

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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*Friday, 15th December, 1944.*

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The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

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PRESENT:

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,  
Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

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

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer,  
Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.

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

The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K.C.  
(Nominated).

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

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

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E.  
(Eastern Berbice).

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western  
Berbice),

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

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E.  
(Nominated).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated.)

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. C. P. Ferreira (Berbice  
River).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 14th December, 1944, were taken as read and confirmed.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

### PROPOSAL FOR PERMANENT FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The PRESIDENT addressed the Council as follows:—

Hon. Members of Council, before proceeding with the Order of the Day, there are three things I wish to say briefly, touching the Estimates. I gave a good deal of time last night to going through the volume in front of us, and it is partly arising out of that study made last night that I wish to comment this morning. I shall follow up later during the Budget session with some fuller comments. I would like, however, to make the initial comment on procedure.

Members will remember that I have always been particularly anxious to provide the fullest opportunity for Unofficial Members to get completely *au fait* with details of the estimates, and to be given the fullest possible information before we come finally to pass the heads in full Council. Members will remember that three years ago I made a proposal for the appointment of a standing Finance Committee of a certain number of Members of Council, I think I suggested

five, whose duty it would be continuously to consider financial matters as they came up and, so to speak, act as the watch dogs of the Council in financial matters. Members, however, were not agreeable to such delegation, and I had to fall back on the alternative of a Finance Committee of all Members, a rather more cumbersome practice. I think that worked very well in 1942 and 1943, and made it much easier for myself and senior officers sitting round the table with Members, to give them the fullest information in an easy way. It also served for informal discussion of matters of policy and very usefully. Now it has not been possible fully to go through the estimates in that way this year owing, I know, to the extreme pressure of work on the Treasury and senior officers, and the fact that so many things required individual and separate consideration and decision. And so we have had to come into Council now to pass these departmental heads without that preliminary canter.

When I appointed Advisory Committees to certain spending Departments last year, one of their primary functions, along with policy and legislation, was the going through of estimates and all financial provision of the Departments on behalf of the whole Council, so that when we came into full Council meeting the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and his colleagues, as the representatives of the whole Council delving for the Council, so to speak, would be in a position to say that they had themselves gone through all the details and were able to recommend the estimates as put before the Council. I think that procedure is working reasonably well, and I am greatly obliged to the Chairmen of these Committees this year again as last year. I have found that in one or two ways the procedure can be made more definite in order to ensure that this job is done in good time and with the fullest opportunity for examination.

As regards Departments other than those with Advisory Committees, there is no such machinery except meetings of Finance Committee of all Members

as held in 1942 and 1943, before the estimates were taken in Council, which has not been possible this year I gather too from the remarks of Members, that they are not entirely enamoured of that system. I feel that I may go back to what I advised three years ago, a limited number of Unofficial Members forming a permanent Finance Committee of conveniently limited size, which, could function regularly. If Members prefer, however, to deal with all the detailed financial business in full Council it will be necessary for me to summon regular weekly meetings of the whole Council in order that we can keep right abreast of the considerable mass of financial business that must come before us, not only in connection with the estimates but generally throughout the year, and avoid things coming upon us suddenly in too great volume. I think I shall ask Unofficial Members to have a meeting of their own, say with the Deputy President, to consider which of these alternative forms of procedure is most desirable. I shall revert to this as soon as I have considered it further.

Now as regards the second point, I wish to make, it is one touching the distinction between recurrent and extraordinary revenue and expenditure. If Members who were in Council three years ago will do me the honour to throw their minds back, I laid very considerable emphasis on the importance of this and gave reasons. One practical reason is that if we sanction expenditure of a special or temporary character it should be shown as extraordinary expenditure, so that we will the more easily drop it or reconsider it the next year: whereas if we put it in an annually recurrent item the tendency is in the next year to regard it as a normal recurrent charge, and if there is no increase shown in the printed estimates, to let it pass, and then the charge becomes an annually recurrent one. If a Department wants, for example, ten typewriters or ten tractors, money can be sanctioned as an extraordinary item and dropped

next year, but if it comes under the recurrent head it may well slip through, although not really required, and stay on the estimates. The other important reason is that the distinction does enable us to have a far clearer idea of the essentials of the financial position than if we do not observe it. The point is that extraordinary expenditure is of the character of capital expenditure or from surplus, whereas recurrent expenditure is that which we have to face up to as an annual charge. The extraordinary expenditure can be dropped, if necessary, or at any rate will certainly come to an end soon. By doing the same thing with revenue we are enabled to see much more clearly to what degree our necessarily recurrent expenditure is met or balanced by recurrent revenue.

In 1941, in the summary of our budgetary position, this distinction was not made, but in the estimates for 1942 Members may remember that after the final print, I had a special slip printed and attached, which showed recurrent expenditure and extraordinary expenditure separately, and showed that in comparison with revenue there was a substantial balance on the right side, the deficit, such as it was, being more than accounted for by extraordinary expenditure.

#### LIMITING RECURRENT EXPENDITURE.

The actual position now is still satisfactory, in that our recurrent revenue more than covers our recurrent expenditure, and the deficit is entirely extraordinary expenditure which we could, if necessary, reduce or drop in time of difficulty. Personally, I am not averse to capital expenditure when money is available and there is real good cause for it, but the utmost endeavour must be made to keep recurrent expenditure within recurrent revenue.

We have accepted with our eyes open a very considerable liability in respect of increased cost of services per-

sonnel, and we must be the more careful over all "Other charges" recurrent items.

Now, in the present Budget, while I see that in certain departmental heads this distinction is properly observed—particularly I notice under the head, Medical—in others too many things have been allowed to slip into the head "Other Charges" and so recurrent. The danger is that if this happens the items may remain shown as recurrent in a future year, and the figure repeated even though the special need for it, or of that part of it which was special or extraordinary, may have passed. I am not criticising the Treasury for a moment, especially as I know the extreme pressure under which the Budget has been brought forward even at this date, but I am disappointed that Departments have not been more particular. For example, I observe under the head "Analyst" that we passed the other day, one new item has been inserted and one item increased which are really not or should not be recurrent. For example again, where the Medical estimates show purchase of typewriters, cycles, adding machines, motor lorry, special equipment, etc., as extraordinary expenditure, other Departments have included them under recurrent votes. Another instance is the Essequibo Boys' School, maintenance of grounds, where an item which seems to me to be mostly extraordinary has been shown as recurrent maintenance. This is, of course, subject to examination of detail.

#### SCHOOL MEALS FOR CHILDREN.

Still another instance is to some extent touching school meals for children. Members may remember that when that was brought forward in 1943 I said in a message that consideration of financing this under the Development and Welfare Act would follow, and my intention certainly was to treat that expenditure as extraordinary until the question of financing wholly or partly under the Development and Welfare Act was settled. As it is this year

it has come in under recurrent, although I am at present by no means sure that it will be necessary to keep it there or at the figure shown in future years.

Now it is extremely important to do everything to make our "recurrent" financial position clear, and though I do not wish to interfere with the print now before Council, I do propose before the reprint is made to adjust the placing of certain items to bring out what I want. The advantages are two, one that we get a clear view in the summary of our budgetary position, and secondly, that we are less likely to be betrayed in a future year into accepting as an annual charge some unnecessary expenditure which was special and extraordinary when first approved.

#### EDUCATION

Now my third point is again touching Education. I said the other day that I hoped very soon to be in a position to discuss that with Members and with fuller knowledge of the Imperial Government's policy as regards financial assistance in education. What I would like to say is that pending that I really must ask to be excused from assenting to substantial rises on recurrent liabilities. Members know the position is going to be extremely difficult. We have accepted the charge for increased salaries with our eyes open, but it is a very heavy liability. Might I draw Members' attention to the fact that when we first sanctioned it by discussion in this Council the expected figure of increase was under \$300,000 for the year 1944. In the year 1945 the increase seems to be something like \$400,000, as it appeared to me in a check made last night of the figures in the printed estimates for this year, as compared with those for 1944. I must ask Members to realise that until I can make a considered review of our financial liabilities under Education I must be extremely chary of assenting to recurrent liabilities, which may be extremely desirable in themselves but

we must have a complete knowledge of the future financial position on the whole question of education.

#### ESTIMATES, 1945.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Estimates for 1945.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

#### LANDS AND MINES DEPARTMENT.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Sir, as the Commissioner of Lands and Mines is present, I am asking that he be allowed immediately to make a statement to this Council as a body representing large numbers of persons who express dissatisfaction with respect to applications for lands made initially to his Department. I am asking that he furnish the Council now, as I know he is in a position to do, with a great many of the statements and excuses which both he and his officers are obliged to make to applicants from time to time. The difficulty has not arisen today, but since the establishment of the District Administration Department. I am not going to say, and I do not wish even to infer that this dissatisfaction is caused by his administration of his Department or by the District Administration Department, but what seems to me to be taking place is that the Lands and Mines Department in Georgetown can only say whether a piece of land is open to application and receive the fee of \$10 from the applicant. The next step is that the application is referred to the District Administration Office, wherever it happens to be, and that is where the trouble commences. For a variety of reasons a decision cannot be reached. The District Administration officer has to visit the *locus in quo* and enquire what is actually hap-

pening there. He may have had no previous intimation about it whatever. He may find squatters there and every objection to the application.

The length of time that elapses between the filling of an application and a decision being arrived at, whether adverse or favourable, is extraordinary, and what Your Excellency has often complained of as being a feature of the Administrative life in this Colony — lack of action, apparent inertia — is illustrated by the administration of these two Departments. How far they can be co-related and made to work together for their mutual benefit I am not in a position to say, and I doubt very much whether the Commissioner can say definitely, although I know that both he and Mr. Laing are doing their best along those lines. Now that we have a District Commissioner the matter becomes worse, and with all those delays you, as Governor, have finally to decide whether A or B can cut out five cords of wood on the East Coast. — something that you personally know nothing about. But even after everything has been settled, and before it is released from the Colonial Secretariat, one is told that the matter is before the Governor whose signature is necessary on some piece of paper which, I say most emphatically, should not reach the Governor except in extreme cases.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to inform the hon. Member that it does not reach the Governor. I sign approval by command.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I do not know how long you have been doing it, but if you do you have no legal authority to do it. You may have done it within the last two or three weeks. I am sorry you have been forced into making the admission. I quite agree with you that you ought to be able to sign. In the final matter the Commissioner of Lands and Mines should be authorized to sign. However, those are details, but I believe I am right in saying that there is

something in the complaint which the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) so frequently makes in this Council, that it is due to the policy of officers on the Civil List.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it is due to the effect of the laws this Council passed in the old days. Apparently the Governor is expected to read through a mass of documents. I tried several ways of getting around it but the lawyers say they were not legal. A great deal of the trouble is in our laws.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I have said so, and that is why I corrected the Colonial Secretary. I am not speaking of large concessions in mining areas. What I am illustrating is that if we are to have development, applications for land to plant rice, for cattle grazing and things of that kind should be summarily dealt with, and if there is no objection or there is hope that the application will be finally entertained, why not give the applicant immediate possession? Why not allow him to enter upon the land if there is going to be no insurmountable obstacle? I have discussed the matter with the Commissioner of Lands and Mines, and I fully agree with him and his officers as to the policy that should be adopted.

I do ask that this matter be immediately investigated. It has all been reduced to writing. The Commissioner has had numerous suggestions, not only from me but from other people who represent members of the public. A little dove-tailing between the Lands and Mines Department and the District Administration Office would produce very happy results. I do hope that the Commissioner will not be afraid to speak his mind. In this Council I have seen officers afraid of their superiors. I have seen a Governor of the Colony pull a Colonial Secretary up and make him sit down. I do not know whether the Commissioner is afraid of the present Colonial Secretary, or whether he is afraid of you, sir, but I do ask that

he be allowed to do his duty without a sense of fear of being chastised. I do hope that will be the policy with respect to all of your officers. As far as I am concerned they need not be afraid of the Governor, the Colonial Secretary or anybody else.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we have had this before, and we have had the Commissioner speaking on it before. What deserves serious consideration is the matter of decentralisation. I think that was the burden of what the Commissioner told us last year. I will call upon him now to tell us what he would like to say.

Mr. F. R. H. GREEN (Commissioner of Lands and Mines): The remarks of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam are quite correct. There have been delays, some lengthy, and they are due to procedure under our laws. This matter has been exercising my mind and engaging my attention for a number of years. My first idea was to put Lands and Mines Officers into the areas and let them act independently of the District Administration, but I now admit that idea was incorrect. We actually tried it out in the Essequibo Estuary and as a result there was a great deal of friction. The scheme did not work well. I think it was Your Excellency who put into my mind the idea of decentralization and working in co-operation with the District Administration, when you arrived here. As a result, when the new District Commissioner for the Mazaruni-Potaro District was appointed, the Land Officer at Roden Rust who had been appointed provisionally was moved to Bartica and instructed to work under the District Commissioner and to work out a scheme for decentralization in collaboration with him. The object of the scheme was that applications should be made through the District Commissioner's Office. If they were made to the Officers in Georgetown they would

be forwarded immediately to the District Commissioner's Office to be handled there first. At that office there would be an expert Land Officer who would be a Land Surveyor and who was to have the maps and all information about the land available. The District Commissioner was to decide in collaboration with the Land Officer on the policy in regard to lands and that policy was to be adopted by them and put into effect. We have now completed all the arrangements for the decentralization of the Mazaruni-Potaro District. It has taken some time as special stock sheets had to be prepared. The scheme has been in operation for a matter of four months, but I am not yet able to say definitely if it is a success. There are, however, indications of a step-up in efficiency as a result of the scheme. Persons can make application to the District Commissioner's Office and get permission from the District Commissioner to occupy land. If there is no question of dispute they can go on the land and get on with their job while the application is coming up to my office in Georgetown.

