

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 16th December, 1942.

The Council met on Wednesday, 16th December, 1942, at 12 noon, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. G. O. Case, Consulting Engineer

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on Friday, 11th day of December, 1942, were taken as read, and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

THE EAST COAST FLOODS.

THE PRESIDENT: Before proceeding to Announcements I would like again to bring to the notice of the Council the usefulness of the Official *bloc* in maintaining a quorum in this Honourable Council. (laughter).

I would just make a comment on the question of drainage and irrigation, because I would like to bring before the Council a Message at the earliest possible moment with respect to one scheme which could be proceeded with immediately.

As hon. Members are aware, a good many visits were paid to the East Coast by several Members of this Council, the Engineers and myself, and several others. On Monday I had an opportunity in about three or four

hours of seeing something of the conditions there. I have been furnished with the Engineers' report which states:—

Rainfall records kept for 47 years show that the average annual rainfall for the whole of December in the County of Demerara is 11.7 inches or an average of 0.38 inch per day.

2. In seven days in December this year (from the 4th to the 10th inclusive) there were 16.68 inches of rainfall at Plantation Enmore. Very heavy rain was also experienced in other parts of the East Coast.

3. Neither the estate's pumps nor the drainage kokers and/or pumps are capable of dealing with this exceptional amount of rain and prevent flooding of the land, even if all the drainage channels seawards of the sea defence line were clear of sling mud.

4. Unfortunately this latter feature is not the case at present. For the past 18 months billions of cubic yards of sling mud have accumulated on the foreshore between Mahaica and Montrose, and at the commencement of this wet season all the koker channels on the sea side of the sea wall were filled with sling mud. This condition is very exceptional and there has never been seen such an accumulation on the foreshore.

5. When the koker channels are thus blocked with sling mud in dry weather they cannot be cleared until there is a head of water in the drainage trenches on the land side. Flooding must inevitably take place before channels can be opened.

6. Local conditions in drainage districts. Buxton Drainage District.— This area has recently been badly flooded. Under the best possible conditions the maximum amount of water which existing works can relieve to the sea (if there was no sling mud on the foreshore) is 2 inches per day utilising to the fullest extent gravity drainage when the tide is low, and the two 80-ton pumps when the tide is high.

7. On two consecutive days recently there was an average rainfall of 3.2 inches and nothing practical would have prevented some flooding. When the rain started one of the pumps broke down and several days elapsed before the necessary repairs could be completed and the pump started up again. This circumstance increased the amount of flooding.

8. Golden Grove-Victoria Drainage District.—The reasons stated for the flooding in the Buxton district generally apply to this district also. When the rain started the koker channel was blocked up with sling mud and difficulty was found in clearing the channel when the head of water had risen sufficiently in the inside drainage trench. The flooding in the district was partly due to the fact that the intake koker on the Crown dam was left open by the proprietor for hours after the heavy rains started.

9. This district is largely dependent on natural drainage as the one pump is only capable of removing $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of rainfall in 24 hours. The Drainage Board have recommended the expenditure of \$20,300 in this coming year to improve the drainage in this district.

10. Although flooding has taken place in this district a recent inspection shows that the flooding of the frontlands was not as bad as that on Plantation Enmore and not nearly as bad as the flooding of the frontlands on the privately owned Plantation Hope on the east side.

11. Ann's Grove—Lancaster Drainage District.—Owing to the existence of sling mud on the foreshore this district has been rather badly flooded. The District Engineer, East Coast, Demerara, reports that flooding in this district was greatly aggravated by the fact that the Greenfield irrigation intake blew out, thus allowing down considerable quantities of water from the back lands.

12. The Drainage Board have for some time been very much concerned regarding the inadequate drainage works for this district and have now proposed that this year \$40,900 be spent on improvement works. If very heavy rains occur, such as the rainfall recently experienced, flooding will be inevitable until these works are completed. The Board have recommended that a new additional koker be built at the Mahaica river together with a connecting drainage canal.

13. At the inside of the Mahaica river there is deep water and the river is never blocked with sling mud, so that when the works recommended are carried out drainage can be obtained during every tidal period. The Board carefully considered the installation of a suitable pump, but this was not recommended owing to the fact that the working cost would be very heavy, whereas, very little annual expense will be incurred in drainage by gravity into the river.

