rates and other expenses.

We also have the Processing Factory. Before this factory was established the farmer experienced great difficulty in getting a fair price for his corn. There was a constant fluctuation of the price. As the result of the establishment of this factory the farmer gets a fair and stable price for his corn, and other crops. As regards the pasteurisation plant I think I have to take some blame for it, because I was a member of that Committee which discussed the question of a pasteurisation plant. It took fully two years before the decision was ar-

rived at. Many Members of this Council would remember the time when there was an outcry that milk, which had come from the rural areas to the Government Milk Depot was being thrown away. Why was it being thrown away? It was because there was no means of preserving it. It came into Georgetown late in the day when housewives already had their supply, and it went bad and had to be thrown away. We were also told that the demand was less than the supply. Why was that? We were told that the people feared the milk was not clean or was impure and so would not risk using the milk for feeding their infants. But if there was a pasteurisation plant they would be sure of getting clean milk, and further, though we would not be able to dispose of all the milk, there would be the means of disposing of any increased supply.

The criticism has been made that very often the Agricultural Instructor cannot be found when he is required by the farmer. I have been associated with what is known as the Union of Local Authorities. There are seven of these Unions covering the whole Colony. Their meetings are held quarterly, and at every meeting both the Agricultural Superintendent and the Agricultural Instructor are present to give any advice required on any matter with respect to Agriculture. Further, instructions have been issued just a few months ago to the effect that Agricultural Superintendents and Instructors would place in every office of a Local Authority or Village Council the itinerary of those officers, so that farmers could always know the day or days on which the Superintendent or Instructor would be at the village office. Therefore I do not know how this charge can be made that when a farmer wants the Agricultural Instructor he does not know where to find him. The notice giving the particular day on which he will be there can be seen at the village office. I mention these things, Sir because, as I

said at first, I think the criticism of the Government is unfair.

The hon. Member, Mrs. Dey, asked yesterday "After Onderneeming and Bel-field Schools, what?" The question of the establishment of a Borstal in this Colony is being considered, but we have been told by the experts that we cannot establish a Borstal unless we have trained officers to run it, and no person who has had any connection with a prison would be suitable to be trained as an officer for a Borstal, and the Borstal must not be established at or near a prison. The matter is being considered and we are seeing what can be done. The first stage in the establishment of a Borstal here is to send men abroad to be trained as officers. I may mention that the wayward boys who are sent to the Essequibo Boys' School at Onderneeming are kept there up to the age of sixteen, after which they are discharged. Our records of these lads after they have left the institution we consider very fair and compare, we are told, very favourably with what takes place in the United Kingdom. It works out that 66 per cent. of the boys who are discharged from the Essequibo School and placed in jobs make good. Not only that, but the boys are under supervision for a period of two years after they have been discharged while efforts are made to place them in jobs.

I would like to say that our records show that the majority of youngsters who find themselves before the Magistrates are those from the City. In 1953 about 517 boys were before the Magistrates, and of those 335 were from the City. So you see our problem is really confined to the City. It is not such a problem in our rural districts, and we are doing everything in our rural districts by means of the establishment of Youth Clubs, Recreation Clubs, Minor Industries and Handicrafts in order to

[Mr. Farnum]

keep our boys in the rural districts. So really the problem is not serious in the country districts but very serious in Georgetown. I am going to ask our energetic Mayor of Georgetown to collaborate with us in seeing what we can do at least to reduce this problem by providing playgrounds and, perhaps, some other means by which the lads may be trained in a trade—some apprenticeship system. It is a matter that will require a great deal of attention not only by persons concerned with Social Welfare but, I think, every Member of this Council.

With respect to the girls, that is a more difficult problem. We have the Belfield Girls' School. About 17 girls are there. The Salvation Army, who look after the girls at that school pointed out to us that in every case when the girls are discharged from that place they go back home to a place of very sordid conditions. Very often they are not wanted by their family and are thrown out, and that makes the problem all the greater to the Salvation Army to find work for them. It is a problem that we are trying to see whether we can solve it in some way, and we have asked the ladies of the Federation of Women Workers to assist us to find some solution in the matter. We have in mind a suggestion of the ladies to see if under some co-operative effort we can start some minor industry in Georgetown which will absorb a number of these girls and find work for them. It is just in its initial stage, and we are working at it.

I am very glad to hear the kind remarks and references to co-operatives. To my mind the future of the small man of this country lies in co-operative effort. We have been impressing upon them that individually they can do nothing, but if they get together and pool their ideas and efforts that would

benefit them economically. I am glad to say that we are in the happy position of having as Commissioner of Co-operatives, Mr. Gordon, a person of ability, who knows his job and with his officers is doing extremely good work. With your permission, Sir, I will just read the results of the working of that Department for 1954. It says:

"The year 1954 has been an outstanding one in the field of co-operatives, the number of societies registered being 106—the highest number registered so far in any one year. The year opened with 254 registered societies and closed with 343—a net increase of 89. The registration of 17 societies was cancelled. Of the 343 societies on the register at the end of 1954, 341 were primary and two secondary. The former consisted of 69 savings, 103 thrift, 58 school thrift, 63 thrift and credit, 16 consumers—including one for the supply of electricity—18 producer-marketing, one transport, 8 land lease and land purchase and 5 farm supply societies."

The Report also states :

"On 31st December, the 341 primary societies had approximately 12,000 members and \$240,000 in Shares, Savings and Deposits. This shows an increase of approximately 4,000 and \$52,000 respectively over the figures for 1953. Reserve Funds stood at approximately \$7,600."

I think the Report is one which the Commissioner for Co-operatives has every reason to be proud of. Another form of saving is that realized through the Savings Societies which I think, during last year, were brought under the Friendly Societies Ordinance. These Societies show a very healthy position because up to the end of 1954 there were 180 in number, with 56,167 members of which 6,000 were juveniles. The total contributions for the year was \$297,729, and levies, death benefits and things of that kind amounted to \$33,469. Benefits paid out to members amounted to \$14,754, and funeral benefits \$53,070 while the amount paid to members in bonus at Christmas was \$136,331. As a result of the enactment in the Friendly Societies Ordinance of the provision

that it is compulsory that 5 per cent. of the funds should be set aside as Reserve they have \$16,247; cash in hand amounts to \$127,392, investments \$74,000—and Societies which own their buildings and other things—\$321,000.

Again I say, the Commissioner for Co-operatives, who is also in charge of Friendly Societies has every reason to be proud of such an achievement.

I have already dealt with juvenile delinquency. In respect of Social Welfare, I am glad to say that it has at long last taken a stand in the Villages; so much so, that applications from the country districts to have community centres there are many. They need these centres to carry on their Women's Institutes—where women can meet and exchange their knowledge, boys and girls can go and indulge in indoor games and things of that kind. We are trying to extend boys and girls organisations like the Girl Guides and Boys' Brigade, in an effort to keep boys and girls in their own districts rather than coming to Georgetown where they might not be better off. We are also trying very hard to get electricity in our villages, and, with the co-operation of the Member for Communications and Works, we hope the time is not too far distant when we will realize this hope. To my mind the availability of electricity in the villages is one of the factors which will keep children in the villages at home.