We are now working out a scheme for decentralization in New Amsterdam. This is going to be a little more difficult as it is a larger district and the position is much more complicated. It is not certain yet what exactly we will have to do. The Officer who was sent there four months ago to act as Land Officer and work under and in collaboration with the District Commissioner, was told to remain there and see after the working out of the scheme and to send in a report recommending what is required. I may add that the position in New Amsterdam has been known for some time to be most unsatisfactory. Very little is known about some parts as to what is happening to the lands, and it is absolutely necessary that we should have a proper organization there in order to be able to get through matters at all. I am

afraid, it will mean further expense because that district, I believe, has been working with a matter of three Rangers who have not been able to get about while the Land Officer who is stationed at Springlands is practically nailed to his seat on account of other duties—Customs, etc. It is going to mean an increase of the staff.

After this scheme has been inaugurated in New Amsterdam, we hope to be able to move Surveyors from Headquarters and make them Land Officers for East Demerara and West Demerara, but as to how it can be worked out we have to wait until the scheme in New Amsterdam is working. It is a matter we have to go into very carefully otherwise we may put ourselves in for a great deal of expenditure without justification. We have to move carefully and slowly.

With regard to this question of everything having to be referred to the Governor, it has been got over in respect of the signing of leases and other documents. They can now be signed in my office, and we have not to prepare elaborate memoranda setting out what they are about. They are brought in to my office and they are signed and sent out, but it is still necessary under the law for application for approval of every single application to be made to the Governor. Whether it is legal for the Colonial Secretary to deal with them I do not know. That has been the practice ever since I have been in this Colony except in special cases. My personal view is that there is a large number of matters which can be dealt with by the District Commissioner and there is no necessity for me to see them. I have forwarded a letter to Government which is now being dealt with in which I recommend that certain powers given under the Ordinance should be delegated to me; which would mean being delegated also to the District Commissioner who is my deputy, which will save a great deal of time.

In order to save time I will deal immediately with the matters referred to yesterday. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) mentioned that there is a shortage of surveyors. There is at the present moment a definite shortage of trained Land Surveyors in this Colony. Take my Department for example, in the last two years one Surveyor has been permanently transferred to District Administration as a District Commissioner — the District Commissioner for the Mazaruni-Potaro District—and another temporarily transferred to act as District Commissioner for the North-Western District, it is possible, may be permanently removed from my Department. Then I have two Surveyors seconded on special hydrographic work on the Demerara River and one Surveyor is ill. At the same time there has been an authorised increase in staff during the last two years by the addition of two permanent Surveyors, two temporary Surveyors and one temporary Assistant Surveyor, for Surveys in connection with Village and Country areas, making a necessary introduction into the Department in the last two years of ten Surveyors, nine of whom have been found, two having been lent by the Consulting Engineer; with the result that the reserve complement of Surveyors available for Government employ is now depleted.

This may be replenished slightly when the results of the present Surveyors' Examination are published. Thirteen candidates will be sitting, but the trouble is that these new Surveyors who will have just passed their examination are very inexperienced and the result is that if we have to employ them on work for which one normally employs experienced Surveyors, I am afraid it will cost more money as they will take a longer time to do the work. They get into difficulties with the public who do not keep appointments with them. At the same time there has been an increase in calls for surveys from the Department, which has meant that the

Department has three to four times the usual amount of work. Since the commencement of the War, there has been an enormous increase in the number of applications received for lands. I have got here the figures up to 1943. In 1940 there were 896 applications; in 1941—1,288 applications; in 1942—2,241 applications; in 1943 there was a slight decrease when the figure went down to 1,777. As far as I can gather, this year we cannot expect any great decrease from that figure. As regards the surveys waiting to be done, the Department's situation is definitely bad. We are about two years behind in the work, and it seems that there is very little we can do about it. Even if I can get more Surveyors I will not have the accommodation and, I have been informed by a very important gentleman from the War Office, that I will not get instruments until the war is over as priority has to be given to their need for war purposes. That is the position and, I am afraid, we will have to carry on as best we can, increasing and finding instruments where we can, until such time as the position is relieved.

The hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) seems particularly concerned because the Department is refusing to issue land over which we have no control. He mentioned that we have a habit of writing back to people and saying "You cannot have the land but if you refer the matter to So-and-So they may be able to help you." That is absolutely correct. What happens is this: We get an application for land from somebody who obviously seems to want land, and it appears from the application that the land is unoccupied. We look up and find that it is private land and, in order to help him we ascertain to whom the land belongs, we inform him by letter that we are unable to give title as the land belongs to So-and-So. The normal procedure in the old days would have been to tell him that the land is private land and he would have to employ the services of a Solicitor or to go into the Deeds Registry,

pay the necessary perusal fee and look for the name of the owner. We have been refraining from doing that in order to save him that trouble.

The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Ferreira) mentioned about non-beneficial occupation of land. I think he must be referring particularly to the Berbice District, because I do know that there is land there that is not being beneficially occupied. That is due to the causes I have already mentioned in reply to the remarks made by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam. It is hoped and I sincerely believe, that the matter will be squared up, slowly it is true, as the result of the decentralization scheme by which we will have expert officers in the district directing affairs under the District Commissioner.

With regard to the amalgamation of this Department with the Forest Department, the actual relation between my Department and the Forest Department does not seem to be well understood. The Forest Department is a scientific department which acts in an advisory capacity to my Department. We refer an application for land to them and ask for advice which we also obtain on general policy and we, through the District Commissioners, administer the forest generally. There are no Forest Reserves in this Colony run by the Forest Department. Most of the forest is of the mixed type which is generally run by the Land Department or by the District Administration elsewhere. I hope I have covered all the points raised.

Mr. EDUN: The observations made this afternoon by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam and the replies given by the Commissioner of Lands and Mines are very interesting in themselves, but I want to say or to make some observations on a different angle altogether in so far as these Departments are concerned—the Lands and Mines, Forestry and Local Government. To my mind their functions are similar and somewhat identical. I think that



these three Departments are confusing themselves in certain detailed action and that is why we have got so much confusion in the matter of applications for lands. I think I should begin by making these points and, perhaps, I should place them under heads like the following:—

- (1) What is the relationship between the Lands and Mines Department, the Forest Department and the Local Government?
- (2) What is the relationship between them in so far as administration is concerned?
- (3) Whether or not there is considerable overlapping in the identical functions of these Departments?
- (4) Whether the system cannot be rationalized and a proper administration take place

I go further and make yet another point—

- (5) What will be the relationship between the Lands and Mines Department, and the District Commissioner for the interior?

I think, sir, that you in your speech recently before this Council made the declaration that there will be a Commissionership of the Interior. Perhaps you realize by now that District Commissionerships have become anathema in this country. The holders are more or less nothing but Petty Governors and, I think, the one who will be in the Interior will be a Deputy Governor and altogether useless. I am wondering whether these Departments in order to save money cannot be co-ordinated in their functions by the creation of one big Department of the Interior with one central office, and this idea of separation of the Interior from the coastlands will definitely die out of the minds of certain people, as I see it. I want to tell everybody in this world that this is not with the idea of separation of the Interior from the coastlands administration.

The CHAIRMAN: I answered that surely last week. Did I not say so? There is no idea of separating the Interior from the coastlands.

Mr. EDUN: I am saying that perhaps there may be the idea.

The CHAIRMAN: Why put up a dummy to shoot at? There is no such idea.

Mr. EDUN: Sir, kindly allow me to make my point? It may be a long range policy and this may just be the thin edge of the wedge—this District Commissionership of the Interior. That will be the beginning of the end altogether, Sir, I want to give you factual evidence of the beginning of a separation. Perhaps if I tell you you would be surprised. I have learnt from the Government of this Colony that there is to be an airfield at Mackenzie, a focal point in the administration of the interior in a few years to come. Why is it not the beginning of a greater idea in the mind of somebody? I am aware of it. I see the practical evidence coming in step by step.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of order! May I explain to hon. Members that both by letter to the Press and statement in this Council and at the informal meeting with Mr. Cross where the hon. Member who has just spoken brought up this very point, it has been clearly explained and full reason given why Mackenzie was suggested as the first big airfield. No other Member has any doubts.

Mr. EDUN: Very well, sir, I accept that, but I want to give further reasons why Mackenzie has been suggested.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with the Lands and Mines Department and the hon. Member must keep himself to the point under discussion.

Mr. EDUN: This is a matter of air transport to the interior and it comes within the province of the discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it is very relevant to the Lands and Mines Department.

Mr. EDUN: Very well, sir, but I find all over the Estimates in the matter of Lands and Mines, air communication, road transportation etc. I think the question of air transportation to the interior comes in. I see a long range policy and little signs of things to come. I think I know a little of this world to be able to see things. Therefore, I want to warn everybody and I take this opportunity to do so. No matter what anyone thinks, any idea of separation of the interior from the coastlands will be resisted by every man, woman and child.

The CHAIRMAN: This is the Lands and Mines Department's estimate and we are discussing the Surveyors.

Mr. EDUN: The Lands and Mines Department's vote relates to the interior.

The CHAIRMAN: The Surveyors work in the interior but they have not got to do with airfields.

Mr. EDUN: The airfield is supposed to be at a focal point of the interior.

The CHAIRMAN: We are in Committee on the estimates for the Lands and Mines Department.

Mr. EDUN: That is why I had expected this Council to discuss the policy of this Government before going to the details of the Estimates. We have not been given a chance to do so and, therefore, we have to attack the policy when dealing with every Department. I wish to make a declaration now that we have to waste time in discussing every Department because

we have not been given time to discuss the Budget proposals.

The CHAIRMAN: You will be given ample time.

Mr. EDUN: After we have committed ourselves to the expenditure?

The CHAIRMAN: We have decided on a certain procedure with the consent of Members and I must go on with it.

Mr. EDUN: I intend to help this Council to get on with the Estimates. I do not want to waste time, but I certainly think it is my duty to sound a note of warning if I see something wrong. After all this is my country. With that point in view I want to say this: I have said over and over under these departmental votes that I am prepared to give my support because I expect the Officers to do good work, but the administration of these Departments should be amalgamated into one big department for the Interior in order that in process of time there can be no effort at separation of the Interior from the coastlands. I see on one hand Forestry a separate entity shrouded within a Trust and, on the other hand Lands and Mines a separate entity and Local Government another separate entity all doing identically the work the Lands and Mines Department had been doing years ago. I think that if proper amalgamation can be done we can save a lot of money. As you say, we have to go along; but you did not tell us that. You said "Let us plant our feet firmly on a good background and then hope for the future." That is how I think about it, and I intend to work towards this Colony getting on.

I want this Council to examine critically and carefully the advisability of amalgamating these Departments in order to save some money. Their functions are identical and why should we waste money on duplication of the work of these Departments? If you examine the Lands and Mines Department's expenditure, for instance, in the matter of transportation in the Interior,

you would find the same expenditure in so far as the Local Government Board is concerned. A small Committee of this Council should examine the question of amalgamating of the three Departments.

Mr. FERREIRA: I am pleased to hear that some effort has been made to put the office in Berbice on a sound footing, but I think it is possible, even at this stage, to save a lot of the time of applicants for timber cutting lands. At present it takes three months and sometimes six months, and I know of a case which took one year. I feel that it should be possible for the Land Officer in Berbice to give temporary or provisional permission which would enable an applicant for land to get on with his work within a week or three weeks of the application. Three months is too long a time for an applicant who cannot afford it.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to refer to the remarks of the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) without saying anything on the principle. I have myself noticed very frequently that there was duplication, particularly in such matters as transfers, and I raised it more than once when travelling around the country. The matter has been under consideration by the acting Governor in my absence, and the Treasurer has a proposal which, to some extent, will meet the kind of thing you are advocating—the amalgamation of transportation instead of having it spread around three Departments.

Mr. GREEN: What happened in the case of boats was that for the North Western District I had on the estimates for this year a sum to provide for a boat and engine for the Land Officer and Warden who should have been stationed in the North Western District. Unfortunately, due to the shortage of surveyors, I have not been able to send one there, but there was this boat, and I believe the District Administration Officer also has a boat which is a rather

heavy launch with a low powered engine and unsuitable for the higher reaches of the river. This particular boat was built as a complement to the launch. It is a light boat with a light engine, so that it could go into the upper reaches of the rivers.

The idea was that the District Commissioner and the Land Officer would change boats according to where they were going. We also have a launch, which has sleeping accommodation for two, in the Essequibo river, and it was felt that it would be better if both of them came under the control of the District Commissioner.