14. Plaisance Drainage District; Helena and Mahaica Country Drainage Districts—Considering the very heavy rainfall recently experienced these drainage districts have been remarkably free of excessive water and strikingly so compared with the privately owned estates.

15. The reasons why the above-mentioned drainage districts have suffered less than the adjoining sugar estates and private lands is due to the fact that at Plaisance there is not nearly as much sling mud accumulated on the foreshore as there is between Buxton and Greenfield, and gravity drainage has been possible to a considerable extent.

16. In the case of Helena and Mahaica drainage districts the comparative freedom from flooding is due to the fact that both these districts drain into the Mahaica river where there is deep water and no obstruction of sling mud at low tide.

17. The history of the matter in the Drainage Areas is as follows. When the Drainage Board was formed in January, 1941, it was quite obvious that in nearly all of the drainage districts existing works were in a bad condition and were entirely inadequate to prevent flooding during exceptionally heavy rains.

18. The Board felt that the first thing to do was to recondition all existing works in Declared Areas and after this was completed to consider very carefully what further works were required to improve drainage and irrigation.

19. Shortage of labour in many cases has slowed down reconditioning works, and on the Essequibo Coast a very considerable amount of this work has not yet been completed.

20. With the exception of the Essequibo Coast, practically all of the reconditioning in Declared Drainage Areas has been completed and planning of improvement works has commenced.

In going down with the Engineer, I asked him particularly which of the numerous schemes I had put up the other day in the two schedules would be the best one to commence with early with a view to preventing what had occurred in the last few days, and he explained that we should go on with that item in the schedule for Ams Grove-Clonbrook costing \$40,900. He assures me that with the works recom-

mended to be carried out now, with the additional koker to be built at the Mahaica river, there is certain to be a great improvement in the district. I know there are differences of opinion on this particular matter, and what I have done so far is to get the feeling of the Executive Council on this recommendation of the Drainage and Irrigation Board. I have assured myself of the consent of the Committee of the Development Trust Fund, from whom funds could be obtained for carrying through the works. I also require the consent of the Legislature and the Secretary of State for the Colonies; the latter I could obtain by telegram. I would therefore like to put before the Legislative Council this particular proposal, and if there are any serious differences of opinion the matter can be debated in Council.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

BOERASTRIE-BONASIKA SCHEME.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer) communicated the following Messages:—

MESSAGE No. 3.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council.

The Council will be aware from my Minute dated 22nd October, 1942, addressed to Honourable Members and from my announcements in Council on 29th October, 1942 and on 3rd December, 1942, of the final development in the proposals for the financing of the Boerastrie-Bonasika drainage and irrigation scheme.

2. As I have already intimated, the Secretary of State for the Colonies has now communicated definite approval of the scheme being undertaken to be financed from Imperial funds on the following terms and conditions:—

- (a) The total expenditure estimated at \$460,000 to be made available under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act and to be regarded in the first instance as a loan to the Colony without interest.

(b) (1) Such portion of the capital cost of the scheme as may eventually prove to be recoverable from the proprietors of land in the area to be so recovered and paid into the general revenue of the Colony in accordance with the intention of section 1 (2) (b) of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1940.

(2) Recovery to be effected by means of a tax on the increase in land values directly attributable to the scheme.

(c) The economic progress and monetary results of the scheme to be carefully recorded and the position reviewed at a later date for consideration as to whether the whole or part of the capital cost of the scheme should be regarded finally as a loan to the Colony, and if so on what terms, or whether all or a portion should be treated as a free grant to the Colony.

(d) Land rents charged by proprietors in the area to be controlled by the Government.

(e) The maintenance costs of the scheme to be borne by the proprietors of land in the area.

3. The conditions set out at (b) and (d) above will require legislation which it is proposed to enact in a form conferring general powers capable of application to specific cases where necessary.

4. I now invite the Council to approve by formal Resolution of the execution of the scheme on the terms and conditions set out in paragraph 2 above, and to undertake to pass any necessary legislation in relation thereto.

5. A vote of \$280,000 to cover the estimated expenditure on the first year's work on the scheme was included in the Supplementary Estimate passed by Council on 14th January, 1942, in connection with approved Welfare and Development Schemes. This vote will lapse as no expenditure has been incurred. A similar amount will be included on a Supplementary Estimate for the year 1943, if the Resolution is adopted by Council. It is proposed to commence work as early as possible in 1943.