I am also glad to see that a survey has been started with respect to the extension of the West Coast, Demerara road to a point up to Bartica. I believe that when that road is opened up, young men here—who, to my mind, are as adventurous as others in any part of the world—will go into the Interior and seek their fortunes. They will be doing so by cheaper means, and there is every

chance of their making a success once they get out of Georgetown.

I think that is all I can say, more or less to defend my Ministry.

**The Financial Secretary:** Most hon. Members have now spoken on the Budget, and I rise to bring to a close a debate which commenced with my Statement on the 17th of December, last. After the conclusion of that Statement the debate was adjourned, and it was agreed that the work of examining the Estimates in Finance Committee should be commenced on the 3rd of January. Finance Committee working sometimes until after midnight, was able to complete the examination of both the Development Estimates and the Recurrent Estimates on the 17th of January. On the 27th of January I tabled the Report of the Finance Committee. Unfortunately, on that day I had to give place to the hon. Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines (Sir Frank McDavid) to permit him to put through a Bill dealing with the B.G. Rice Producers Association. After the Bill had been passed by the Council, Members showed some reluctance to proceed with the debate on the Budget and, accordingly, another adjournment was made. I thought then, that when we came back into Council hon. Members would have gone straight into Committee to pass the Appropriation Bill, but that did not happen. Instead, Members elected to speak on the Budget, a privilege the Legislature has always availed itself of to criticize Government activities with which they did not agree. Thus the debate has gone on for a matter of five days. The time taken, however, is no greater than that taken by the 1954 debate.

My task in replying to the debate would have been a much heavier one,

[The Financial Secretary]

had I not been fortunate in having several Members coming to the rescue of Government and replying to criticism directed against Departments within their portfolios, as well as other Members speaking on Government's behalf. The first speaker was the hon. Member, Mr. Jailal. He spoke for a little over three hours and the essence of what he said was that Government had not done enough in the way of development. Other Members of the Council following Mr. Jailal were, perhaps, less critical but the theme still was 'whether Government had or had not gone sufficiently far in its development policy.'

As the Member for Agriculture explained, the development policy of the Government centres around the Report of the Mission of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In this Report, a five-year investment programme was recommended, but Government, seeing the urgency of the problems confronting the Colony accelerated it into a two-year programme, and has ever since been using all its resources to carry it out. I was somewhat surprised that Members of this Council are not satisfied on this score. Nevertheless the hon. Member, Mr. Jailal, felt he should speak on Development and as I listened to him it seemed to me that what he said suffered from delayed action, and that he might well have been speaking more on the Development Plan in its formative stage than on a plan which had been approved since March, 1954.

Because the hon. Member did not see in the Development Plan projects that he thought desirable, he seemed to have considered it necessary to accuse the Government of lack of imagination and vision, and went on to suggest that Government should organize a helicopter service for the transportation of milk from outlying areas to centres

of consumption; that to improve drainage Government should acquire a dredge for deepening the estuaries of the Pomeeroon River, the Essequibo River and the three creeks in Demerara, and that the waste lands of Essequibo should be converted into pastures for the raising of beef cattle. I say that because of these omissions the hon. Member seemed to have felt justified in accusing Government of lack of vision and imagination. This is a sweeping statement, but I think what is remarkable about the Member's speech is not what he said, but what he did not say. The hon. Member, for instance, did not tell the Council where the money was to come from to carry out the development he has in mind. Unless he is able to do so, I submit one would be right in feeling that much of what he said was mere histrionics.

We would all like to see our industries going ahead much faster. We would all like to know that the Colony is expanding and would like to see it become not only the granary of the West Indies but supplying as well these Island Colonies with all the meat they require. But in our impatience for these things we must give due weight to what has been and is being done. In this regard I would like to join issue with the hon. Member when he says that nothing is being done for local animal husbandry. The Member for Local Government has referred to the artificial insemination service which has been introduced and which has been in operation for some time. The Government's dairy improvement programme has been a great boon to this Colony. I wonder whether Mr. Jailal knows that prior to Government embarking on this programme it was popularly believed in the Colony, and in high quarters at that, that the Colony would not breed dairy animals to produce more than eight or

nine pints of milk per day. May I say in refutation of what the hon. Member has said, and for his information that as a result of the work of the Department of Agriculture small farmers living in the environs of the Government Stock Farm today own animals which give 30 and 32 pints of milk a day, and I personally know of cases where animals on freshening have given as much as forty pints a day and 10,000 lbs in a lactation of less than 365 days. It is quite true that this success has not been extended to the country areas but the reason is not far to seek.

I would call the Member's attention to item 23 which appears under the Head "Agriculture" in the Estimates—Agriculture—Agricultural Education Officer. The post appeared in the Estimates for the first time in 1954. In this connection it will suffice to say that dairy husbandry is a matter of education and a plant of slow growth.

In regard to the pig industry, it is the case that Government has introduced at great expense the Berkshire breed of pigs. The breed has done well on the whole but success in a big way is limited by feeds. In every country in which the pig industry has come into prominence it has done so on the cheap by-products of the food factories of those countries. We have, it is true, our rice mills, our sugar mills and copra mills, but the feeds produced by these factories are somewhat lacking in proteins. The fish centre which it is hoped to establish, and for which provision has been made in the Development Estimates, should remedy this lack when it produces, as is planned, fish meal. The hon. Mr. Bobb has told us that a Committee is now considering what can be done to put the industry in better heart.

With regard to the beef industry it is the case that this industry on the

coast has in late years suffered because of the economics of rice planting, and while Government has not the means to convert the vacant spaces of Esse-qui-bo into rolling pastures for beef cattle, much is being done for the cattle industry in the Rupununi. The Member for Agriculture has told us of the struggle which is being waged by the Department of Agriculture to keep foot and mouth disease raging over the border in Brazil, out of the Rupununi District. In addition, as Members must know, a modern abattoir has been established at Lethem with refrigeration, and an airlift to fly beef to the City has been in operation for some years. In this respect I think it is true to say that in so far as a beef airlift is concerned this Colony has led the way, being in the field even ahead of Australia. I think that Members will generally agree with me that what I have said hardly sustains the charge made by the hon. Member, that Government has either been dilatory or supine, or has shown lack of vision or imagination in the matter of development.

Leaving Agriculture and coming to a matter more within my portfolio, I was encouraged to hear the hon. Mr. Macnie condemn the size and frequency with which the Supplementary Estimates have been submitted to the Council. I hope that Members of the Government who heard what Mr. Macnie said will endeavour to assist in bringing to the notice of their respective Departments the fact that when the annual Estimates have been passed by this Council the expenditure of their Departments have been fixed and arranged, and will persuade them that they should do all in their power to keep within their approved provision. With a little more planning I am convinced that requests for supplementary provision could be very considerably reduced.