With regard to the matter of applications and temporary permissions raised by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Ferreira), that is the whole idea of this decentralization—to enable that to be done, but before that can be done it is necessary to get copies made of all the stock maps of the rivers to ensure that there is no overlapping of applications. If you give two persons permission to work on the same land there would be trouble. When a man goes to the New Amsterdam office and applies for a wood cutting licence it will be possible for the officer there to look at his map and see if the land is available, and if he is quite certain, it would be possible for him to recommend to the District Commissioner to issue permission to work right away. That is the idea.

Mr. FERREIRA: There are so few timber areas that it is possible today for the Land Officer in New Amsterdam to know which areas are being worked, so that it should be possible to deal with applications on the spot.

Mr. GREEN: I am open to correction, but I feel that it is better for him to be quite sure and have the plans there, because we have had breaches of the peace and all sorts of trouble over this timber business. For some reason

or another timber people seem to be rather of a fierce character. For that reason we have to be very cautious.

The CHAIRMAN: When I went to Parika two years ago there was a Lands and Mines officer completely alone. He had a launch which he used when he wanted, but it was not used for many days. There was also an Administration Office at Bartica. Now we have the District Commissioner's Office at Bartica with the Lands and Mines officer working in the same office. That is along the lines of what we are aiming at. Now you are doing the same thing in the North West.

Mr. GREEN: Yes, sir.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: The difficulties of overlapping will not be remedied except applications are allowed to go through one channel only. Under the present system a resident in Berbice is privileged to apply to the District Commissioner's Office there for cattle grazing or timber cutting lands, while another applicant is allowed to lodge his application at the Head Office. It is this duplication that causes the difficulties. The Head Office is not in a position to say whether applications have been granted in Berbice or *vice versa*. I suggest that applications should only be accepted at the district office, so that the officer in charge would be certain that there are no other applications at the Head Office. If applications are received at both places there must be confusion.

Mr. GREEN: The position is that when we decentralize it will be definitely understood that applications will be accepted at the Head Office and immediately forwarded to the district office to allow of action being taken. We will just act as a forwarding agent.

The CHAIRMAN: The Member would like the applicant to be told to run away to the district office.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Yes, sir. The Commissioner might give an undertaking that he will forward the applications. We know how papers are held up.

The CHAIRMAN: The whole system depends on getting the records completely decentralized.

Mr. GREEN: Stock maps have to be got, and they are complicated things. It takes much time, and I believe there are thousands of small holders in New Amsterdam and the Berbice district.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: There would be great difficulty if applications are lodged in Berbice and Georgetown, to be dealt with at both places, even at different times. I think all applications should be forwarded to the Head Office in Georgetown where the plans can be looked at and the Commissioner can be certain that the same lands have not been applied for by other persons. I agree with the Commissioner that there have been cases where two persons have applied for the same land and both were granted leases. After that one knows what happens. The parties fight each other and the Commissioner has to intervene, and probably cancel both leases. Although it is necessary to facilitate the granting of applications I do not agree that they should be hurried through. There is a provision in the law that the Commissioner of Lands and Mines must first be satisfied that an applicant for land is financially able to cultivate it, in the case of agricultural leases, and even in the case of wood cutting applications, that the applicant is in a position to beneficially occupy whatever land is applied for.

With respect to leases, which we know have first of all to be approved by the Governor in Council. I do not think that duty should be delegated at all. The signing of leases after they have been approved by the Governor, should be done by the Commissioner of

Lands and Mines, but I think the right to approve should be vested only in the Governor of the Colony where Crown lands are to be leased to applicants.

The hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) has referred to the paucity of land surveyors. I quite agree with him. We have been endeavouring for the past 18 months to get a surveyor to survey a piece of land which is now in dispute in the Mahaicony river, and in respect of which we are engaged in a law suit in the Supreme Court. The Commissioner of Lands and Mines has explained the position, and we cannot make a practical survey overnight. Whilst it is true that there are 13 candidates for examination, and it is possible that they may all pass, practical experience is essential in order to give satisfaction to those who employ them.

The hon. the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) spoke about the amalgamation of these three Departments, but unless their work is the same I cannot see how Government can cause a fusion of those three Departments. There may be cases of overlapping, as in the case of the launches, but in the main the work of the three Departments is separate and distinct, and I do not think the time has come when those Departments should share one common office and be administered by one Head.

Mr. EDUN: While we are thinking of a District Commissionership for the interior why have these three offices? Have one big office with these three functions going on within it.

Mr. ROTH: Speaking from personal experience extending very considerably longer than that of the Commissioner of Lands and Mines of his Department, I agree entirely with the present scheme to experiment with decentralization of the Department and to work in conjunction with the District

Administration in its various branches. I am quite confident that had his predecessor organized such a decentralization at the time when the District Administration Scheme was founded, there would not have been the complaints we have been hearing of regarding delays.

With regard to the Sixth Nominated Member's comment about the proposed Commissionership of the interior, I think it is a case of a little knowledge being a dangerous thing. If the hon. Member would possess his soul in patience for one or two weeks he and other Members would see the interim report of the Committee dealing with the matter, which will explain the whole principle of the proposals for the administration of the interior.

Mr. EDUN: To a point of explanation. I would like to inform the hon. Nominated Member that it was the Lands and Mines Department which administered the interior when we had the largest gold and diamond output in the year 1919. We did not have all these big ideas of administrative machinery then.

Mr E. A. LUCKHOO: I agree in the main with the remarks of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford). With regard to the staff of the Lands and Mines Department I think there is very much more to be desired, and I am glad to see that steps are being taken to strengthen the Surveying Department of that office. I notice that an officer of the Department, Mr. Cossou, who is attached to the office in New Amsterdam, is engaged in work of this nature, and I am pleased to say he is showing great interest. I hope these applications will be dealt with by the District Administration Office. There is too much delay in dealing with applications, even in receiving replies. The result is illegal occupation of Crown lands. People are prosecuted and are told to legalize their occupation. The method of giving out land to persons

who illegally occupy them, is not correct, because a bona fide cultivator is deprived of the use of that land. No premium should be placed on the illegal occupation of land.

I know of a recent case in which a petition was sent to Your Excellency in respect of certain Crown lands in the rear of the first depth. "A" has been in possession of that land for 20 or 30 years and has permanent crops planted on the land. No money has been paid to Government in respect of the occupation of that land for 20 or 30 years. The Local Authority applied for a sub-division of the second depth which has been granted to the proprietors of the first depth in proportion to the first depth. As a result of that the individual I refer to will be deprived of a great deal of his coconut cultivation. He has appealed to Government to legalize his occupation. He admits that he has done a wrong but says he has been in occupation for over 20 years. The oranges and coconut trees on the land have been the main source of his livelihood. He has now been told that he will be entitled to a proportion of the back lands. What have the Government officers been doing all those years? He has been occupying that land for several years, and now he has been suddenly called upon to surrender it to other persons who have land in the first depth and have not put a single day's labour on that cultivation. Is that fair and equitable? Is it fair to deprive him of the fruits of his and his family's labour after a number of years? I am glad to have had this opportunity to bring the matter to Government's notice.

I think that in the Berbice area Government will have more officers stationed at various points. Complaint has been made to the Berbice Chamber of Commerce that timber is brought into New Amsterdam without having passed through the proper channel. I

do not know whether that still obtains today, or whether greater vigilance is being exercised.

I agree that there is a definite shortage of trained surveyors, and on that account many applications cannot be entertained. One Nominated Member has referred to litigation which is being held up on that account. That has brought some grist to the legal mill because the lawyers engaged are not giving gratuitous service.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I would like to remind the hon. Member that lawyers do not get refreshers in this Colony.

Mr. GREEN: With regard to the hon. Member's statement that timber is brought down without paying royalty I agree that that has been so, but I do not think it is a very large proportion. It is very difficult to arrive at the proportion but it certainly has been going on, and that is one of the reasons why a Land Officer is in the district now. It is one of the points he has been instructed to go into.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I now move in a number of items? The explanation is, as stated, that the control of these boats has now been transferred to Local Government. Therefore it is desirable that the sums which now appear on this estimate should go to the Local Government estimate. I therefore move that sub item (15) — Boats' Crews — be reduced from \$7,000 to \$4,240; that item 1 (20) — Temporary War Bonus — be reduced from \$6,000 to \$5,450; that sub-head (b) — Subsistence Allowances — be reduced by \$1,500, and the total carried out at \$10,750. I also move that sub-head 3 — Maintenance of Water Transport — be reduced from \$1,000 to \$250; that sub-head 6 — Materials, Equipment and Instruments — be reduced from \$4,250 to \$2,650, and that sub-head 14 — Uniforms for Boats' Crews — be reduced from \$500 to \$250. The total of these items

is \$7,410, and when we come to Local Government I will move in corresponding increases in the related heads.

Items as amended, agreed to.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I think it will be convenient for us to take the whole of this head, but there is one item to, which I would like to draw attention and that is item 8—Surveys in Village and Country Areas. I have a distinct recollection as to how this item first appeared on the Estimates. It was for the specific purpose — the carrying out of certain surveys in village and country areas that were long overdue. But I see now that the amount of the item is increased. As a matter of fact, if I remember rightly, the work that was being done was on a definite programme, but I see now that in order to carry out special work of partitioning this item will be increased for 1945 by a sum of \$2,000. I am going to ask that the two things be divorced from each other. I do not think the item "Surveys in Village and Country Areas" will be continued for an indefinite period of time, and I shall keep my eyes on it. I think the item was introduced at my request some time ago. It was only for \$500 or \$600 but was specially increased to \$2,000 in order to carry out this important work. I am keeping my eyes on it. I would not like this item to be used for any other purpose so that I cannot keep a proper eye on the expenditure. If we have to carry out special partitioning work in the areas now then a new item ought to be introduced. We ought to do that now so that the two things may be divorced. When the matter was discussed here I have a recollection that there was a definite programme. I think it was in the regime of Sir Wilfrid Jackson and he agreed to earmark a sum which eventually went up to \$3,430 in 1943 and to \$4,000 in 1944, and now it is to be \$6,000, I am rather afraid—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member was not here when I made the remarks about the distinction between Annually Recurrent expenditure and Extraordinary expenditure. If it is a special programme for two or three years then it is an item of extraordinary expenditure.

Mr. de AGUIAR: This will be a special item in my opinion.

The CHAIRMAN: As a matter of degree.

Mr. GREEN: This vote started some years ago as the Public Health Department had been trying to force certain villagers to conform to the requirements of the law. It started in the Courentyne area, the Courentyne River and Berbice Districts. The idea was to employ a Surveyor who would partition and re-allot the building sections of certain estates. At first they were partitioning the whole estate, and then it was decided that was far too expensive. They are now re-partitioning the actual building sections. These partitions have been going on ever since. We did about three estates a year and the Executive Council had been passing these partitions, but they started to run ahead of the work and so I had to ask for some money in order to carry out the programme. That is the reason for the increase I am merely carrying out what the Local Government Board and the Public Health people are asking me to do.

Mr. EDUN: I think I know something about this vote. In the Central Board of Health we agreed recently that all assistance should be given the proprietors in such areas where they could not themselves afford to have the surveys and the lands laid out. I think the Director of Medical Services did suggest that the Lands and Mines Department be asked to do something about it. If there is an increase of the vote, that is the reason for it.

Mr. de AGUIAR: The Central Board of Health Bill was passed in 1934, but no action was taken then. I was a member of the Central Board of Health, and it is as a result of my knowledge that I ask that this work be carried out here. It seems that some extraordinary work crept in. I want to be sure that it is not so.

Mr. E. A. LUCKHOO: I think the Bloomfield area was responsible for the inception of the vote. It was thought that the houses were too near. I think they will be confronted with a great deal of difficulty in the solution of that matter. In some blocks the houses are 11 feet apart and the lots are mixed up. I do not know how the partition is going to straighten that out. You may define the area but there will be great difficulty in rejecting the people from land which they have occupied for years.

The CHAIRMAN: The point is whether the item should be divided into two. You say it has been voted for some years and so may remain as current expenditure.

Mr. GREEN: It seems that we are going to have it for some time to come. We are always getting requests for partitioning.

The CHAIRMAN: They seem to be continuing?

Mr. GREEN: I am not the Officer concerned with the policy; I am only carrying out the surveys.

The CHAIRMAN: Better leave it there for the moment.

Mr. deAGUIAR: I am going to ask that the original papers be turned up and let us know how we stand. My recollection is perfectly clear. Some programme was put up. I think the Public Health Board will be able to say how long it will be carried out,

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest we pass the item and leave the adjustment for later.

Mr. deAGUIAR: I agree.

Head passed as amended.

The CHAIRMAN: I would just like to mention about the question of amalgamation of Departments—I see the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member and the hon. Member for Western Essequibo are not here today—one of the objects is precisely to get the Departments working with the most possible co-operation. My opinion is that much of the administration of this Colony should be decentralised and not be so departmentalised. This experiment in Essequibo is precisely with that in view.

#### GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Item 1(f)—Geologist (\$2,400 by \$120 to \$2,760), \$2,460.

Mr. deAGUIAR: I think this item came under this Department's vote because in 1940—

The CHAIRMAN: I can explain that. When I came here we had three Geologists and this Council decided to throw up the Colonial Development grant. I thought it was premature and we lost the Geologists. I put up an application to the Comptroller for Colonial Development and Welfare which was accepted on the basis that we pay for two Geologists and Development and Welfare pay for one. We have not been able to get either this one or the one from the Fund. We are still left with this one officer to get.