GORDON LETHEM,

Governor.

12th December, 1942.

SUBSIDIZATION OF IMPORTED COMMODITIES

MESSAGE No. 4.

Honourable Members of the Legislative
Council,

I have the honour to refer to my Message No. 14 dated 18th August, 1942, and to Resolution No. XXVI. of 20th August, 1942, passed by the Council approving of the appropriation of such sum not exceeding \$300,000 to meet the cost of subsidization of imported commodities during the year 1942.

2. In my Message referred to above, and during the course of the discussion which took place on 20th August, I undertook to bring the matter before Council for further consideration as to the general policy and action to be pursued in relation to subsidization after the close of the year 1942.

3. Honourable Members will be aware from the announcement on this matter made by me in my address to Council on 18th November, and by the Colonial Treasurer in the Budget Statement, that the Government proposes to continue the policy of applying subsidies to selected imported commodities as far as may be possible and desirable. This policy has always had the strong support of the Secretary of State for the Colonies as a policy for the whole of the Colonial Empire since the beginning of the present condition and it is generally regarded as the most appropriate and effective means of stabilizing as far as possible the cost of living. Moreover, in the extremely difficult circumstances now developing, the only way in which prices of essentials can be kept stable or pegged, is by Government accepting the liability of meeting the difference in regard to supplies imported at figures above the cost to the consumer.

4. I accordingly invite the Council to approve of the appropriation from surplus balances of such sum not exceeding \$600,000 as may be necessary to meet the cost of subsidization and price stabilization of essential imported commodities during the year 1943.

GORDON LETHEM,

Governor.

12th December, 1942.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

BOERASIRIE-BONASIKA SCHEME.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer) gave notice of the following motions:—

THAT, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 3 of 12th December, 1942, this Council approves of the Execution of the Boerasirie—Bonasika drainage and irrigation scheme on the terms and conditions set out in the Governor's Message, and undertakes to pass any necessary legislation in relation thereto.

SUBSIDIZATION OF IMPORTED COMMODITIES.

THAT, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 4 of 12th December, 1942, this Council approves of the appropriation from surplus balances of such sum, not exceeding \$600,000, as may be necessary to meet the cost of subsidization of imported commodities during the year 1943

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESTIMATES, 1943.

The Council resolved itself into committee and resumed consideration of the estimates of expenditure to be defrayed from revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1943.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Sir, before addressing my mind to the details of this head I am asking your permission to make a few remarks with respect to the announcement you have just made regarding the flooding of the East Coast of Demerara. I am not going to criticize the official reports or the reports of specialists, because when you do that you only intensify the evil. I do not wish to criticize but I wish to make a statement which they may consider. The report practically says that owing to the abnormal rainfall nothing could have been done to prevent flooding. I am ready to concede

that, but I say that the East Coast remains flooded now because the ordinary village authorities have complained bitterly since October, when the sun was shining at its brightest, against the lack of preparations to meet the floods which they said were sure to come in December. I have a number of witnesses to that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it necessary to raise this now? If you do so you raise a general debate. I think you may leave it until my Message comes forward in respect of a particular scheme.

Mr. ELEAZAR: As Your Excellency pleases

THE CHAIRMAN: If you speak now I should want to reply, and I think half a dozen of us too. A motion will be put before the Council as soon as we can; tomorrow if possible.

Mr. ELEAZAR. I may not be here to-morrow. Anyhow, I will not go any further with it at this stage. It seems to me that in the estimates under "Public Works" Government has departed very vigorously from what has been the rule for a number of years—that new appointments were usually put below the line. In this instance Government has made many new appointments, and most of them above the line, so much so that the Fixed Establishment of the Department has been increased by something like \$8,000. That means that we have to pay a considerable amount in salaries and upon those salaries we will have to pay pensions.