[The Financial Secretary]

On the subject of increased taxation which it has been necessary for me to introduce, I think most Members must realise the need for increased revenue. Yet two proposals under this head have come in for a great deal of criticism—the proposal that a ceiling of \$1,500 should be put on the allowance for insurance for income tax purposes, and the proposal for the withdrawal of duty-free concessions on gasoline used in industry. These proposals, it seems to me, were bound to be made sooner or later. The withdrawal of the gasoline concessions had in fact been recommended as long ago as 1952, and the ceiling on the income tax allowance for insurance had been recommended by Mr. R. O. Nicholas, United Kingdom Inland Revenue Expert who reported on our fiscal system.

In regard to the ceiling on insurance for income tax purposes, I would explain that a ceiling on such allowances exists in the United Kingdom in respect of deferred annuities, and generally in Jamaica, British Honduras, Barbados, Fiji and Malaya, and that in each and every case the ceiling in these countries is lower than the ceiling recommended here. I wish to make it clear that the one-sixth allowance now permitted by law is still continued on incomes up to \$9,000 a year, and that the ceiling will only come into effect on incomes over this sum. The position is that, as the law exists, evasion of tax is possible in both the premium paid on deferred annuities and on the annuity when it is drawn in a lump sum. If an annuity is however paid, the payment would be liable to a tax, but no tax is collectible when the annuity is drawn as a lump sum.

In connection with the change proposed, representation has been made that the proposal is a breach of faith on the part of Government, and that the allowance is used to provide for old

age. Neither seems potent argument. Taxation is by no means a contract between Government and governed. Apart from the fact that most businesses now carry their own pension schemes for their employees, the allowance of \$1,500 is still generous, and could buy adequate security for old age even for professional and self-employed persons. For instance, an annuity purchased for \$1,500 at age 35, maturing at age 60, would provide a payment of \$315 per month. This would seem to provide reasonable security for old age.

The question which has however exercised my mind since I made my statement on the budget, is whether it would be fair to apply the proposal to existing contracts. I have made enquiries into what happened in other places when the ceiling was introduced, and have learnt that in the United Kingdom the ceiling was not applied to existing contracts, and I therefore propose to move an amendment when the Bill on this subject comes before Council, to exempt policies taken out prior to the date I made the Budget Statement, i.e. the 17th of December. That is as far as Government is prepared to go in the matter, and I hope that those who have criticised me for making this proposal will at least concede that it is not peculiar to British Guiana, and is indeed a practice which is likely to spread.

I now come to the proposal to withdraw the concession with respect to duty-free gasoline. Quite a number of misrepresentations have been made on the proposal. I said as clearly as I could, that the reason for withdrawal was the abuse to which the concession was subject. It is not, and never was, the intention of Government or anyone in Government to hurt big business, small business or anyone. As early as 1952 the question was considered by a Committee which found that there was



substantial abuse, and recommended that the concession should be withdrawn. Ever since that time Government has been looking around to find a constructive solution on which to cushion withdrawal. When I became Financial Secretary it was one of the first problems that came to me. Much thought and time have been devoted to the matter, and when power kerosene, which is used in the United Kingdom, was suggested, it seemed the perfect answer, and was only accepted after the most diligent enquiries and trials had been carried out and reported on by the B.G. Rice Development Co. I was therefore not a little surprised when the proposal encountered the criticisms it has.

When it became clear to me that industry could be seriously affected by the proposal, steps were taken to modify the recommendation, and a Committee appointed to go into the matter. This was reported to Finance Committee, and I mentioned that the matter would be deferred pending the report of the Committee. I hope that something constructive will emerge from its labour, but I was disappointed to hear Mr. Jallal speak in the way he did on the proposal, because he was not only in Finance Committee when the statement was made, but he is also a member of the Committee, and all the facts and findings in the matter are in his possession.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think that some Member said that the proposal had been put into effect. I think it was the Rev. Mr. Bobb.

**The Financial Secretary:** The proposal has not been put into effect: it could not be until this Council had approved of the change in the law. We have also considered what could be done to control the concession. The United Kingdom, United States and Palestine have also granted similar concessions in regard to gasolene, but those countries, despite their better

methods of control, have now abandoned them because of the difficulty of control. Some control can be exercised, but it could only be done at great expense and considerable inconvenience to users of motor vehicles who would be liable to be stopped at any time to have their vehicles examined to see whether they were using free gasolene. There is abuse of the concession in this Colony, and whether it involves a loss of revenue to the extent of \$100,000 or \$120,000 no one can definitely say.

I think, Sir, I have said as much as is necessary in replying to the debate, and all that is now left for me to do is to thank Members of Finance Committee and of this Council who have supported me.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

#### COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

**The Financial Secretary:** I beg to move that Council resolve itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

**The Attorney General:** I beg to second that.

Question put, and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

Clause 1 passed without discussion.

Clause 2—*Treasurer to defray expenses of Civil Government.*

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members will, for the purpose of voting, or reducing, or increasing any of the amounts, be guided by the figures in Schedule A. What I propose to do is to call the Heads.

**The Financial Secretary:** I suggest that I should call the Heads.

**The Chairman:** Very well.

[GOVERNOR]

**The Financial Secretary:** Head "Governor". I move that the sum of \$21,590 be moved in, as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$21,590.

#### GOVERNOR'S SECRETARIAT

**The Financial Secretary:** Head "Governor's Secretariat". I moved that the sum of \$32,986 be moved in as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$32,986.

#### LEGISLATURE

**The Financial Secretary :** Head "Legislature". I move that the provision be carried out at \$29,209. The figure printed in the Appendix is \$123,369. The explanation is this. If Members look in the detailed Estimates under the Head they would see provision for the remuneration of the Speaker and Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature, and also at item 2 provision for Travelling Expenses and Subsistence Allowance of Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature. Those two items by error have got into the body of the Estimates. They are provided by law and therefore have to be shown separately. Having done that, it would reduce the amount provided under the Appropriation Bill.

**The Chairman:** With that explanation Members would understand.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$29,209.

**Mr. Raatgeber:** Before you pass on, Sir I would like to know whether it would be in order for me to pay tribute to the hon. the Financial Secretary for the excellence of his reply to the debate

on the Budget Statement. I have had the pleasure to be present with him many years in this Council, and this speech of his is the best and most balanced I have heard. I would like to ask Members to join me in congratulating him on the way he delivered it.

**The Financial Secretary:** May I thank hon. Members for the expression.

#### AGRICULTURE

**The Financial Secretary :** Head "Agriculture". I move that the sum of \$1,165,990, as recommended by Finance Committee, be inserted in the Schedule.

Question put, and agreed to.

**Mr. Ramphal:** I rise first of all to ask a question in order that I may be clear in my mind on what we are doing. When we say "aye", does it close our right to speak on the Head ?