Mr. deAGUIAR: These posts have been put on the Estimates.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We have got one, but we have no one willing to do examination for minerals,



The CHAIRMAN: The hope is to have geological surveys financed from Colonial Research projects. About the question of getting Geologists it is going to be exceedingly difficult now with the rates of pay prevailing, and it brings us to the question of the whole salary scales of technical officers being at present very high.

#### LAW OFFICERS.

*Item 1(b)—Solicitor-General, \$5,040*

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move the deletion of this item as provision is made on the Civil List for the post of Solicitor-General, and that it be placed in the Civil List column.

Question put and agreed to.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move the insertion under Local Government of \$7,410 deleted from the Lands and Mines Department's estimates and the further sum of \$850 deleted from the Medical Department's vote. The amendments necessitated are:—

- (a) Sub-head 1, item (21) Crews and Boat-hands—to read:—  
 3 Captains at \$480 by \$30 to \$600.  
 2 Engineers at \$360 by \$24 to \$480.  
 24 Boathands at \$240 by \$24 to \$360.  
 1 Lorry Driver at \$360 by \$24 to 480.  
 Temporary Boathands

and the amount increased from \$9,240 to \$11,640;

- (b) Sub-head 1, item (31)—Temporary War Bonus—increased from \$15,400 to \$15,950;
- (c) Sub-head 2,—Transport and Travelling—item (b) Subsistence Allowances increased by \$1,500 and the total carried out at \$25,900;
- (d) Sub-head 5—to read "Ration Allowances for Boats' Crews, Rupununi and North-West District" and be increased from \$650 to \$1,010;

(e) Sub-head 6—Uniforms for Crews and Messengers—increased by \$250 to \$1,460;

(f) Sub-head 10—Land and Water Transport—increased by \$3,200 to \$7,000.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed.

Mr. FERREIRA: I notice in going through the estimates that no mention is made of a launch for the Berbice River area.

The CHAIRMAN: We have put one in for the Agricultural Instructor.

Mr. FERREIRA: That is a tent-boat to be stationed in the Berbice River. This matter was brought up before and, I think, it was agreed by the Commissioner of Local Government that such a boat was necessary, because we find in New Amsterdam the Commissioner has no means of travelling up the Berbice River and visiting the Districts. I do not see how the Local Government can be held responsible for the District unless that Officer can visit his district. That applies also to every Government Department's Head. The Police have no means of getting about; if they want to carry out Police duties they have to hire a launch from a private source. There is no Police launch, and as soon as they go to hire a private launch it is known. If anything like a surprise raid is intended the effect is lost. The Lands and Mines Department has no suitable launch but an outboard engine boat.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Finance Committee has already agreed to spend \$6,000 on this launch and it will have to be revoted in 1945. I do not know whether it appears among the items for expenditure this year.

Mr. FERREIRA: It should be inserted in these estimates.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: If it has been approved, as it has been in Finance Committee, it would be put

on the supplementary estimates for this year. Maybe the money has been spent, but if it is not it would be revoted. If it remains on this year's supplementary estimates we may have a chance of spending it afterwards.

Mr. FERREIRA: I am thoroughly satisfied with the explanation.

Mr. deAGUIAR: I think I would like to preface my remarks by saying I am very unhappy about this. I have been endeavouring to see if I can make myself happy by making an investigation from the information available here, but I regret to say there have been so many changes that I find it extremely difficult to follow the Estimates at all. I hope the Council will bear with me for a few moments while I try to make an analysis. In 1943, from the printed Estimates here, the total voted was \$225,000 and included in that expenditure was a special grant of \$62,000, which is a very handsome figure and \$4,000 under a special grant which no longer appears. If we were to deduct those two items alone we would find it represents a very large sum. On the other side I have found that from 1944 to 1945 there is a financial increase in the Clerical Establishment of something in the vicinity of \$10,000. I have found it difficult to follow how it is that in 1943 the total was \$225,000 while those items I have named were extraordinary expenditure which no longer appears, and yet in the addition the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has moved in the actual figure will practically go back to where it was in 1943. I am forced to the conclusion without careful analysis of the Head, that between 1943 and 1945 the vote under this department has increased by over \$70,000. I may be wrong in my judgment. I think it would be found extremely difficult to explain the reasons for it even although certain deductions made in other Departments, such as those named by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, are

added to this one. I must admit I am unable on the statement before us to advance any reason for it.

We agreed it is true, to reinstitute the post of Secretary of the Local Government Board, but while we did that on the one hand we still find that the Clerical Establishment is going up. Under that Head alone there is \$10,348 —\$1,800 for the Secretary, \$720 for Temporary Clerical Assistance, etc. I really do not know where we are going with this particular Department. To my mind we are either giving it too much to do or it is getting top-heavy, and I am afraid one of these days we are going to find ourselves in a very chaotic condition. It has a very valuable Officer at its head and I give him credit for the work he does, but it seems that unless we are very careful and I have no doubt the estimates under this head are going to reach one of these days the alarming figure of half a million dollars (\$500,000). I do not see how we are going to afford it. The expenditure is growing and it is growing at such an alarming rate that I am afraid soon we will not be able to afford the Department. I would not like to see District Administration go down in this country as it is doing a good service and we have to be careful. New items are creeping in while other items are being increased and the estimate keeps going up all the time. If you take the figures, for this year, the expenditure is \$176,000 and for next year it will be \$221,000, —a matter of about \$50,000 increase. I do not know where we are going with this vote.

Mr. EDUN: It is near the time for the adjournment. I do not think the Council should continue.

The CHAIRMAN: We have two minutes more.

Mr. EDUN: I will not finish what I have to say in two minutes. What I want to bring to the attention of this Council is that a Senior Officer of

the Department is designated "Land Settlement Officer," and I am asking Government seriously to tell this Council what is going to be done in the case of those "dam" settlements like Whittaker Dam on the Corentyne, New Dam at Canje, Rampoor on the West Bank Berbice River, Hague Backdam on the West Coast Demerara. These settlements have sprung up without any idea of planning, and somehow you have inhabitants of this country living there for all these years. Take Whittaker Dam, the people have been living there nearly 20 years or more without any idea of planning.

At this stage the Council resumed and adjourned until 8.30 p.m.

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#### NIGHT SESSION.

8.30 p.m.—

The Council resumed and resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1945 under "Local Government."

Mr. EDUN (resuming): I was speaking this afternoon on the settlements which I purposely referred to as "dam" settlements. Before I proceed I would like Your Excellency to take this note. I have been attending these sessions very regularly, both afternoon and evening sessions. I do not do so because I get any kick out of it, but because I feel it is my duty to be here to watch the policy adumbrated by the various Departments. If I could not be here to-night and I took up a newspaper to-morrow morning to read of what took place I would see absolutely nothing. There is no record of the proceedings of the previous night. So I go out of my way to travel across the river to attend these meetings. I am prepared to co-operate with Government 100 per cent., and with the most essential unit—the sugar producers.

This Colony is divided into Municipalities, villages, country and rural districts, sugar estates, and settlements. The Local Government Department concerns itself with village, country and rural districts but not, I think, with sugar estates or settlements. I think there is some little surveillance of sugar estates, and a little more perhaps of the settlements. I am asking Government to consider fully whether it is prepared to continue to allow settlements to be created here, there and everywhere, or whether it is prepared to remove the people from those settlements in order to give them at least some degree of the amenities of civilization. This Department, is responsible for those settlements and ought to be responsible for them. Let me give some idea of the Whittaker dam on the Corentyne, and the Hague settlement. As I have said in the past there was no planning at all.

The CHAIRMAN: What do you mean by the Whittaker dam?

Mr. EDUN: The one you visited some years ago. Although Your Excellency has given us some idea of Government's policy regarding land settlement, nothing practical has been done except talking, and we shall continue talking and doing nothing practical. That is not good enough. Perhaps Your Excellency has seen a tendency on the part of the inhabitants of this country to co-operate with Government in order to create proper settlements, proper residential areas with an economic background. I should particularly refer you to that cheque for \$5,000 sent you by the Indian Welfare League as direct evidence of what the people of this country intend to do when it comes to practical steps so far as land settlement is concerned. Since then nothing has been done. Ask yourself, sir, whether I, as a leader of those people, would be content with promises? How long shall this go on? Put yourself in my place and ask "How

can I satisfy those people?" We have given you money and we want to see what you can do as regards land settlement.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that you put yourself in my position.

Mr. EDUN: Very well, sir. I received this telegram this morning:—  
"Please arrange deputation to meet Governor urgently over proposed Land Settlement project. Harry Armoogan (President)."

That is the man who sent you that cheque.

The CHAIRMAN: All right, I shall see him.

Mr. EDUN: He states further:—

"The League is asking for all available land at No. 66 in the meantime. This estate is undeveloped and unoccupied. It is situated on the upper Corentyne and is ideal for acquisition, as it would not entail any arrangement for purchase with a private owner. The League would be willing to purchase outright or acquire on a lease, and to establish a settlement thereon by its own initiative."

The CHAIRMAN: If that is practical we will pursue it. They suggest No. 66 instead of Bush Lot.

Mr. EDUN: I plead with Your Excellency to explore the position and see whether something cannot be done for the League which has offered you its co-operation. I think I shall leave that entirely in your hands because, knowing your ideas of development and progress, I have no fear so long as you are at the head of affairs, but you cannot get everybody to do what you want, and I fear the other cogs in the wheel. That is why, if I go back to the Local Government Board, I shall criticize as fiercely as I can the attitude adopted within that Department in order to frustrate — I do not say deliberately, but maybe an attitude of *laissez-faire* on the part of certain officers — my personal contact with the Head of that Department. In the past it was one of fruition and

pleasant reminiscences when he was Head of the Labour Department, a man in whom everybody in this country has confidence. I do not think he gets team work in his Department. I am sure that if he gets about himself and sees to it that things are done as he wishes we shall make more progress in our endeavour to lift up.

We do not want settlements any longer; we want village and country districts—proper civilized communities. I listened myself to the Head of the Department when he pleaded for money to help the Hague settlers. I do not think anybody else could have pleaded more strongly. Words and words, and mere words are not enough in this age. We want more action, as by action man is judged. I am not going to attack any item on the expenditure at all, because I have complained in my own way. I am going to give Government all the money and all the co-operation in 1945, and after co-operation there will be non-co-operation. I shall lead a movement of non-co-operation in order to allow my country to get ahead. In 1945, maybe after the war—

Mr. FERREIRA: There are Defence Regulations.

Mr. EDUN: I am not concerned with that. Coming back to the question of village districts a very unsavoury incident took place quite recently. I am going to show how this *laissez-faire* functions. When the Department raised the taxes on the house lots on the Windsor Forest estates by 300 per cent. another hon. Member of this Council, myself and another gentleman went to Hague where we met the District Commissioner and overseer of the estates. We said "We want to co-operate with you. Let us have the comparative figures for three years in order to see how your estates are being worked, so that we might advise the people what to do." Would you believe, sir, that that request was never answered at all, although I

repeated it several times? I had to come to this Council and ask for those figures before I got them. Eventually, in a spirit of frustration, between 300 and 400 people from Windsor Forest came to Georgetown to see Your Excellency, because the District Commissioner did not do his duty.

Some people, perhaps the Head of the Department, will want to justify his subordinate by saying that some mischievous fellow was behind that story, or that I was that mischievous man, but if I had led you would have had 5,000 people. How were those people treated? Although they came to the Head of the Administration, to the foot of the Throne as a last resort, they were refused a hearing. Ceremonials and formalities were demanded from those people who were seeking to carry out the economic life of British Guiana, and the police were called in. I want to warn this Government that if there is any shooting in this country I shall endeavour to arraign someone before a tribunal for murder, whoever he may be. I am prepared to do that. Nothing happened; but something might have happened. We do not want that sort of thing. It was simply because a District Commissioner could not do his job. That is why I am against these Commissionerships, these petty dictators all over the Colony. If we had a dictator like yourself, sir, by all means—

Mr. FERREIRA: I am not aware of the fact that you are a dictator, sir, I considered you a democrat.

The CHAIRMAN: If I were allowed to abolish this Council we might get on. What about that?

Mr. EDUN: My friend did not listen to what I said. I said if we had a dictator like you (laughter). — the English language is a funny thing.

Mr. FERREIRA: I agree. (laughter).

Mr. EDUN: I feel strongly about this matter because, from my infancy I was allowed to believe that the last resort for the average man in a British democracy was to go to the foot of the Throne and be heard. I have said what I wished to say and I want to appeal to the Head of the Department in the interest of those people at Windsor Forest; not to adopt the attitude of a dictator against people who want to be governed. I have advised those people that there ought to be a Local Authority at Windsor Forest, La Jalousie, and Hague, but the fly in the ointment was that they had legal obligations — they had a leasehold for 99 years. I would like to give an instance. There was a Local Authority at North Pouteroyen, but simply because one man, an ordinary citizen and an ex-Magistrate, did not want a Local Authority there he said: "This is my property. These trenches and dams are mine. How dare you create a Local Authority in my absence?" The result was that the Local Government Board, with all its machinery, collapsed like a house of cards.