Our pension list, as we have always complained, is one of the millstones around the necks of the taxpayers of the Colony, and we should be very careful in making new appointments. Suppose we want to cashier some of those gentlemen when they come here? We may find that an officer does not suit our purpose. We bind ourselves not only to pay him a salary but a pension

too at the very start. I am of the opinion that all these new appointments should be put below the line, and as we see the officers' efficiency we put them above the line. I have never yet seen so many new appointments in one Department. I think that if eleven new officers are required in this Department the least we should do is to put them below the line until they have shown their efficiency. I will have a remark to make under some special item.

Mr. JACOB: I quite agree that it is regrettable that the majority of the seats of Elected Members are vacant, and during this session I have noticed that. As a matter of fact certain hon. Members representing important constituencies have not graced this Council chamber since the session began. Maybe there are very good reasons for that. I would like to add to what I stated on the last occasion under this head. I made certain specific charges or statements against the Public Works Department with respect to the drainage of Craig village. I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not generalizing; I am making a definite statement. I have been following up that particular matter for quite a long time, and during the week-end deputations came to Georgetown and saw the District Commissioner. They tried to see the representative of the Division, but my information is that they were unable to see him and they went to the Guiana United Trade Union to seek their help. I think the majority of the farmers of Craig Village are members of that Union, therefore the Union proposes to follow the matter up to see if anything can be done.

It was painful to listen to the opening remarks of the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) this morning. He said that sometimes when you criticize you intensify the evil. I am sorry to say that that is the impression I have formed myself—that when

you criticize certain public officers they refuse to do anything. I will not go so far as to say that they do the wrong thing. I think the farmers of that district are making the definite charge that the wrong thing is being perpetuated. I am not prepared to make that definite statement now, but the Union is prepared to follow the matter up and to see why that settlement should be flooded continuously. I have the figures showing the amount of the rainfall recorded at Plu. Diamond, and in a letter to the Colonial Secretary dated December 15 those figures were given. One paragraph of the letter reads as follows:—

“It is now reported to us by members of the Union that the entire cultivation was flooded since Saturday, 5th inst., although only 9.29 inches of rain fell at Plu. Diamond from Wednesday, 2nd inst., after a long spell of dry weather.”

I have seen the rainfall returns myself; I got them from the Department of Agriculture and I can vouch for their accuracy. If they are going to be disputed, as my statements are disputed from time to time, I will ask that the correct figures be supplied. That is another grievous complaint I have to make. I make specific statements here and general observations are made decrying things I have said, and in fact nullifying them. That is how this Legislature has gone on since I became a Member, and I am wondering how long it will continue. No wonder the majority of the Members do not attend, and it is true that the Official *bloc* helps to keep it going. I am hoping that the Official *bloc* will be removed very soon, and let the people select their representatives to come here and speak for them. The letter I referred to states further:—

“The farmers complain that the three check sluices were not opened until Saturday morning, 5th inst., although the person in charge was requested to open them before by some of the farmers.”

“Up to Thursday, 10th December, 1942, when 13.23 inches of rain were recorded at Pln. Diamond, very little of the surplus water in the cultivation at Craig found its way to the sea on account of the faulty design of the drainage facilities.”

THE CHAIRMAN: I think you might leave this, as I have suggested to the hon. Member for Berbice River, until we come to the particular subject. It will come forward as a Message in connection with a particular scheme, and I shall have no objection to Members raising those points. We are now in Committee on the estimates of the Public Works, and I think we should stick to our last.

Mr. JACOB: I quite appreciate that, sir, but I say that I have made statements here and those figures will support my specific charge of definite neglect. I am just following up. I am not referring particularly to your statement this morning about the whole Colony. As a matter of fact I went to Lusignan last Sunday and I would like to say right now that the statement you read this morning is not borne out by what I have seen. I know Lusignan exceedingly well: I have worked there for six years, but that is another matter.

I crave Your Excellency's indulgence to complete the statement I made so far as the rainfall is concerned and so far as Craig is concerned. Up to Thursday, 10th December, only 13 inches of rain fell at Diamond, but the homestead there was flooded from Saturday when only 9 inches of rain fell. The facts are that the check sluices were not opened, and the state of the drainage is such that even if the sluices were open—

THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask you what relevance has this to the Public Works estimates?

Mr. JACOB: We are paying all these Executive Engineers to look after this work, and I submit with all confidence that if this Legislature was

constituted differently this vote would not pass this Council today. That is the relevancy.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right.