**The Chairman :** No.

**Mr. Ramphal :** I wish to use this opportunity under the Head "Agriculture" to make reference to what I believe, and what has come to be represented to me, as a matter of grave concern in the Civil Service. Sir, I think it is the accepted policy of Government that wherever Guianese of talent and integrity are found they would be given an opportunity to occupy the highest position which our country can afford them. In this particular respect I am sure that the highest officer of the land is in agreement. But it appears that there is a general movement among certain senior Government Officers to do everything possible to destroy that fundamental basis on which our Service exists. In the Department of Agriculture, Sir, we do have men of great academic standing. We have men who have given years of very useful service to this country, and it is being rumoured in the Civil Service now that an attempt is being

made to remove one of the gems of our Service from the Department in which he is most qualified to serve to another Department in order that some other Officer may be brought to take his place.

When we were doing the Fisheries Division in Finance Committee, I asked the hon. Member in charge of Agriculture when the separation of inland and sea fisheries was effected, whether everything would be done to prevent a further superstructure by the introduction of some other officer from outside to supervise the two officers in charge of the divisions, and I am glad to say that an assurance was given to me and to Finance Committee that that was not the intention at all. I do not question for a moment the correctness of the assurance given. I have taken it and I rely on it.

On the question of the Deputy Director of Agriculture I can tell this Council that there is a genuine feeling of concern throughout the Civil Service that one of our most brilliant sons is being pushed aside in order that someone else not now in the Service may be drawn into the Permanent Establishment of our Service. I wish in this high place to hope that when we do injustices—we should never do them at all, but if we do them—we should do them to the old men who have little time to remain to take revenge on us. Let us not do them to the young people. I wish to ask that those who are in the Government would see that justice is done to the young people on whom the future of this country must necessarily rest.

**Mr. Rahaman :** Under this Head there is a matter of vital importance which I would like to mention. It is linked up with the drainage and irrigation of Block III on the Corentyne. This matter was brought before Finance Committee, and in this Council

the hon. Member, Mr. Macnie, spoke on the same subject. It is about a water supply for from lots of Block III, the area between Nos. 52 and 74. The acreage of that area is about 27,479 acres and of that 13,000 acres is under rice. The balance of 14,479 acres includes the residential area and is without a water supply. In 1945, or thereabout, the then Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, at a meeting with the residents of the area said that water would be brought to their homes and backyards in order that they could have kitchen gardens and plant cocoanuts in that area. The people are paying for the whole of that acreage to the Drainage and Irrigation Board and all that they get is water for 13,000 acres though rates are collected on the balance of acres. That question came up in Finance Committee and the hon. Mr. Macnie also spoke on it in this Council.

I just want to tell you of the cattle in that area. With your permission, Sir, I would like to read a letter which was written—

**The Chairman :** Written by whom ?

**Mr. Rahaman :** Written to the Union of Local Authorities by the District Commissioner in Berbice. It is dated August, 1945. I quote from the letter:

“District Administration Office,  
New Amsterdam, Berbice;  
23rd August, 1945.

Sir,

I have the honour to address you on the subject of the Drainage and Irrigation Improvement Scheme in Block III Corentyne.

This Scheme is to provide Drainage and Irrigation facilities in the First, Second and Third Depths of Lots 52-74 Corentyne. It contains 55,432 acres; of which 27,479 acres, comprising the First and Second depths will be empoldered and watered; pasture lands will be established in the Third depth. Practically all the first depths comprising 12,225 acres is held under freehold ownership, while the depths behind are held general-

[Mr. Rahaman]

ly by the first depth owners on leases from the Crown.

The cost of the main works estimated at \$1,719,820:—will be met from Colonial Development Funds as a free grant, while it is intended to carry out the internal works estimated to cost \$452,830:—by loan; recoverable to the extent of 50% from local authorities and estate proprietors in the area. The first 50% of the loan will be repayable on the full acreage of the first and second depths.

Now, the assurance was given to empolder about 27 or 28,000 acres. Now they tell us that they have found it impossible to drain that area by means of a canal between No. 51 and No. 52. The decision had been taken to drain that area by the same canal, and I am surprised to learn, from representations made to me, that the Local Authorities have to pay \$18,000 to empolder the 28,000 acres. The fact also remains that money to the amount of \$2 million was invested to complete the scheme. I call the scheme an incomplete one.

The rice lands have been handed over to the Local Authorities but not the cattle area. The people are willing to pay agistment fees but the Government must empolder those 28,000 acres, because as things stand cattle are roaming all over the place and destroying gardens. People can grow black eye peas, corn and ground nuts. I would like to see some encouragement given to the people to plant useful small crops and to keep their cattle on pasture lands.

I want to say something about the beef shortage. This is an agricultural country and we have no right to suffer from beef shortage. While we depend on the Rupununi for cattle, we have on the Corentyne Coast facilities to breed and rear cattle, but nothing is done in respect to the Corentyne. I have said it repeatedly that encouragement should

be given to cattle-rearing on the Corentyne. I know we can raise thousands of head of cattle. I remember in the past thousands of head of cattle were exported to Surinam, and Trinidad. Today we cannot even supply ourselves fully. What is this encouragement we need? The building of dams on the lands and providing somewhere for the cattle to graze and sleep at night without getting cramp. I think that is all I have to say about cattle.

**Mr. Jailal:** I referred to agriculture in all its aspects in my speech on the Budget, but I think I would be lacking in my duty to this country if I did not join hands with the hon. Member, Mr. Rahaman, in what he has just said. I remember in 1954 being given a slight tap on the head for having brought the name of a particular officer into this Council, and now I know one might better paint a picture without calling names. A new Director of Agriculture has been appointed, and I believe—I hope I am correct—that we have in him a man of courage to fight to the end with the problems of agriculture — at the top level.

I see no reason why this country should not seek to make a permanent appointment to the post of Deputy Director of Agriculture. An appointment is long overdue, and I feel we should give the post to no one else save and except a Guianese who has been in the service for a long time. One of the officers who has actually acted in the post has come right up the ladder, and if we did not appoint him, it would again be a case of breaking faith. I feel that this is one case where notice must definitely be taken of what is happening. It may be that I am a little ahead of time, but it is a matter of public interest and it becomes necessary for Government to explain its position, so

that rumours about the matter would cease.

I wish to support the hon. Member Mr. Rahaman in what he said about Block III. It is a case where we are continuing a wrong policy. We cannot ask people to pay rates — and high rates at that—for lands which they cannot occupy. The people use one-half of their land for rice planting, and the other half is left unused because there is no water. I feel that the Agriculture Department and the Drainage and Irrigation Department should join forces and see to it that these lands are brought into cultivation.