If Your Excellency happens to be riding through Pouteroyen you will see the mess on the public road. Hibiscus has been planted all over the road, but not one of the P. W. D., officers has dared to say that it is creating a nuisance on the public road. That sort of thing ought not to happen in this British country. I want to see an order from the Public Works Department to cut down all that Hibiscus on the road at Pouteroyen. As a member of the Central Board of Health I know that there are hundreds of applications for land to build houses. We have heard of wonderful schemes of housing and so forth. I know that those things will take time, but here we have practical things to do. We do not get any assistance from the Local Government Board, and that is why, when the Board asked that a certain item be increased, I mentioned that we wanted more money in

order to help the small proprietors to lay out land for the purpose of building houses and living under civilized conditions.

Dr. SINGH: I would like to clarify the point about the demonstration that came to Georgetown about 400 strong. I consider that it was inopportune, and that they were badly advised by some people who coerced them to come to Georgetown. When the question of the rates and the status of the district arose some of the people of Windsor Forest came to me and I advised them to call a meeting of the ratepayers. That was done, and I went to Windsor Forest and met 700 persons who put their case before me. I advised them that the best thing to do was to pay their rates and then they could go into the question. I then asked two or three persons to go along with me to interview the Commissioner of Local Government, and they did so. They were quite satisfied that if they paid their rates the matter would be reconsidered. A few days after I sent them a telegram to the effect that they must pay their rates and the question of the status of the district would be reconsidered. Everything went well. I communicated with the Commissioner of West Demerara who told me that they were paying up quite well. In the meantime the people were coerced and were instigated by some person to come to Georgetown and make a demonstration. They came for me and I told them that they could very well get what they wanted without all that fuss, and without having to pay \$1 per head to come to Georgetown. I do not want to divulge anything, except to say that they were instigated by some person who ought to have known better. After all those people need advice, and they should have been given better advice. (applause).

Mr. EDUN: That is so far as the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) is concerned. Maybe he will say who that person was. Perhaps he would not like to call his name, but

anyhow I do not wish to tackle the matter. It is a very delicate matter. I have said it openly that if I had to bring a demonstration I would not have brought 400 persons. When the grievance of the people was put before the officer it was his duty to attend to it and get it out of the way. The hon. Member who has just spoken ought to have sensed that something wrong was going on at Windsor Forest, and it was his duty to do the right thing. In any case I am not here to say that, except to say that I have told this and other Departments that when a complaint is made to an officer he should for Heaven's sake get it out of the way.

Frankly speaking, I have already said that the sooner this District Commissionership is obliterated from this country the better it would be for everybody. If we are aiming at self-government through the development of Municipalities, Village and Country Districts, sugar estates and trade union authorities, what is the need for District Commissioners — to be listening like spies and carrying tales to Government? I say "No" This District Administration Scheme was introduced by a Governor who came from Africa. It is a long story. I cannot take up very much more time because I intend to leave as soon as I am finished I have to go to Berbice to-morrow and I wish a bit of rest. I thank Your Excellency for giving me an opportunity to deal with certain things which have happened in this Colony, and which might have led to very disastrous situations. In any case I want to plead with Your Excellency with regard to No. 66. I know that you did not have time to see into it. I will tell the people to wait until after this session of the Council. They will accept such an assurance from you.

Mr. LEE: I would have liked to tell the hon. Member who has just left the Council, to read the law and learn something before he attempts to make such comments on the Windsor Forest

dispute. He advises this Council to adopt democratic principles, and when Government adopts that principle by teaching people to govern themselves first in Country Districts, then in Village Districts and afterwards in County Councils he objects to that. Those people have been paying rates which were below the cost of the maintenance of the district, and he says they must continue to do so and the general revenue or other revenue from the estate should pay for their upkeep. He calls that democratic principles. I would like him to look at the law and see whether Government can interfere with privately owned property as he suggested with regard to Pouderoyen. He referred to the dams and trenches belonging to a certain proprietor at Pouderoyen. That proprietor has the right to control his property, but the hon. Member wants Government to cut down the fence on the proprietor's land. Does he want to involve Government in an action for damages? I certainly would not ask Government to do such a thing, and I feel sure that the Law Officers would not give any such advice to the Government.

The salaries of the District Commissioners are far above those of other Executive Officers like Magistrates and Police Superintendents in the Districts and at some time or other these qualified specialised officers are going to complain against being paid less than the District Commissioners who are not qualified persons and are not specialists in such administrative work. As hon. Members know, many of them at the present moment are doing good work, but there are many who do not know the people and the districts and yet will be drawing the salaries that are being budgeted for. I do not know whether those officers will protest, but I certainly do not think it is equitable that these District Commissioners should draw salaries above those of other officers who are responsible for the observance of law and order in the districts and also the health of the people there. I leave that for Government's consideration and I

would ask Your Excellency to look into it. I do not know what prompted Government to raise the salaries of the District Commissioners to such a figure, but what concerns me most is that I would like Government to make a declaration in respect of the Land Settlement Scheme that has been passed by this Council. When will it come into operation?

The CHAIRMAN: I have already made it in Council.

Mr. LEE: I was not here. I am sorry if you have already done so.

The CHAIRMAN: I spoke at some length.

Mr. LEE: In respect of the Land Settlement Scheme?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. LEE: I was not here in Council at the time, and I ask you to forgive me. What I do like to know is when the scheme will be put into operation, as in going through the several districts many settlers, good agricultural families, are asking when the settlement is going to start. They are willing to occupy the land under Government control. In respect of my constituency I would like to plead with Government that the tenants on the rice estates in both islands of Leguan and Wakenaam would like Government to convert those rice estates into land settlements in order that they can secure heir holdings, be sure of their tenancy and live a happy life. Sooner or later this Government will be faced with that problem, because when the housing scheme is put into operation it will be found that the house will have to be built along the roads that run through the Islands some parts of which will be on private property. Your Excellency knows these two Islands as you have travelled over them. If provision is not made in the legislation to be passed for Government, if it is deemed fit, to purchase those private lands for the settlers, I feel sure Gov-

ernment will be disappointed at having accepted the principle of land settlement. Your Excellency knows that since the introduction of the Defence Regulations the tenants on those Islands have earned the respect of Government and they desire to further that respect by purchasing their holdings. I have been advising them to save as much money as they can from the rice they reap, and they are trying in that direction. Your Excellency can see that from the deposits in the Savings Banks of those islands. They are carrying out that advice because they sincerely hope Government will at some future time take over those estates and whether by long term tenancy or otherwise they will be able to purchase and develop that portion of land which will be given them. Your Excellency and Government are aware that some of the tenants cannot at the present moment prepare the lands and keep them in a proper condition because they feel dis-possession of their holdings.

Turning to another question, I would like the Local Government Department to try and advise those people who are living in Country Districts that they should convert their districts into Village Districts. There is a mistaken idea by the people living in Country Districts that if they allow the conversion of a Local Authority into a Village Council their taxes will be increased and their houses will be taxed. That controversy is going on at the present moment in some of those Districts. I feel, sir, it is the duty of this Government to educate the people to the fact that it will be better for them to have Village Districts whereby they will be able to elect their representatives on the Council and so control the administration themselves rather than throw the burden on Government to nominate persons to sit on the Local Authority and conduct their administrative affairs. I can assure you that there are many Local Authorities which hold their meetings without the knowledge of the villagers or people living in those districts, and so those

villagers cannot take an interest in the affairs of their districts. Unless the Local Government Department through its officers try and advertise when meetings of the Local Authorities are to be held by bell-ringers or otherwise the people will remain backward and make no advancement in regard to local administration and local government and, I feel, that we are to a certain extent to be blamed in that many of us who hold such positions by nomination will not consent to the conversion for fear that in the event of there being elections they will not secure election to seats on the Councils. Therefore, they advise Government to continue with Local Authorities rather than convert them into Village Councils. I admit that Government has to take the advice of the men whom it thinks can best advise it, but I would like to warn Government that many of them are not giving the best advice because of self-interest.

I would like also to point out that if Local Government is to succeed, and I hope it will succeed, in the agricultural policy as adopted by that Department, it will have to do some spadework along with the Agricultural Instructors or Agricultural Superintendents of the various districts, because many of the people in the districts are not cognizant of the agricultural policy of Government and it can only be carried throughout the villages by the Local Authorities in collaboration with the Agricultural Instructors or Agricultural Superintendents. I know it is working somewhat successfully on the Esse-qui-bo Coast where meetings held by the Local Authorities are attended by the District Commissioner and the Agricultural Instructor and the people are taking a more lively interest in their affairs and know exactly what is the policy of Government. I would advocate and I sincerely hope Government will carry that policy throughout the country whether there be Local Authorities or Village Councils, so that the people will know their rights. In the Grow More Food campaign many of the



people did not know that if they approached the District Administration and expressed a desire to carry out Government's agricultural policy they would get help from Government or the Grow More Food Campaign. Up to now some of them do not know that. It is only because I urged that there should be a public meeting that one was held in my constituency when the people turned out and listened to what was being advocated. I advised Government that in all the Districts the Grow More Food Campaign should hold public meetings so that the people could see and know who is asking for help, who is getting help and for what purpose.

Mr. FERREIRA: To a point of correction! That exists throughout Berbice. I did not know it does not exist in Demerara and Essequibo. We have the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice present and he can assure this Council that at meetings of the Grow More Good Campaign held in New Amsterdam and on the Corentyne the public attend and know all that is happening. If such a state of affairs exists as the hon. Member states, it does not exist in New Amsterdam or on the Corentyne Coast.

Mr. LEE: I am glad to hear that because when I was last there about eighteen months ago I found that the meeting was a hole-and-corner affair. They held a meeting in the Whim Court-room and there were very few people present; when I asked whether it was a public meeting they said "No, only some of the members attended, talked a little and went away.

Mr. FERREIRA: I must object to that unless the hon. Member can produce proof.

Mr. LEE: Your Excellency, I am saying what I know as a fact. Whether the hon. Member for the Corentyne Districts can verify that or not, I cannot say but I am positive that about eighteen months ago the meetings of the

Grow More Food Campaign held on the Corentyne Coast were not open to the public. At the present moment the Grow More Food Campaign has not had a public meeting in my constituency and I have complained about it, but they say it must be a private meeting. I am stating what I know and what is the experience I have gained which can make this Government a successful administration during your regime. Money is being spent for a particular purpose, the Advisory Committee of the Agricultural Department accepts that and I want it to be carried to the people.

The CHAIRMAN: I know all about it, but some of your colleagues in Leguan and Wakenaam think differently from you. Do not speak as if you are speaking for everybody. There are other people with views adverse to yours. I am very interested in your views in trying to see how the project can be made successful.

Mr. LEE: I am glad that Government is interested in my views, because I can prove what I say. If you look up the records of the economic provision returns from the islands of Leguan and Wakenaam where the meetings were public, you will see that what I am advocating, although in the minority, is best for this Government in carrying through its agricultural policy. I am not saying that I am infallible. I am saying that from my experience, whether my colleagues agree with me or not though I respect their opinion, my opinion is the best for this Government. I will give another instance. My friend, the hon. Member for Berbice River says these meetings are held publicly. Can he tell this Council how many people on the West Bank Berbice have been granted money for the purpose of carrying this Grow More Food Campaign to a successful issue?

Mr. FERREIRA: To a point of explanation! I may mention that I am not a member of the West Bank Berbice Grow More Food Committee. The

member of that Committee who is present can answer that. I can say, however, that at Ithaca money has been granted for developing certain lands for agriculture and a grant has been given to the Ithaca School for pig-rearing and for an apiary. Those are two instances I know although I am not a member of the West Bank Berbice Grow More Food Committee.

Mr. LEE: The policy I am asking Government to adopt is the correct one. A few people have adopted it and made it successful. Was your meeting public?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it is relevant. We are dealing with Local Government Department's estimates. I suppose you can commend it to your Food Production Committee.

Mr. LEE: I am trying to point out to Government that if it accepts the policy of teaching these people through their Local Authorities which is Local Government it will be carrying the propaganda of the Grow More Food Campaign into the Village Councils and Country Local Authorities, and the campaign will be more successful than it is at the present moment. That is what I would like to point out. I sincerely hope that principle will be accepted by this Government that the public should be told especially through the District Administration and through the District Agricultural Superintendents and Instructors of Government's policy.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: For the information of the hon. Member I may point out that the District Committee of this Grow More Food Campaign is comprised of members of the village community. What more propaganda or advertisement can there be than the actual help given to each village where money has been spent and actual benefit has been derived by the people themselves? Would he say that by keeping public meetings the people would be more satisfied and would know more

about the Grow More Food Campaign than they would be through the actual help and benefit they obtained from the Committee?

Mr. LEE: I am surprised that hon. Members should contradict the statement that it is not successful. Can they tell this Government how many members of the Committee have been granted help and how many members of the Local Authority of the village have been granted help? Compare the results with those of other districts where it has been carried on and see whether it is more successful or not. I am not saying it has not been carried on in other districts. I know from my own knowledge it has been carried on in other districts and successfully. On comparison it will be found to be the best for the policy of this Government.

With respect to Land Settlement, may I enquire from Government if that will be carried on in conjunction with the Housing Scheme? If that is not so, certain places which have been selected cannot be successfully developed unless the Housing Scheme is carried out together with the Land Settlement scheme. I plead with Government that the Housing Scheme and Land Settlement be made to go hand in hand and I ask that a particular note of that be taken.