Mr. JACOB: We are paying these engineers. The place was flooded from Saturday, 5th inst., and it is true that the continuous rain caused further flooding, but the farmers complain, and I wholly agree with them, that no pumps are required there. There is natural drainage, and if the design of the drainage works there was different the place would not have suffered as it has. The farmers go on to make a comparison between Craig and Pln. Diamond. There is only a road dividing the two places. In the letter they ask that an early estimate be made of the loss both places have suffered, and an early inspection be made so that we might get at something definite. That is what the people want. I urge Government to do that without any further delay. In fact I am going to insist that it be done. It is time that something is done in this Colony. We cannot have these things going on perpetually. We have experts of every kind here. We have Drainage and Sea Defence Boards and people who are supposed to be mechanical engineers, marine engineers, civil engineers and I do not know what, yet we have this thing going on continuously. It is the view of the people that it is being purposely done, and I urge Government to put a stop to this business. If these men are not capable of doing their duty without being advised by other experts then something has to be done. I am going to record my dissent against the whole vote as a protest, and I do so on the specific instructions of the people who have been suffering for a long number of years—nearly a century.

Mr. PEER BACCTIUS: In this estimate Government has given effect to the recommendations of the Reorganization Committee. The Committee was a very strong one and maybe

that is the reason why I am a bit disappointed with its findings. The Committee has not gone far enough in the re-organization of the Public Works Department. My friend the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has complained, and I think his serious complaint is that the vote has increased out of all proportion. My complaint is that the Committee has not gone far enough, and I am doubtful whether there will be a complete re-organization in view of what I regard as moderate recommendations by the Committee. We must bear in mind that quite recently there were certain extension works to be carried on, and those works could not be carried on with the existing staff of the Department. We know also that it is Government's intention to continue those extension works, for which another \$300,000 will be placed on the estimates. Together with the Bonasika-Boerasirie scheme there will be large sums to be spent by the Public Works Department, and I am afraid that the recommendations regarding the staffing and supervision of those works are inadequate.

I hope it is not the intention of Government to pursue the policy of asking private companies to spend public money, and that with the re-organization of the Department an end will be put to that practice. If that policy is to be abandoned I maintain that the staff will be inadequate to meet the extension works and the additional drainage and irrigation works in other parts of the Colony.

I understand there will be no subdivision of the districts so far as the District Engineers are concerned, and I wonder whether the Committee has considered the East Coast district, extending to the West Bank of the Berbice River, a stretch of 70 odd miles to be supervised by a single District Engineer. It appears that the Committee was more concerned about strengthening the staff at headquarters than the supervision in country

districts. I say that so far as supervision is concerned the country districts have been badly neglected, and under the present re-organization scheme I feel that they will continue to be neglected. The District Engineer of each district, besides having the supervision of roads and all buildings, also supervises sea defences and river surveys at one time or another. I am asking Government to re-consider the matter of the supervision of districts. The Committee finds that there was and still is lack of supervision, but I think it has been very moderate in its recommendations for a cure of that ill. In paragraph 9 of its report the Committee says:—

9. The proposals in this report aim at re-organizing the Department so as to make it capable of dealing with its present responsibilities based on the existing scale of expenditure. If and when major schemes or additional responsibilities are undertaken (e.g. irrigation and drainage works of the magnitude now in contemplation) it will be necessary to provide special additional staff for such purposes."

With such works in progress I do not think the appointment of additional staff should be further delayed. I am asking Government to consider seriously the staffing of the Department fully in order that those works should not be delayed or continue to suffer from lack of supervision. Maybe that lack of supervision contributed to the loss and suffering of the people on the East Coast. Having heard what Your Excellency has said I do not intend to touch on that phase of the matter today, but I hope there will be no attempt on the part of Government to reduce any of these expansion works. In fact I think that in the changed circumstances Government might consider seriously the question of providing more employment for the people in view of certain circumstances which have arisen recently, and that there might be an extension of these works. It was suggested that the Public Works Department might not be able to spend

more than \$300,000 annually on these works, but in the changed circumstances I feel certain that the Department will be able to spend far more than that sum; therefore I take it that Government will seriously consider the question of making the staff of the Department adequate to cope with these works.