The Corentyne has become the granary, and the Agricultural Department would be well advised to let it remain so. It is no use for this Colony to fool itself that people will rear cattle where rice cultivation would be more economical. I made this plea here, and I believe a stronger plea is necessary, that the proposed Block III pasture is in a wrong place. I wish to reiterate that Block III pasture as proposed should not be gone ahead with for the same reason my friend (Mr. Rahaman) has advocated. It is going to cost us 80-odd thousand dollars, while on the other hand we can retire our cattle to an area that would not cost a penny. I venture to say that the correct time to put cattle in that area would be when cattle-rearing becomes an economy. I am sure that if we proceed with this programme of spending large sums of money on vast empty wastes we will be spending money wrongly.

I heard the Financial Secretary say that he had proposed that areas in the Essequibo should be turned into pasture. He said he could **only** advise, but he could not provide the money—it was for other people to do so. It really does not require large sums of money. There are lands aback of Devonshire Castle, Esse-

quibo, and lands on the banks of the Ituribisi Creek which can easily be dammed and used for cattle. All they need is a little bit of examination—not even technical examination—and they are most likely to cost a couple of thousand dollars. All these lands belong to Government and Government is not willing to give them up to private people who apply for them, probably because Government feels that the people might not fully utilise them and instead, in the course of time, intends to provide these lands for the use of everybody.

The Agriculture Department should take the lead and make recommendations to Government this year or next year. Let the Department be a little bolder. I shall not belabour the point any more, but I do think that this Department should do it; it is not for the Financial Secretary or the Executive Council to sit and plan these things. Let the Department plan it and probably we will find the money for it. I maintain that Essequibo needs a double economy and this is one of the economies that need providing for. I am going to take what assurance I have got from Members of the Government.

I am not going to spend any more time on this Head. I hope in the course of time an assurance will be given that we are following the Development Plan to the letter and that all possible help and necessary assistance, technical or otherwise, would be given to the people. I also hope that not in the dim, distant future but in the near future our schemes for the general benefit of the people would be implemented.

There is another matter I want to go into in a little more detail now that I am in the Rice Marketing Board. I feel that Agricultural Instructors and other officers of the Department should, like primary school teachers, be made to put a plan of their work

[Mr. Jailal]

before the Head of their Department. In other words, I would like to see improvement represented in their plans for lessons, inspections and so on. It is stated that notices are put up at village offices as regards the activities of these agricultural officers, but that is not the answer as to where they could be found and so on. If some of these officers made a better attempt to do their jobs, I am sure we would have a more satisfied peasantry. I sincerely hope that the Head of the Department will compell these men to submit reports showing what they have done from time to time. This would eliminate many of the complaints that come from among the peasants. These things should not be seen from the top only, but also from below. I hope that with the provision of such a large sum of money for the running of this Department there will be better planning and supervision than we have had in the past.

Those Members who complained about plans not being carried out satisfactorily were not far wrong. That is what motivated my remarks when I said that officers should be given every facility to do their work, and I hope my remarks will be given the necessary weight. If we provide the necessary facilities and the officers cannot do their jobs as we expect them to, then let us get rid of them.

**Mr. Lee:** I would like to refer to something relating to development, but I do not know whether my representations to Government will be successful. I have been told that if the rice farmers desire to obtain loans from the Credit Corporation for the purpose of planting or reaping, they must first form credit societies in their respective districts. I feel, however, that these people are not being properly advised as regards the use of co-operatives and so on, and that if Government does

not pursue the right policy the rice farmers would be thrown right back into the hands of extortionate money-lenders in order to obtain loans for the forthcoming crops. I hope that the suggestion for better advice and a better policy relating to the rice farmers will be adopted. Members of this Council are aware of the fact that many of these farmers have suffered through the recent rains and are on the brink of exhaustion with regard to credit from shops and other places.

Another matter which I think should be considered by Government is its policy with regard to the fish industry—which also concerns the poor man. I do not think sufficient money has been provided for this Department, and unless this is done I fear that it will be a dismal failure. A wrong impression would then be created in the minds of the people in the rural areas who desire to supplement their earnings from that source. I understand that Government intends to purchase a site on the East Coast for the use of the industry, but I would like the officers of the Department to inform Government that fishes do not abound on abandoned estates, such as the one Government intends to purchase. I know that experiments are being carried out in relation to the establishment of a modern fishery, but I know from experience that if anyone thinks of getting sea fish from inland canals or trenches he will be sadly disappointed.

**The Financial Secretary:** I think the question of a modern fishery and fishing in inland waters are two different things.

**Mr. Lee:** I venture to think that it is because Government has not provided sufficient money to carry out the experiments that they have not been successful, and Government is afraid of the criticism I am making. The officers are available at the present time, but I find

that as soon as something is suggested Government says that there is no money to do it. I intend to complain, however, so that this Council should know that the money provided is insufficient to carry out the experiments. If an expert says that \$5,000 is required for the purpose of carrying out an experiment and the amount is not provided, then we should not seek to blame the officer concerned.

As regards the rice industry, I repeat that if Government fails to provide loans for the rice farmers so as to assist them in planting or reaping, they would be thrown back into the hands of moneylenders. I will conclude by saying that it is necessary to expand the fish industry if we desire to supplement our meat supply with fish.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** I think it is strange that the hon. Member should have chosen to make these remarks at this stage. I just want to say that I was privileged, two nights ago, to attend a showing or exhibition of photographs and camera slides which was given by Mr. Allsopp, our Fisheries Officer, at the office of the F.O.A. in Georgetown. It was, indeed, a most remarkable exhibition, and I came away feeling extremely pleased and proud of that particular officer and of his knowledge. May I say that those pictures covered some of the work we are doing in British Guiana which has been extended from some of the countries Mr. Allsopp was privileged to visit in the course of his F.O.A. tour. The countries were Brazil, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba, Palestine and Indonesia, and Mr. Allsopp had taken those remarkably fine coloured slides and subsequently attached to them a running commentary in the form of a lecture describing the various experiments that were going on. I came away somewhat edified by what I had heard and seen, and with the knowledge that he was going to do everything he could to introduce similar

work and, I hope, with similar success in British Guiana.

It must not necessarily be thought that the fish which will be cultivated will be the delectable *hassar*. We may find a better type of fish. I heard Mr. Allsopp speak of the *Israeli Carp*, a very delectable fish which is being tried out here. It also must not be thought that because of the habitat of the *hassar* it cannot be cultivated elsewhere. The whole idea is to cultivate fish in a fish pond. Another thing is the cultivation of brackish water fish—to establish fish ponds along our sea coasts in the courida swamps; to empolder those areas and convert them into fish ponds. I do ask the hon. Member to trust those officers who have acquired an immense amount of knowledge, and I feel sure that if they want money for those experiments Government would certainly agree to invite this Council to vote the necessary money.

There was one point in the hon. Member's remarks which I really could not follow — his reference to the cultivation of marine fish inland. The proposals with respect to marine fish have nothing to do with inland fish. The idea is to utilize to better advantage the fisheries we have, and to ascertain those techniques to be used at sea that would provide the greatest quantity of fish and improve the means of catching that fish, and the process of bringing it in and marketing it. The inland side is an attempt to actually cultivate fish for food. I have tried to make myself clear on this very little known subject about which, up to a few hours ago, I did not know very much. I do not want to appear discourteous to Mr. Rahaman who is not now here, but I wish to say I hope he will appreciate that I could not give him any detailed answer, particularly with regard to the technical aspects.