Item (1) (3)—3 *Assistant District Commissioners, \$6,414.*

Mr. FERREIRA: With your permission, sir, I desire to refer briefly to item (3) of the sub-head we are now considering. Before doing so, however, I would like to refer to the point raised by the last speaker—the salary of the District Commissioners as compared with that of the Magistrates. I do not think that should come into the picture at all. The status of an Administrative Officer as head of a district should be above that of a Magistrate, but at the same time I would remind the last speaker that when the new salary scale for the Magistrates came in it was

clearly set out that Magistrates would be appointed not at the lowest point in the salary scale but at any point. Therefore, I do not think his argument holds good.

Reverting to item (3) I see there is the note: "Provision for an additional Assistant District Commissioner to be stationed at Springlands." I would like to make a few remarks on this item. I think it was during Your Excellency's absence last year that this matter came before us and fortunately it did not go through as it was felt by certain Members—and I am inclined to agree with them now—that matters of this sort should wait until the Estimates meeting of the Council. We have it before us now. I am glad it has been put on the Estimates by Government and I hope it will receive no opposition because I consider this post of Assistant District Commissioner for Springlands a very deserving one, and I am glad to see that Government appreciates the responsibility of the Officer at that point. The district of this officer—and I mention this for the benefit of those Members who may be inclined to criticize the item—extends from Tarlogie to Crabwood, a distance of 125 miles and covering an area of some 40,000 acres with a population of approximately 20,000. Further, the Officer is responsible as His Majesty's representative on the eastern outpost of the British Empire in South America. (Applause). His counterpart in Nickerie, Dutch Guiana, controls a much smaller and less important area as a full District Commissioner. I do think we should have enough national pride and raise the status of this post.

This Officer is far removed from New Amsterdam and I recall an incident which dates back as far as to 1935 when in those days that Officer, I regret to say, had not even a telephone. A deputation went to that officer and, on his own accord he had to arrive at a decision. I am glad to say that Officer,

who is at present stationed on the East Coast Demerara, was an officer of tact and he was able to so satisfy that crowd which must have numbered, not 400 as I have heard, but possibly 1,000. I would like to think that when we have officers stationed at outposts, whether on the eastern or western or southern side of the Colony, they should be men of distinction, men of tact, men who uphold the dignity of this Colony. I am not in any way decrying anyone's ability. I admire your good judgement in acquiring temporarily, not permanently I hope, a District Commissioner or Assistant District Commissioner who had been playing a valuable part in the affairs of the Corentyne today. It may not be known that the duties of that Officer include not only those of a District Administration Officer but those of a Sub-Comptroller of Customs, Harbour Master, Inspector of Shipping, Deputy Navigation Officer Sub-Protector of Aboriginal Indians and many others too numerous to mention.

I would like this Council to appreciate that that post is a most important one, and when an Officer is being selected for a post like that he should be an officer who can live up to the high traditions of the Service. That district is growing rapidly. We have the Crabwood Creek Rice Expansion Scheme, the Nos. 57—72 Rice Expansion Scheme there and, I think, we should take full cognizance of the matter. At the same time I would like to draw attention to the fact that in New Amsterdam the Assistant District Commissioner is still, as far as I am aware, holding an acting appointment and I feel that Officer should be confirmed. I further feel that New Amsterdam should have a permanent Assistant District Commissioner as well as Springlands, and I say that for this reason:

The District Commissioner is in charge of the West Coast of Berbice, the Corentyne, and the Canje district. It is not a small area, and when that

officer is away the public should be able to get a decision from someone who holds a responsible position, and not be told to wait until the Commissioner returns. The Assistant District Commissioner in New Amsterdam has to run the office when the Commissioner is away. He is clerk to the Licensing Board and in charge of prosecutions under the Spirits Ordinance, and Chairman of the Poor Law Board. He has to make Poor Law payments and to inspect and be responsible for the Local Authorities. He is also on the Board of Surveys, and supervises gasolene control, makes payments to discharged prisoners, and is Chairman of the Old Age Pensions Board. The suggestion was made earlier today that we are wasting time. I hope the speaker did not include me.

I would like to bring it home to the Council that in New Amsterdam there should be a full Assistant District Commissioner, and that the office on the Corentyne should also be strengthened. Members should acquaint themselves with the importance of Berbice today. They should be aware that Berbice produces a considerable amount of the total production of sugar and rice, the two staple exports of the Colony. It is an important and growing area, and I have no doubt that when the schemes for irrigation and drainage come into being that district will grow more and more. I think it is on record, and Your Excellency has yourself mentioned it, that throughout the Colony the largest increase of population is on the Corentyne. I think, therefore, that every effort should be made to administer that district properly and thoroughly.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I did not intend to speak on the item, but the hon. Member has so well championed the case for an Assistant District Commissioner for Springlands that I thought I should rise immediately after him to oppose such an appointment. He has indeed armed himself with a long list of the duties

of the District Commissioner in Berbice—the duties of almost all the District Commissioners in the Colony. They are not new duties created for the District Commissioner of Berbice. The duties the present Commissioner is performing were those performed by Commissioners before him. I quite agree that the District Commissioner in Berbice should have an Assistant in New Amsterdam. According to the argument of the hon. Member the District Commissioner of New Amsterdam should have an Assistant at Springlands and one in New Amsterdam, and of course the same argument would be applicable that one should be stationed in Western Berbice. I would not attempt to ask that an Assistant District Commissioner be appointed to Western Berbice. I take it that if the District Commissioner in Berbice is given one Assistant it would be sufficient for him to run the district and run it well, but if he has an Assistant District Commissioner scattered all over the County of Berbice the District Commissioner himself would be isolated. He would be far removed from conditions throughout the County, and I would like the District Commissioner to be fully informed of everything within his district.

Today I venture to say that so far as District Administration in Berbice is concerned the position is far from being a happy one. I would not like to say very much on that point, because Your Excellency has been in Berbice for over a week and I think you are the best judge of whether that district is being well served so far as District Administration is concerned. I have lived in the district and happen to know how the administration is being carried on in the County as a whole, and I feel certain that your keen observation will not fail to make an impression on you as to the manner in which the administration is being carried on in that County.

I intend when we reach the items to move the deletion of one Senior

District Commissioner. We have three Senior District Commissioners on the present estimate, while all these years there were just two. For what reason it is proposed to increase the number by one, I do not know.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I remind the hon. Member that the additional post was added this year by resolution of this Council. It did not appear on the Estimates last year.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Maybe a resolution was carried by this Council, but I do not remember it. Perhaps I did not attend that meeting, but I still exercise my privilege as a Member of this Council to oppose the addition of another Senior District Commissioner. We had two Senior District Commissioners and I doubt whether those two posts were filled during the period they were in existence. I think they remained vacant for some time. Recently one Senior Commissioner was seconded for service as a Land Officer, and immediately that was done a junior Commissioner was promoted. It was the only time for a long period that the two senior posts were filled. If the necessity did not arise all these years to have the two senior posts filled during the entire period I cannot see the necessity now for an additional Senior District Commissioner.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I think there is some mistake about the matter. A senior was substituted for a junior Commissioner. It is really not an additional officer.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: It is an additional post. I think the hon. Member will agree that it is an additional post on the senior grade.

The CHAIRMAN: Balanced by a reduction in the other grade. The total remains the same.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I admit that the total remains the same, but I feel certain that Government will be

put to a hard task to justify the increase in the upper grade. I do not know whether the idea is that the higher salary will make the officer. It is on that ground I am opposing the additional post in the senior grade. So far as the District Commissioners are concerned I do not think Government has cause to be happy. The District Administration Department was created against a great deal of opposition, and if I remember correctly one of the grounds of the opposition was that it would be difficult to find the right type of officers to fill such posts. We hoped at the beginning to be able to find a few officers who were capable of filling those posts. One is actually with us today and has been placed at the head of the Department. He is a very capable officer and it is perhaps a misfortune for Government that the Department has lost one or two of its valuable officers, and is not in a position to replace them, I do not know for what period of time. If I remember correctly that was one of the subjects I discussed with Your Excellency during the second week of your arrival in this Colony—the difficulty to find officers to fill these posts. Government is in the same position today, but it is not difficult to raise the status of these officers by increasing their salaries. Not only has the grade been increased by one but the salary has been increased by £100, and at this stage may I enquire whether these officers will be entitled to free quarters, or with their increased emoluments they will pay rent for their houses?

I observe from the report of the Committee which dealt with the salaries of senior professional and technical officers, that the majority of the Committee recommend certain scales of salaries for officers of the District Administration, with free quarters, and the new salary scales are on the estimates before us today. I therefore would like to know whether the recommendation with respect to quarters has also been accepted by Government. I hope

that in view of the increased emoluments these officers will not be allowed the privilege of free quarters. Like all other officers who have been given increased emoluments, they should pay rent for the quarters they occupy. At present I say that as one of the two senior posts was only filled a couple of months ago, I see no justification for increasing the senior grade of District Commissioners.

The CHAIRMAN: I will now call upon the Commissioner of Local Government to reply to some of the points raised.

Mr. M. B. LAING (Commissioner of Local Government): The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) who, unfortunately, is not here this evening, raised a point in regard to the increased expenditure under the head of Local Government. He particularly made reference to the increase of \$11,340 under item 1 (5)—Clerical Establishment. It is quite obvious that there has been an increase in expenditure under this head for 1945, but I think my hon. friend was unnecessarily perturbed, for the reason that the increase of \$11,000 on the Clerical Establishment is due almost entirely to the revised salary scales of which this Council has already approved. If Members would refer to Appendix K they would find that there has been an increase of five in the clerical staff of the Department. That is not unusual, for the reason that the duties of the Department have been increased, and three of the five additional clerks are now employed in the Welfare branch of Local Government. The increase, of course, was inevitable if the duties of the Department are to be extended. Of the two other clerks added to the Department, one had to be added in order to cope with the increased rum production, particularly at the distillery at Blairmont, on which, of course, Government collects Excise tax, while the other appointment was made in order to cope with the

increased clerical work in the Department. Members will also note that included in the sum of \$11,340 is a sum of \$3,512 which appeared previously below the line, and which has now been placed above the line as a result of the officers concerned becoming pensionable officers.

The other increase is under the heading "Miscellaneous Services", item 16—Charges on Colony lands—in respect of which there has been an increase of \$11,435. That increase is more apparent than real, for the reason that on the West Coast estates we have, during the last three years, carried out a re-conditioning programme which has cost \$50,000, and therefore our maintenance charges for those years have been considerably reduced. We are replacing this year the normal maintenance charges required to maintain the estates in proper order.

The hon. the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) referred principally in his remarks to land settlement. I find myself entirely in agreement with him except on the point—that while he would seem to be prepared to rush in and establish land settlements here and there I would prefer to see lands gradually selected and properly drained and irrigated before persons are invited to settle upon them. Evidence is not lacking in this country where land settlement schemes have failed because the lands were not drained and irrigated. In those cases they never had a chance of success, and I do not think we should repeat what happened in the past. Your Excellency has made a complete statement in regard to Government's policy on land settlement.

The hon. Member also referred to the question of rates at Windsor Forest, Hague and La Jalousie on the West Coast. He also advocated that there should be a greater number of Country and Village Districts. I entirely agree with him

that there should be more Country and Village Districts, but if he agrees with that he must also agree that where there is freehold property in villages that property should be maintained by the people and not by the taxpayers of British Guiana. That is where we differ in regard to rates at Windsor Forest, Hague, and La Jalousie. For instance, in 1942 we collected \$518 in rates and expended \$1,472. In 1944 we collected \$320 and expended \$1,208. There can be no reason in my mind why the difference in those figures should be met by the general taxpayers of the Colony. Undoubtedly it should be met by the people who benefit, and who have freehold title for the lands. There can be no difference whatsoever to my mind between persons owning freehold property at Windsor Forest and those in the neighbouring village of Den Amstel where, as is proper, the freehold property is maintained out of the village rates. However, the matter has been amicably adjusted, and the rates, or the greater portion of them, have been paid, and I think that everything in those areas will go smoothly. There is no evidence whatsoever of forcing upon those people something that they did not want in the way of administration. I would like to add that the question of the payment of rates is a matter which they themselves agreed upon when they became owners of those lands, and that as a result of their declining to pay and maintain their own property steps had to be taken to appoint a Local Authority which would be able to levy and collect those rates.

The hon. Member's reference to land settlement included a proposal that we should investigate the laying out of No. 66, which is Colony property on the Corentyne, for land settlement. He said, and I quote his own words, that No. 66 is unoccupied. I do not know what the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) will have to say about that. My recollection

is that No. 66 is occupied. The first depth, I think, is leased by a gentleman named Ramnaraine, and the second depth is part of the 75—57 rice expansion polder.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) also referred to land settlement, and mentioned that he would prefer to see a larger number of Village Districts than Country Districts. I am entirely in agreement with him. We have tried by all possible means to get persons residing in Country Districts to apply for Village status for their districts. I have tried, the Local Government Board has tried, and the Village Chairmen's Conference has helped, and by circular we asked the Country Authorities if they would like to be converted into Village Councils. I must say, with regret, that all the replies were disappointing, but I have not given up hope that we may still see a greater increase in the number of Village Districts.