Mr. SEAFORD: I regret that it was not possible for me to be here when this criticism of the report of the Committee was started on Thursday last, but in the remarks which have been made today there was very little criticism of the recommendations which have been made. In fact the only criticism was from the last speaker who said he felt that the Committee had not gone far enough, and was not spending enough money on additional staff. I can assure the hon. Member that the Committee went into all the details. It considered the work that had to be done by the existing District Engineers and realized that it was far more than they could properly carry out. I think if the hon. Member looks at the recommendations with respect to the technical staff he will see under Head Office that the District Engineers will get a great deal of assistance from the Head Office. The addition in the technical staff is an Executive Engineer, Buildings and Roads, who will help all the District Engineers. There will also be a Quantity Surveyor who will help the District Engineers in getting out specifications. There will also be a Superintendent of Buildings and a Superintendent of Roads. All those, it is hoped, will be of assistance to the District Engineers.

When the Committee was going into those matters it had to look at them from all angles, and this Colony has not a bottomless purse. We had to consider what we regarded as maximum efficiency with practicability. Nothing could be done without considering the cost. We wanted to get the

greatest value for the money we have to spend, and on that principle we based our recommendations in this report.

The hon. Member referred to paragraph 9. In that paragraph we point out that if those other schemes are to go through it will be necessary to take on new staff and more engineers, because the present staff of the Department could not possibly undertake any new works. I think Your Excellency has already given it out in this Council that it is proposed to get an engineer and staff to look after the work in connection with the Bonasika-Boerasirie scheme. Further than that, in respect of the ordinary re-conditioning works which are going on at present we are trying to strengthen the overseeing staff. We feel that the salaries paid to the overseers are very small indeed, and that in the past it has been difficult to get the right man for the job. We are hoping that by a new system of apprenticeship we will be able to build up a better and larger staff of overseers who will be able to carry on the work. It is quite impossible for the District Engineers to superintend all work in their districts; they have to rely on the men under them.

I am only dealing with the report of the Committee of which I was a member. I know that the Director of Public Works will reply and will be able to point out very much more than I am capable of doing. Throughout all the work we have been doing on the various Committees the Director and his staff have given us all the assistance they possibly could. They have been very helpful in every possible way, and I would like to thank them on behalf of the people of the Colony for the work they have done. They are criticized, but we all make mistakes. Whenever anything was brought to their notice it has been wonderful how prompt action has been taken in the matter.

Mr. LEE: When this vote was considered in Finance Committee I could not be present, but in the circular sent round to hon. Members, although I agreed with the Committee's recommendations that the staff of the Department should be increased in order to provide better supervision and more efficiency, I find that several of the major decisions are superfluous. For instance, when I entered this Chamber I heard the hon. Member say that this Colony has not a bottomless purse. Will Government give an undertaking that in the coming year when extensive building operations will be undertaken they will be supervised by a building expert? I find that the erection of a new Queen's College building has to be held up on account of the plans not having been circulated among certain Members. I have also heard a rumour that it is proposed to build a new Hospital. Funds were voted last year for the erection of a police station at Leguan, but the Department says that there is no material to build it.

If Government is going to embark upon extensive building operations which are requisite, then I agree that it is absolutely necessary to bring someone from England who has expert knowledge, and who will be able to supervise the work and be responsible for it. We have very good overseers in this Colony who could be added to the staff of the Department and would have more time at their disposal to supervise the erection of those buildings. Why do we want a supervising officer to go around examining those buildings? If we are going to have in the office an expert who is going to look into the plans, and if we have not got overseers who can read plans we should get rid of them; they are useless. I say that the overseers and many of the carpenters employed by the Department can read plans and can erect buildings according to plan. More overseers and more supervision of the actual execution of the work are absolutely necessary if it is to be carried out within the estimate of the

Department. If a building expert is brought here to teach apprentices I admit that such a person would be of service to the Colony, but have we searched among the people here to find a man who can do the job? I am informed that there are men in the Department who can teach boys properly if they are given the opportunity, and I am asking Government to consider that aspect of the matter very carefully.