I heard Mr. Macnie suggest that the various Local Government Author-

[Sir Frank McDavid]

ities concerned should make representations about the proposition to bring water to the road, a proposition which they say was a promise of a previous Government. I would like to make some inquiries into the matter to see whether there is reasonable hope of Government taking the initiative in this matter.

On the question of the Block III pasturage I have today had put on my desk some draft legislation concerning that. I am not myself satisfied about the whole business, and I am calling a conference about it, but I cannot of course undertake to agree with Mr. Jailal's presentation of the case. I disagree violently with him but I will tell him that I undertake to go into the matter myself.

**Mr. Raatgever:** I wish to associate myself with the remarks which have been made by the hon. Mr. Ramphal regarding the appointment of a Deputy Director of Agriculture when the post becomes vacant. I am aware that Members of this Council have nothing to do with appointments, but it is our duty when matters of this kind are brought to our attention, to ventilate them here. All things being equal the local man must be appointed. During the 9½ years I have been a Member of the Legislature. I have always expressed that view, and I shall continue to do so.

**Mr. Farnum:** (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): With regard to Food Production Loans I think it is well known that in the past those loans were made through the Co-operative Credit Banks which have now gone out of existence. Today farmers who desire such loans have to apply to the Credit Corporation through the Regional Development Committee. It was pointed out that this procedure involved delay, consequently an arrangement was made with the Co-operative Department where-by the money to be refunded the share-

holders of the Co-operative Credit Banks would be pooled to form the nucleus of thrift societies. Loans would be made to the members from the accumulated share capital, but applications for loans above that capital would have to be made to the Credit Corporation in bulk, and the societies would then make individual loans to their members.

In addition to that the operation of each society is confined to an area of three miles so that its members would know the persons who wished to borrow money. If money was lent for farming the members of the society would be able to see that it is used for that purpose. I believe there are 80,000 rice farmers in the Colony, and it will be appreciated that there would be considerable delay if individual applications for loans had to be dealt with by the Credit Corporation. It is therefore more expeditious for those societies to borrow large sums from the Credit Corporation and make loans to individual members. I can assure this Council that the matter is being dealt with very expeditiously and extra staff has been asked for by the Co-operative Department.

**Mr. Carter:** I rise to support the hon. Mr. Ramphal in his clamour for British Guiana jobs for Guianese. I spoke very feelingly yesterday in dealing with the Department of Agriculture. I understand that someone from outside will be appointed to the post of Deputy Director of Agriculture when it becomes vacant, and that a local officer who has qualified himself for appointment to the post is likely to be transferred to some other country. I do not agree with the hon. Mr. Raatgever that matters of this kind cannot be brought up in this Council.

**Mr. Raatgever:** I did not say that. I said that this Council has nothing to do with appointments, but when such matters are brought to the attention of Members it is our duty to ventilate them here.



**Mr. Carter:** This happens to be a debate on the Budget, and as we are voting money for this Department I think it is the proper time to speak on a matter of this kind. This is a case in which we have a qualified local man, but someone from abroad is to be appointed to a vacant post. I would advise the Council not to vote the salary for the post.

**The Chairman:** I cannot allow any Member to refer to any member of the Civil Service either by name or indirect reference. I know it is not the proper thing to do. It is against parliamentary practice. When the hon. Member, Mr. Ramphal, spoke I understood him to say that he deprecated the removal of the officer from one place to another in order that some other person be put in his place. Now I hear something different. This person is to be transferred to another Colony.

**The Chief Secretary:** I do not wish to discuss any particular appointment in the Service. I think it is improper. I regret this question being raised at this time. But I would like to make one point as there seems to be some misunderstanding. Promotions in the Civil Service are governed by qualification, seniority and merit. In considering promotions, officers serving in the British Guiana Service are given first preference, and if there are suitable officers in the Service they receive promotion. But all serving officers receive equal consideration. I would like to stress that point. The question whether that officer is a native of British Guiana or not is quite immaterial.

**Mr. Ramphal:** I spoke on the general principle, and I made the reference merely in passing.

**The Chairman:** I would be glad if no further reference is made to it.

**The Financial Secretary :** In the course of the reply made by Sir

Frank McDavid, to hon. Members, he said he had seen pictures of fish life and culture which had been exhibited. I, too, have seen these pictures. I happened to see them in Trinidad where I met Mr. Allsopp. It would be a very good thing if those pictures could be shown to Members of this Council. They certainly have a certain amount of interest.

Before I take my seat there is another point I would like to make. The hon. Member, Mr. Lee, spoke about loans from the Credit Corporation. Loans do not come under this Head, but the point is this. The Credit Corporation comes under my portfolio, and I would be very glad if the hon. Member would meet me and the Member in charge of the Co-operative Department, because I think we may be able to fix the matter for him. It is a question of policy. I do not think we can depart from the policy that has been laid down, but I may be able to help the hon. Member if he sees me.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you.

**Sir Frank McDavid :** I am told that Mr. Allsopp is willing to exhibit the pictures to Members of this Council. I will certainly make the suggestion to see whether it can be done.

**The Chairman :** Hon. Members will allow me to refer to one of the points raised. I know there are areas in the vicinity of Boerasirie where they pay full rates for benefits which do not exist. That is the complaint.

**Mr. Raatgever:** I can support that. There is an estate that my firm owns on the Corentyne, Auchlyne in Block III, for which we pay a drainage and irrigation rate of \$6.00 a year and get no water or drainage. I have said it here over and over, and I have said it in the Executive Council.

Head passed at \$1,165,990,

## ANALYST

**The Financial Secretary:** Analyst—  
I move that the sum of \$35,144, as recommended by Finance Committee, be moved in under this Head.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$35,144.

## AUDIT DEPARTMENT

**The Financial Secretary:** I move that the sum of \$97,126, as recommended by Finance Committee be moved in under this Head.

## AUDIT DEPARTMENT

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$97,126.

CENTRAL HOUSING AND PLANNING  
AUTHORITY

**The Financial Secretary:** Central Housing and Planning Authority—I move that the sum of \$71,278 be moved in under this Head.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$71,278.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT—CHIEF  
SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

**The Financial Secretary:** Central Secretariat, Chief Secretary's Office—I move that the provision be carried out at \$60,800, as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-Head passed at \$60,800.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT—DEPARTMENTAL  
SECRETARIATS

**The Financial Secretary:** Departmental Secretariats—I move that the

provision be carried out at \$138,261, as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-head passed at \$138,261.

COLONIAL SECRETARIAT—ESTABLISH-  
MENT DEPARTMENT

**The Financial Secretary:** Establishment Department—I move that the provision under this Head be carried out at \$94,541.