The hon. Member also mentioned that in some Local Authorities no notice was given of their meetings. The meetings of Local Authorities in rural areas are, of course, public, unless the Chairman wishes to hold them *in camera*, and if the hon. Member would let me know the names of the Local Authorities which do not hold their meetings in public I will take early steps to put that right.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Ferreira) for his support of the application to this Council for an additional Assistant District Commissioner to be stationed at Springlands. I certainly do not consider and have never considered that the pay of that officer is commensurate with his responsibilities. He has quite a long list of duties, as Members heard when the hon. Member read some of them, and I certainly think that an officer holding such a responsible post should not rank lower than an Assistant District Commissioner. The hon. Member

for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) was opposed to that, but I am not quite clear as to his reasons. because I do feel that any officer placed in the position of the officer at Springlands, with so many duties to perform and having on the opposite side of the Corentyne river a full-fledged Dutch Commissioner, with whom he is in constant contact, should not have a lower rank than that of an Assistant District Commissioner. As the Member for Berbice River pointed out, his opposite number in Dutch Guiana, although in charge of a smaller area, is a full-fledged District Commissioner.

The hon. Member for Western Berbice also referred to the personnel of District Administration and said that he did not think we could find suitable officers to fill these posts. I do not at all agree with him. I am one of those who believe that here in British Guiana we can produce men capable and qualified to hold any of these posts, and I think that our District Commissioners, in whatever districts they are, are fully qualified to carry out their administrative duties. It takes a long time, perhaps, to train a District Commissioner, but I have no reason whatsoever to doubt that British Guiana can produce the men.

The hon. Member also referred to the question of salaries, and asked whether District Commissioners were to receive their quarters rent free. They do at the present time occupy free quarters, but there is a Committee sitting to consider the whole question of quarters—whether they should be paid for or free. Those, sir, are all the questions that have been raised by hon. Members on the estimates of Local Government.

The CHAIRMAN : I propose to begin by taking page 31. I gather from the hon. Member for Western Berbice that he wishes to move the deletion of one of the posts of Senior District Commissioner, presumably in order to make six Juniors. As has been pointed out that was approved by the Legislative Council in a resolution of December last year, actually a year ago, and it would be rather a difficult thing to turn around suddenly and reverse the decision made then. It would also effect very definitely such proposals as I have in mind for the filling of those posts. He also took some exception to the salary. I had actually prepared a note should that question arise, which I shall read:

“In regard to the estimates which we began yesterday I had intended at the end of the proceedings to comment on the point touching the changes in salaries of certain officers which have been put forward by Government to the Secretary of State. The Officer Administering the Government in my absence and the Treasurer had inserted in the new printed estimates the salaries as recommended by Executive Council, that is the practical politics of the matter which should help us a good deal in getting this matter through quickly in the end. But of course it must be understood that pending the Secretary of State's reply, Government and I are not able to make any definite pronouncement as to the actual figures being finally accepted and put into operation. As members know, it is a fixed rule by direction of the Secretary of State that these changes of salary shall not be brought into effect or even, strictly speaking, put before the Legislature until he has notified the Governor of his prior sanction. Nevertheless it is practical politics to have these figures in print, as we are quite certain that changes will be made, and this has been approved in principle by most of us. The point I wish to make is that it is impossible for me to take any firm decision or even to comment usefully on them until I have had the Secretary of State's reply, which might of course raise quite special or even new points.

That makes it impossible for me to do anything but stick to the figure in front of me. Some comparison has been drawn in regard to Springlands and the



neighbouring Colony of Dutch Guiana. As hon. Members know, I have visited Dutch Guiana. I have considerable knowledge of Colonial Administration and I have conversed with the late Governor, Dr. Kielstra, now a Minister in Mexico, who explained to me what happens there. Surinam has a very much smaller area than we have. All its occupied territory, with a very much smaller population—less than one-half—is divided into six districts. In each of those districts there is a District Commissioner, a person of quite superior degree. He is a graduate of a Dutch University and School of Colonial Administration and has had training in the Netherland East Indies. I have had reported to me the spectacle of a Dutch District Commissioner in good uniform and accompanied by a Police Guard come across the Corentyne River and visit the ramshackle British post with paint which has mostly turned black and the Officer in charge a Second Class Clerk. I quite entirely agree with what the hon. Member for Berbice River has said. The Springlands District counted in terms of wealth and population is substantially more important than the district run by the Dutch District Commissioner. I have considerable admiration for the system in Surinam. I only wish we were as good in certain ways, though I am not going to say that I am by any means ashamed of our own. I would be glad to keep up the standard. I have to put the proposal to reduce the number of senior District Commissioners from 3 to 2 and increase the number of Juniors from 5 to 6.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : I am wondering, in view of what Your Excellency has said, whether it would not be more appropriate to defer the item until we make a definite pronouncement on it.

The CHAIRMAN : No appointment can possibly be made until the whole thing is accepted by the Secretary of State or criticized as he may well do.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : In moving the deletion I would add in reply to the Commissioner of Local Government that I do not for one moment doubt that we will not find qualified persons in this Colony to fill these posts but, sir, at the moment I am tempted to ask the question: "What are the qualifications of a District Commissioner?" We have just heard from you, sir, the qualifications of a Dutch District Commissioner. Can we say, sir, that ours are similarly qualified?

The CHAIRMAN : I will answer that in this way. I think we all admit that the chief qualification for a practical useful District Commissioner in this country is knowledge and experience of British Guiana. That our District Commissioners certainly do have.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : But I hope Government in its own mind has fixed the standard of practical experience that a District Commissioner should have before appointing him. Any appointment without fixing the standard, even in Government's own mind, of what should be the qualification of a District Commissioner may ruin a very useful scheme. Though, sir, I may stand alone I still move the deletion of the item.

Question "That the item stand as printed" put, and the committee divided as follows:—

For: — Messrs. Ferreira, Roth, Jackson, Dr. Singh, E. A. Luckhoo, Austin, J. A. Luckhoo, Woolford, The Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—11.

Against:—Messrs. Lee and Bacchus—2.

Item passed.

Mr. LEE: I take it that means we have voted for the increase of one District Commissioner.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. LEE: I want to move formally an amendment that the salaries should be as in the 1944 Estimates—2 at \$3,120 by \$120 to \$3,840 and 6 at \$2,400 by \$120 to \$3,120.

The CHAIRMAN: That has been already put and lost.

Mr. LEE: That is in respect of the number.

The CHAIRMAN: Why put it that the item should go back on 2 District Commissioners and 6 others?

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I intend to move the deletion of 3 District Commissioners at \$3,600 by \$120 to \$4,320.

The CHAIRMAN: I took the opinion of the Council on the item as it stands and 11 voted for it and 2 against, so I must take the item as it stands as having been accepted by the Council. All amendments against that particular item must therefore fall.

Mr. LEE: I agree with you, but I would like it to be recorded that I protest against the item as printed in the Estimates and would like the salaries to be carried out as printed in the 1944 Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: You have done that by your voting. I must accept the vote of 11 to 2 in favour of the item as it stands.

Mr. E. A. LUCKHOO: Under this Head I am going to move the reduction by \$1.00 of item (4) so as to raise a discussion on certain points. There seems to be some misunderstanding in respect of the procedure adopted in taking the vote on this matter. From what I understand from the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus), he is under the impression that his amendment related to item (3).

The CHAIRMAN: No; he was querying item (2).

Mr. E. A. LUCKHOO: I do not want any misapprehension. As regards the appointment of District Commissioners. I am entirely in agreement with the present men in the posts. With respect to the Assistant District Commissioner on the Corentyne, which I take it will be made, I think there is absolute necessity for such an appointment. I just want to record that as my considered view. In respect of the type of individual to be appointed, that is a matter for the Government. I take it every care will be exercised in the appointment. The District Commissioner is a very important officer. He is looked up to for guidance by the people residing in his district and, therefore, one expects such an individual to exercise the right commonsense in the discharge of his duties. I wish to record that because on one or two occasions I was rather disappointed that certain requests made to a certain District Commissioner in respect of the welfare of certain people in a certain district did not receive the response which I expected to get from that particular officer. Quite recently I had to approach the hon. Colonial Secretary in respect of a very important matter touching rice cultivation on the Corentyne. I pointed out to him that about 2,500 bags of milled rice were in a certain mill without means of transportation to the Springlands Bond and about 2,400 bags of padi were outside the mill exposed to the weather and without any protection, and asked that he be good enough to see what could be done in order to ameliorate the suffering of the people in that locality, as distress warrants had actually been issued against the people for the recovery of rates.

The people had asked me to intervene on their behalf. I was met by a very large deputation and actually escorted into the rice mill where I

saw the bags of padi on the pavement without any adequate protection from rain and the milled rice stored in the mill some of the bags and their contents actually deteriorating on account of the long stay in that particular bond. There was no means of transporting that milled rice to the Springlands Bond which was, however, congested at the time and no transport facilities were given the people to remove that rice from the mill. I took the opportunity to approach Mr. Grant who is the Officer in charge of the Springlands end and asked him for a stay of execution of the warrants in order that I might consult the District Commissioner on the matter. As a result of that, I made certain recommendations and suggested that the two bonds then empty at No. 63 should be utilised for the purpose of storing that rice which was in the open. My suggestion was forwarded to the hon. Colonial Secretary who promptly replied agreeing to the suspension of recovery of the rates and took steps at once to advise the proper authorities in respect of that matter. I am very much obliged to the hon. Colonial Secretary for his prompt action in that particular matter. The people claimed that Government had induced them to grow more food, and now that they had done so Government prevented them from utilizing the value of their crop. I thought it a hardship on those people who in spite of adverse conditions had been able to produce a favourable crop.

In view of my experience I think that men of experience should be appointed District Commissioners—men who will be able to exercise a little bit of judgment, commonsense and tact in the guidance of the people and their welfare. My remarks relate particularly to any appointment Your Excellency might make. I hope Your Excellency will take proper care to see that men with ripe experience and knowledge of conditions and of affairs are appointed to that particular post. They act as a sort of Deputy Governor and the people look to them for guid-

ance. But for my kindly intervention those people on the Corentyne would have been levied upon and their property taken into execution, though there was ample security for the payment of the rates in the rice and padi stored up at the mill. Was not that a *bona fide* guarantee for the amounts due to Government? That was a splendid opportunity for the Officer to have gone forward and said to the people "I will communicate with the District Commissioner in the matter", but no sympathy was shown them. It was not playing the game, on the part of a man occupying such a prominent position. The Corentyne is one of the most promising districts. The people have responded to Your Excellency's call in respect of your Grow More Food Campaign. They planted, reaped and stored their produce, and all that remained was for them to realize the cash wherewith to pay their rates and meet other necessary obligations. Was it fair to the people that they should be made to suffer such humiliation as to have distress warrants actually taken to their doors? That was a splendid opportunity for a District Commissioner imbued with the right spirit to go among the people and assure them that he would report at once to the Colonial Secretary the predicament they found themselves in, but that was not done. I had to take the full responsibility in telling the District Commissioner that I would at once communicate with the Colonial Secretary in the matter. Thanks, however, to the readiness on the part of the hon. the Colonial Secretary in granting the concession asked for. It would have had a very damaging effect on the Grow More Food Campaign had the Colonial Secretary not acted as he did because there was a threat held out, as I told the Commissioner of Local Government. Some of the people told me that if they were not given some redress or if Government did not take a favourable view of the matter they would give up rice cultivation. That was made abundantly clear by a good many of those people.

It seems to me that those responsible for advising Government had no knowledge that the people were in a position to realize their crop and pay their rates. With a little bit of foresight on the part of those responsible it could have been suggested that the rice be removed to a place of safety and stored at No. 63 where your bonds have been erected at the expense of the Rice Marketing Board, as there was neither rice nor padi in them. Surely, Your Excellency, that would have been a splendid gesture on the part of those responsible in that area to instruct Government that those two bonds were available and could be used and so save the people from certain loss which must ensue as the result of the exposure of the padi to all kinds of weather conditions and the deterioration of the milled rice on account of the delay in providing transport facilities. I am glad that I have been assured by the hon. Colonial Secretary that immediate steps are being taken to have the rice removed. The Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, the hon. Colonial Treasurer, also informed me as to the steps which they have in mind to take to remove the congestion.

There is another point which I think I should bring to Your Excellency's notice. I do not know who is responsible for the motor service in that district. The district is divided into two areas, one is from Wellington Park to Crabwood Creek and the other from Wellington Park to New Amsterdam. The motor service for the transportation of rice is limited to those two areas. The rice from the No. 2 area—Wellington Park to Crabwood Creek—must be removed to Springlands and that from the No. 1 area—Wellington Park to New Amsterdam—to New Amsterdam. Whether it is rice or padi, that seems to be the restriction placed on the movement of the motor vehicles used in the transportation service. I pointed out to the responsible officer in that district that in New Amsterdam there are several advantages over Springlands in respect of shipping. At New Amsterdam

you have three or four shipping points and the rice may be shipped by the Transport and Harbours Department, or by Sprostons Ltd., or by the Municipal Authorities at New Amsterdam Stelling. The people from Wellington Park to New Amsterdam being so privileged their rice is quickly shipped. In one case, I may point out to Your Excellency, a certain quantity of rice was actually transported from No. 48 on the Corentyne Coast to New Amsterdam and when it got there on discovery that it came from No. 48 which was outside the No. 1 area shipment of that rice was refused. I think a little more care should be exercised in the defining of those areas especially when the Springlands Bond is congested and there is no schooner or anything else available to take away the rice.

It should have been known by the Chairman of the district that there was sufficient security for the payment of the people's rates in the rice and padi held up there. I speak on this matter with a certain amount of feeling because I have been told and I have reason to believe that a threat was held out by the people to cease cultivating rice unless they got redress on the point. I think, the hon. Colonial Secretary having so readily undertaken to carry out my suggestion to have advances made to the people and transportation made by schooner or some other means from Springlands to New Amsterdam since they were assured of cash payment for their rice when it reached Georgetown, the difficulty has been solved. This has been a very grave matter with me on account of the continuous representations made. I have had to visit those people and try to assure them that it was not the fault of the Head of the administration. I was so satisfied with the hon. Colonial Secretary's reply of my representation that I at once transmitted the substance of the telegram I received to the people who are now perfectly satisfied.

The CHAIRMAN: I think your representation is very much appreciated at Headquarters and every possible action will be taken in the matter.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I was looking at the clock as it is rather late, but I would ask Your Excellency's permission to make some remarks on the observation made by the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice. I gather he said that some portion of rice from the Corentyne on arrival at New Amsterdam for shipment to Georgetown has been refused. Am I to understand the refusal came from the Transport and Harbours Department?

Mr. E. A. LUCKHOO: I have been so informed from a reliable source. It was refused because it came from outside the prescribed area.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Refused by whom?

Mr. LUCKHOO: It was not allowed to be shipped from New Amsterdam.

Mr. WOOLFORD: It is a very important matter, and I ask permission to make a reply on behalf of the Transport and Harbours Department because it is causing that Department very grave anxiety. It must be understood that there is no obligation on the part of the Department to accept the delivery of rice beyond New Amsterdam. The Department has no means of transport beyond that. I know that the Commissioners of the Transport and Harbours Department propose at some future time to have some working arrangement in regard to the matter.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I do not intend to cast any reflection on the Transport and Harbours Department in the matter.

Mr. LEE: May I be permitted to add my quota to what has been said by the hon. Member for Berbice River?

The CHAIRMAN: I think the question has been sufficiently ventilated.

Mr. LEE: If Government thinks that it was not the fault of the people that they did not pay their taxes Government might make a gesture in this Council by making the execution a free process.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think any action was taken.

Mr. LUCKHOO: Distress warrants were actually issued but no further action was taken, thanks to the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. LEE: But costs are taxed on the distress warrants.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think that should be.

Mr. LAING: They are paid by the Local Authority.

The CHAIRMAN: The matter will be gone into.

*Item 14—Purchase of typewriter, \$200*

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think the Commissioner of Local Government has secured approval of the Council being asked to provide a sum for an additional typewriter. In accordance with what Your Excellency said this morning, I think the item should be shown as extraordinary expenditure in case the Commissioner should make it a habit. I therefore move that the item be amended to read "Purchase of 2 typewriters, \$350," and shown below the line.

The CHAIRMAN: We have now taken 16 hours to do 15 heads. At this rate, if we sit all next week and the following week we would get through the Committee stage by the end of the year. I have done nothing today and

other officers may be in the same position. I would suggest that lengthy speeches might be left for the general debate, and that we should get on with the items in the Committee stage. We have had a tremendous amount of irrelevancy—every little peg being seized to hang something on. Shall we take the next head—Magistrates?

Mr. FERREIRA: I think we should continue.

#### MAGISTRATES.

Mr. LEE: I do not think we should sit later than half past ten.

The CHAIRMAN: Several Members have indicated readiness to take another head.

Mr. WOOLFORD: It is sure to be a matter of complaint by Members who are absent, that we sat longer than the time arranged. We should not give them an opportunity to say that this head was taken after half past ten.

The CHAIRMAN: What am I to do? Government's work will come to a stop. Members have no idea of the pressure of work on Government officers. I am receiving now 15 and 20 letters a day asking for interviews.

Mr. LEE: I can understand that. I will be as brief as possible in any comments I have to make, in order that we might finish before Christmas.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: As a matter of interest may I inform the Council that the hon. Member rose 20 times during this debate.

Mr. LEE: But it was necessary to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: Would Members like to take some neutral head like "Ministers of Religion" or "Militia?"

The estimates under "Militia," "Ministers of Religion" and "Miscellaneous" were passed without discussion.

#### MISCELLANEOUS— (a) SUBVENTIONS, ETC., MUNICIPAL.

*Item 8—Rates on Government Properties \$13,512.*

Mr. FERREIRA: I presume that this item will have to be increased in view of the increase in taxes.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That will be dealt with in supplementary estimate. We are not yet aware of what the increase will be.

Item agreed to.

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

*Item 14—Public Free Library Committee—for Museum—\$6,707.*

*Item 17—Georgetown Public Free Library, \$5, 335.*

Mr. FERREIRA: Last year I raised the question of Government's contribution to the Library in Georgetown. I think it is an admirable thing to have a Library in Georgetown, but again I ask for some consideration for New Amsterdam. Last year I was told that the British Council would have a West Indian Library started, and that Berbice would have a branch, but a year has passed and nothing has been done. The Berbice Y.M.C.A. kindly undertook to start a small Library, and a voluntary worker, a young lady, attends every afternoon to distribute books. The Librarian in Georgetown very kindly sent two boxes of books to Berbice every week. That went on quite successfully until, unfortunately, the lock on one of the boxes was broken and the books were stolen. I do not know whether the Transport Department was to blame, but that was the end of it. It was most unfortunate.

If we are going to develop culture in this Colony some effort should be made to continue this work. I raise the question because an organization in America has donated a thousand volumes free of cost to the Library, and the books are in New York awaiting shipment. I think Government should provide a small sum for New Amsterdam so as to enable the Y.M.C.A. to pay a Librarian a small salary and to maintain a small library which could work in conjunction with the Georgetown Free Library. I am asking that the matter be given sympathetic consideration by Government, and that the Colonial Treasurer be asked to say something about it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Dr. Helen Stuart, the Director of the Central Library Scheme, proceeded to London and had various conferences with the British Council, and information has been received that she has been appointed Director of the Library Scheme in the West Indies on behalf of the British Council. I have received a letter informing me that she will be arriving in the Colony on the 9th December to organize conferences. I cannot say what her plans are going to be. I replied by telegram asking her to postpone her visit until January because of what is happening now. When she comes the whole question will come up again, and I feel sure Government will take advice from her, as representing the British Council, on that and other matters. I am asking the hon. Member to be a little more patient.

Mr. ROTH: I was unaware that we were going to reach this head this evening. With regard to item 14 I cannot question the figure but there is a point on which I feel very deeply indeed. The B. G. Museum is governed by the Public Free Library Committee. As you are aware, sir, some Museum authorities of standing have stated in writing that the British Guiana Museum ranks amongst the

first five not only in the Caribbean area but in Central and South America, and I think it should have its own governing body. At present it is just an adjunct of the Public Free Library Committee. The members of that Committee, with one or two exceptions, of which the Chairman is the most notable, do not really take an interest in the Museum. Sometimes I doubt whether one or two of the members even know where the Museum is situated, and I do not think it is fair to an institution of such importance that it should be governed under those conditions. I am asking Government to consider very deeply the possibility of putting the Museum under its own governing body. I realize that one part of the Museum shares the same building as the Free Library, but that difficulty could be got over by appointing the same Chairman to the Museum Committee. I am asking you, sir, to give the matter serious consideration.

*Item 55—Subsidy to Canadian National Steamship Service, \$40,800.*

Mr. ROTH: Why do we still pay a subsidy to the Canadian National Steamship service?

The CHAIRMAN: Correspondence is going on at the moment.

*Item 61 — Contribution towards British Society, Haiti, \$24*

Mr. ROTH: What is the British Society, Haiti, and why do we contribute to it?

The CHAIRMAN: We are all busy looking it up now. We have reduced all these things in others places. I did know of a contribution in another Colony for a Jews' cemetery from a body in another part of the world.

*Item 67 — Grants to Churches for services among Aboriginal Indians, \$19,000.*

Mr. ROTH: I see that the payments completing the disendowment of the Churches come to an end this year. How then about this amount? Is it for Social Welfare work?

The CHAIRMAN: They applied for its continuance and the Secretary of State agreed subject to this Council consenting for any period of years. That cablegram only came this week actually. I am satisfied myself that until Government is prepared to do something in the matter we can scarcely refuse it.

Mr. ROTH: Thank you.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOOD: I think the hon. Nominated Member should be the last person to question it.

Mr. ROTH: I am not questioning by any means their right to have the money, but I am by no means convinced of the benefits to the Indians. It is a rather delicate subject, but those are my considered views. There are some very fine exceptions but not all.

The CHAIRMAN: That is so, but we are in the position that we have to admit that we can do nothing else.

#### PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES

*Item 14 — Temporary War Bonus \$42,000.*

Mr. LEE: The Council had passed a resolution here granting War Bonus to pensioners who receive pensions up to \$60 per month. What I want to enquire is whether that resolution was carried into effect and the increase paid to the pensioners.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The resolution was passed by the Council and the bonus is in force. The pensioners will be paid before the end of the current year.

*Item 6 — Militia Pensions and Gratuities, \$239.*

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have a small amendment to make to this item. I would be glad to increase the lump sum payments by \$4,000. The reason is, there are one or two unexpected retirements and the pensions have to be paid early in the year. Militia retirements are rare. I move that the amount be carried out at \$4,239.

Mr. FERREIRA: Would not that come under the Imperial Government's payment?

The CHAIRMAN: That is our own Militia. It relates to the Band

Motion put, and agreed to.

Head passed as amended.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

*Item 31 — Provision of Mosquito Nets for Infants, \$1,200.*

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I shall have to ask Your Excellency to re-commit Head XXIII—Miscellaneous—in order to move the insertion of a new Sub-Head 31—"Provision of Mosquito Nets for Infants, \$1,200"—in response to Mr. Roth's motion. The hon. Nominated Member will appreciate the reason.

Head re-committed, and motion made.

Mr. ROTH: I thank Government for that.

Mr. FERREIRA: Is any provision made for prisoners to be equipped with mosquito nets? I ask that question because I think that should be. We should bear in mind that malaria can be easily transferred from one person to the other. I am referring to New Amsterdam because one prisoner died there of the fever. I only got to know that by extracting the information.



The COLONIAL SECRETARY: May I ask the hon. Member, do you say that a prisoner died from malaria?

Mr. FERREIRA: Yes, at the prison of New Amsterdam. I think the prisoners should be supplied with mosquito nets because malaria can be transferred from the prison to outside.

Mr. E. A. LUCKHOO: I desire to congratulate Government on this matter. Since the subject was under discussion there have been writings in the newspapers and a great deal of interest among the mothers in the country districts. I hope in time a larger amount will be set apart for this work because there are many deserving cases of persons who are unable to purchase it. It is a beginning in the right direction and I appreciate Government's action in the matter.

Motion put, and agreed to.

#### SITTING OF THE COUNCIL

The CHAIRMAN: We still have quite a lot to do next week, and I feel inclined to suggest that we resume at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday.

Mr. AUSTIN: I may suggest that you fix a time which will not upset everybody.

The CHAIRMAN: Then, we must be prepared to sit later. Last year we sat eight hours a day, now we are only sitting from 12 to 4 and from 8 to 10.

Mr. AUSTIN: That was arranged and we were told about it. We said we will sit from 2 to 4 and from 8.30 to 10.30, but without any notice we go on later. I do not think it is fair.

The CHAIRMAN: We must be prepared to sit later.

Mr. AUSTIN: Surely if we are given notice.

The CHAIRMAN: On Tuesday we will try to sit later.

Mr. AUSTIN: As far as I am concerned we can sit earlier and longer, but let hon. Members know in time.

The CHAIRMAN: We can let them know on Tuesday.

Mr. AUSTIN: We have gone a half hour over.

The CHAIRMAN: We must surely carry on so as to come to a finish. We did it very frequently last year, sitting from 4 to 5. I am sure hon. Members wish to run the Legislative Council and, therefore, they must be prepared to give their time to it. We are four Government Officers on this Council and we certainly have as much work to do as anybody in this Council. I have been up from 10 minutes to 6 a.m., but I am prepared to go on. We must be prepared to go on, otherwise we will not get through with the business of the Council as expeditiously as we desire.

Mr. AUSTIN: It is a question of giving the Members of the Legislative Council timely notice that you are going to sit later.

The CHAIRMAN: We have begun the hour and may go on until we complete it.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: This is the Budget Session and I think four hours is too short if we are going to have debates. Some of the debates I have listened to are but repetitions, and it seems to me that if we are to get through the Estimates in time for next year we must sit longer hours. I am prepared to sit until midnight.

The CHAIRMAN: We may stick to 2 to 4 and 8.30 to 10.30 but when we return in the evening we must be prepared to sit longer than 10.30.

At this stage the Council resumed and adjourned until Tuesday, 19th December, 1944, at 2 p.m.