**Mr. Ramphal:** I want to ask the hon. the Financial Secretary, if he wants more money for this Department. I know he has had a fairly large number of officers added, but it is my impression that the Establishment Branch is still carrying a tremendous heavy load, and I wish to invite him not to hesitate to come to us. I know this particular branch is very heavily overburdened.

**The Chief Secretary:** We have not yet appointed all the additional staff which has been provided under the Estimates to the end of last year.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-head passed at \$94,541.

COLONIAL SECRETARIAT—PUBLIC SERVICE  
COMMISSION.

**The Financial Secretary:** Public Service Commission — I move that the provision be carried out at \$24,840, as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-head passed at \$24,840.

COLONIAL SECRETARIAT—INFORMATION  
SERVICES

**The Financial Secretary:** Information Services—I move that the provision

be carried out at \$135,443, as recommended by Finance Committee.

**Mr. Ramphal:** The hon. the Financial Secretary was informed that he had promised that this Information Services Department would provide a booklet which would inform the public as to what our general development programme is. A whole year has passed and we have not had the booklet as yet.

**The Chairman:** It was a very good report we had yesterday.

**Mr. Ramphal:** We have gone further than that. Unfortunately you were not in Finance Committee to hear the discussion. That was promised us, and we have not had it fulfilled.

**The Financial Secretary:** The hon. Member is quite right. This matter came up in Finance Committee when the Development Plans were being considered, and it was said the booklet would be published. Such a booklet is now being prepared and, I think, the comments of a number of people are being invited on it. The hon. Member may be able to give very valuable suggestions, and I shall speak to the Information Officer. I think he would be very grateful for any assistance the hon. Member can give him.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-head passed at \$135,413.

#### CIVIL AVIATION

**The Financial Secretary :** Civil Aviation—I move that the provision be carried out at \$100,730, as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$100,730.

#### DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

**The Financial Secretary:** Co-operative Department—I move that the provision be carried out at \$99,454, as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$99,454.

#### CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

**The Financial Secretary:** Customs and Excise—I move that the provision be carried out at \$435,249, as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$435,249.

#### DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT

**The Financial Secretary:** Drainage and Irrigation Department — I move that the provision be carried out at \$201,600, as recommended by Finance Committee.

**Mr. Jailal :** In my speech on the Budget I referred to this Department, and I said at that time that I would speak further under the Head. This Department is a revenue-earning department or a revenue-collecting department. By that I mean that rates are collected from the various villages and estates, the landed proprietors, in the areas that are termed Drainage and Irrigation areas. There are several of these areas which have become distressed areas because of the fact that our drainage and irrigation facilities are incomplete and also inadequate. While I was outside I heard the hon. Mr. Raatgever, refer to Auchlyne estate paying something like \$6.00 per acre for drainage and irrigation. I have known the Auchlyne estate from my very boyhood

[Mr. Jailal]

days, and since those days Auchlyne never had proper drainage and irrigation. It would seem unfair to the proprietors of that estate that they should be burdened with these rates. The estates cannot pay them and the farmers, who rent lands on those estates and are now protected to a very high degree in terms of security, do not propose or hope to give one nickel more in terms of rent because of the facilities afforded them. Auchlyne estate as any other estate for that matter cannot carry on except they can pay their normal liabilities, and I see no reason why we should not do something to assist them, where the Department has failed to be able to implement the facilities for which the people are paying rates.

The same condition is obtaining on the Essequibo Coast. There you have four to five small proprietors who own lands and are paying drainage and irrigation rates. I know that they strain every effort to pay those rates. I refer particularly to the lands that drain through the Three Friends sluice. For several years now that Three Friends sluice has been inactive. In 1954 Pln. Mainstay lost 65 acres of rice, properly empoldered and new land. I know also that notice was given to the proprietor of that estate that it would be put up for sale if he did not pay his drainage and irrigation rates. I know that because I had to make representation on his behalf in the matter. How are those people going to pay those rates? The Department is not standing by the people. There are no provisions, as I said originally, for this particular thing.

Except we can do something about providing the facilities for which we charge fees, I recommend we withdraw the charges. We cannot let these people suffer all the time. Maybe many of the Members around this table do not fully understand this subject, but there are very few estates that are paying drain-

age and irrigation rates and are getting good advantage out of drainage, and I strongly recommend to Government that if we cannot immediately put into effect proper drainage and proper irrigation, then we should withdraw charges for them.

I want to refer to the islands of Wakenaam and Leguan. A long time ago these places were declared drainage areas. True enough, rates are not charged in some cases, but it is no use having an area as a drainage area and not doing the work. In the island of Wakenaam there is a single property of no less than 400 acres which long ago produced sugar cane. The sea has caused the land—a good portion of it—to become practically useless, and if we do the work we can save at least some acres of good arable soil. I think this department must at once proceed with the policy of taking care of these things. In Finance Committee the Director of this department told us he did not have the necessary technical help. At that time it was suggested that if we could not obtain the technical help we need from England, then we should look to other sources.

I wish now to reiterate my recommendation that if we cannot get help from England for the salaries we offer, then we should turn to Holland, for that country has engineers with a particular bias towards our type of work here. The Universities in Holland are training people who take up jobs in Venezuela and in other parts of South America, and consequently we can encourage them to come to this country. The Holland guilder is below our dollar and I feel that the money we would offer would be attractive enough to engineers from Holland. I wish to recommend that in order to speed up our development work and give full effect to it, we should try to get these engineers at once. I feel that the contribution this department could make is so big and so necessary that we should not hesitate in such a matter.

I want to reply to the hon. the Financial Secretary's rebuttal. He did not say it directly but he asked me to find the money. I proposed that this country should purchase a dredge for use within the country. We are planning to spend a lot of money in our development programme and we will have to dig a lot of drains. I have said that in order to retire a sluice—in order to remove it from one spot to the other—the normal cost seems to be about \$35,000. The dredge I am talking about would cost this country \$6 million. Of course it is quite a large sum of money, but the asset the dredge would be to this department would be great and with this dredge in use it would change the picture in regard to Budgets because the money spent to retire sluices would be saved. A dredge would help in sea defence. As I said before, we can put the suction hose into the mouth of the sluice and draw the mud away. I suggest that a loan be sought to purchase this equipment. If a farmer wants a tractor and approaches someone for a loan he usually has to convince that person that his need for the tractor is reasonable and that in a few years' time he would pay off the loan. It is the same with us. This country has borrowed money for all kinds of things and I suggest that this proposition be given some consideration.

I see Messrs. Bookers are putting down a great big pumping station. The excavation works that are being done cost thousands of dollars. Those who know the dredge I am talking about would know that it could do the work of a pumping station. All that needs to be done is to put the hose down, and with this equipment doing work other than that for Government the fees charged would repay the expense of purchase. I feel that an investigation by this department into this particular suggestion should be undertaken, and the Member in charge of this department would be well-advised to look into

it. Places like Texas are building roads with the aid of a dredge. One of these days we might wake up to find Nog Ens giving us some trouble. Our entire waterfront of the Demerara River can become as good as the waterfront in St. Lucia where the boats can moor alongside without wharves. But without a suction dredge it would be utterly impossible to tackle such a problem. I feel some step should be taken to go into this suggestion.

I feel that a dredge would bring much-needed help to the farming community. It would probably prove some sort of counter to the Hutchinson schemes for Eastern Demerara and Western Berbice, and I know my friend the hon. Member, Mr. Lee agrees with me that if we can deepen the mouths of the Mahaica and Mahaicony, and the Abary we will certainly be able to take off more water than we are taking off now. When a flood condition exists and the mouths of those rivers fail to take off the water, then an over-all flooding of the backlands results. The dredge "Sir Crawford" cannot do the work: it is impossible; but a suction dredge can do it to very good advantage, and all the money we are going to spend on Bellamy will be useless if we do not have a means of steadily empoldering our sea front. I wish to emphasise as much as possible the necessity for a suction dredge.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member is repeating with emphasis, what he has previously said and I cannot allow him to do that at this stage. I am anxious to put the question about this Budget this afternoon. I am sure the hon. Member's criticisms have been listened to with respect. Leave the matter as it is.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** At the risk of detaining the Council for five minutes, I would like to say a few words. I think the hon. Member is interpreting the Drainage and Irrigation Department as a revenue-collecting operation. It is nothing of the kind. I think it is well

[Sir Frank McDavid]

known that a Board—the Drainage and Irrigation Board—is the instrument by which rates are levied. The Drainage and Irrigation Department is engaged in the construction of main works, and it is also the machinery by which the Drainage and Irrigation Board undertakes maintenance. Although it is not much of a point to make, still I must correct him.

On the question of rates, another seeming inaccuracy occurred in his remarks because he may have implied that rates are levied on some arbitrary basis from drainage areas and whether or not work is done, these rates are levied. Of course, that is not the case. Estimates are made on the basis of cost of work, and that is the position in which drainage and irrigation find themselves, and I have every sympathy with it. Several areas have the advantage of adequate drainage; there are some areas where heavy pumping is done and there are other areas where no pumping is done. But still, the whole arrangement is so poor that the result is not commensurate with the amount of money expended by the Board, and, of course the money expended in rates has to meet the Board's expenditure. My own idea of the whole set-up in this country is that we should have average drainage rates. It is a big subject. I have heard many people speaking about it in the past, but the time has now come when, indeed the whole structure by which drainage and irrigation is controlled in British Guiana should be re-modelled. As I said, it is a big subject, and I think it would take two or three years at least before legislation can be brought forward.

In so far as Auchlyne is concerned, I know the Governor in Council—and I, myself—were surprised to hear of the difficulty and adversity of the proprietors and others in the vicinity, and I assume that the drainage work carried on there will go on in part until

the complete scheme is finished. But in so far as villages are concerned, I am sure Members will recall that a very large portion of the rates of the local authorities is paid by Government itself. Some \$85,000, representing a substantial portion of the rates levied by the Drainage and Irrigation Board, was paid by Government. I cannot attempt to answer the question this afternoon; it is a very big subject. I do sympathise with those areas where the work has been done, and where the rate is much too high for the villagers.

**Mr. Carter:** I want to object to the speed with which the Financial Secretary is rushing this Appropriation Bill so as to pass the Estimates this afternoon.

**The Financial Secretary:** I am not endeavouring to rush this Bill and pass the Estimates this afternoon, Sir.

#### CIVIL AVIATION

**The Chairman:** I have said that if any Member wishes to speak on a particular item he should say so. Does the hon. Member desire to speak under any particular head?

**Mr. Carter:** Yes, Sir; under the head Civil Aviation—item (b)—Assistant Director of Civil Aviation—(Deputy Airport Superintendent)—\$4,320.

**The Chairman:** Then let the item be recommitted.

Item recommitted.

**Mr. Carter:** In Finance Committee I raised an objection relating to this particular item, because I understood that it was intended to appoint someone from abroad to this post when there was a local candidate fully qualified for it. I should therefore like the Member for Aviation to reiterate his promise when he said that he was going into the qualifications of that officer. I am referring

to his report to Finance Committee on this particular question.

**Mr. Kendall** (Member for Communications and Works): I think my hon. friend misunderstood me. What I said was that if the person concerned had the qualification, I thought his application would be considered. I would like to say publicly that Members charged with portfolios have nothing to do with the appointment of officers. That is handled by the Chief Secretary and the Public Service Commission, so that I would not be able to give any guarantee or promise that the person concerned would be appointed. What I say is that so long as he is qualified and makes his application, I am certain that his application would be considered.

**Mr. Carter:** The observation made by the Member for Communications led one to believe that local candidates were being considered for the post.

**The Chief Secretary:** Sir, I must object to what amounts to lobbying by an individual for a post in the Public Service of this Colony.

**Mr. Carter:** I may not be representing an individual. I am only saying that there was a post for which a local candidate was qualified, and I would like to know whether his application was considered.

**The Chief Secretary:** The hon. Member was referring to an individual, of course.

**Mr. Raatgever:** The feeling outside is that local men are being pushed aside as regards posts for which they are qualified, and it is not a good thing. Mr. Carter is entirely correct. We are hearing tremendous outcries that many of our own people are qualified but are

not given posts for which they are qualified, and that is the reason why they are going abroad in such large numbers, second only to Jamaica. If they are qualified and they are not being considered for posts in their own country, where must they go? They must go elsewhere, but that is not right. This is their own country and the country that owes them a living. I quite agree with Mr. Carter.

**The Chairman:** The only complaint is that there must be no reference to any particular individual; that is the Chief Secretary's point. I must explain that Mr. Carter has not been in public life for a very long time. The hon. the Chief Secretary has also explained that although he is the holder of the portfolio relating to the post he cannot do anything. It is the Public Service Commission which deals with such matters.

**Mr. Raatgever:** May I suggest that we take the adjournment now, Sir? It is near 5 o'clock and there are many items left for consideration. I would like to speak further, but I am not prepared to do so this afternoon.

**The Chairman:** Very well; we will take the adjournment at 5 o'clock.

#### LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME

**Mr. Raatgever:** I am going to ask that action be taken to get this Department started as quickly as possible. I have said time and again that this is a most necessary Department in the Government today, and when it is started it is going to give the people a greater stake in their country. It will make them more contented and give them more employment. The sooner it is set up the better it will be.

**The Chairman:** I propose to adjourn until Tuesday next at 2 p.m.

**The Chief Secretary:** Subject to your decision, Sir, is there any objection to Monday?

**The Chairman:** Monday is practically a *dies non* in this Colony.

**The Chief Secretary:** It does not appear to me that that is any reason

why we should not sit in Council on that day.

**Mr. Raatgever:** I suggest Tuesday, Sir.

**The Chairman:** Council is adjourned until Tuesday next, at 2 p.m.