We are also going to have a Superintendent of Roads. I agree that the Colony's roads are in a deplorable condition, but can we afford the expenditure to obtain such a person? If Government intends to undertake extensive road-building on proper lines then I agree that we should have such a man, but have we tried our men to the extent of giving them the opportunity to build roads which can stand up to heavy traffic? Only on certain occasions is an overseer asked "Can you do this job?" Many of them I know can show the Department the results of their past experience as overseers in other spheres of the Colony's activities. One thing I would like some of the Superintendents to realize is that the experience of overseers is knowledge they have gained although they have not studied their work technically, but we find Superintendents ignoring them. An overseer is a mere tool; he is there to take orders and carry them out whether they are right or wrong. In some instances the overseers can teach those with technical knowledge. I am not saying that a man with technical knowledge is not the better man.

The Council is being asked to increase the salary of the Superintendent of the P.W.D. Yard because of his long and meritorious service, but when his successor is appointed he must be given the lower salary. I know as a positive fact that many men who have worked under that Superintendent have suffered at his hand and could not express their opinions freely to the

Head of the Department. Many of them have had to seek employment elsewhere I know of the case of a man who had served 19 years and because he expressed his opinion freely to the Superintendent he was charged with insubordination.¹ That man was only getting \$12 per week and as a result of his skill and experience he is now earning \$120 per month and perquisites at the Naval Base. I admit that if materials and stock are kept in the Yard the Department should have a person in charge whom it could trust. I am not saying that Government should not have trust in the present officer, but why should we raise his salary and give his successor less?

I understand that the surveyors who will be appointed to the Department will be in charge of the carrying out of the welfare schemes, but I think the number of surveyors will be too small for the amount of work involved. If the welfare schemes will not be undertaken next year the number of surveyors will be too many. If it is the intention of Government to increase the salaries of the surveyors attached to this Department it will also have to increase the salaries of those attached to the Department of Lands and Mines, but at the same time we have to consider those men who are giving service to this Colony. If Surveyors are essential both in the Lands and Mines and the Public Works Departments and are deserving of consideration on account of the risks to themselves and to their health in the discharge of their duties, and if their salaries are to be increased I think they are deserving of it. I have been out in the country and have seen them sometimes go without breakfast until 3 o'clock in the afternoon and working in water to their waists in order to carry out certain services according to their schedule. Some of them have suffered from malaria and other ills as a result.

These people are giving service to the Colony, and I feel that if salaries are to be increased or such consideration is to be given to any person they should be the persons to receive it. In my opinion it is not necessary to have an Assistant Paymaster, for the reason that if the times are regulated so that the Paymaster can go from Essequibo to Berbice you will find that he can fulfil the duties of that job without assistance, but of course he must have the available means of transportation that Government has placed at his disposal. For instance when he gets to Leguan he has to wait there for the steamer until afternoon, while there is the Police launch at Parika which he should be able to use. I have calculated it and found that he can do the job alone. He and his clerk pay the money and that is all he does. When he returns to office he hands over the pay-sheets and his job is finished. There are clerks in the office to make the entries. I do say, however, he is entitled to a certain amount of Risk Allowance.

I do not know whether the contract of the Resident Engineer, Pure Water Supply Scheme, includes House Allowance. In last year's Estimates I did not see it, but I notice in this year's Estimates he is to be given House Allowance. That is one of the things I do not agree with. If he is deserving of a proper salary which will include this House Allowance, I say increase it. Why should we make a difference between him and the Assistant that he has? Why should the Assistant who has to follow the drilling of the wells all the time be not given a House Allowance as well? A principle should be adopted. I have said in this Council that I will never agree to House or Duty Allowances. I think that if an officer is deserving of an increase of salary in order that he may provide a house for himself it should be given him. If it is not in his contract I do not agree that he should be paid House Allowance and not the other people who are there.

When they go out into the country certain houses are erected for the technical workers, foremen, etc., and I think that comes out of the Vote. I feel that if the Resident Engineer is to get House Allowance then let his Assistant get the same, but do not make a distinction between the two in the Estimates.

I invite attention to the salary of the Cooks for the Colony Houses at New Amsterdam and Suddie—item (41)—\$48 per annum or \$4 per month. I would like to know if Government is satisfied that \$4 a month can pay a cook at such an institution as the Colony House at New Amsterdam or Suddie. I feel that some increase should be granted these people and a reasonable increase too, to show that Government appreciates their services. I have stayed at the Colony House at Suddie and was very well attended to. I think Government Officials when they go there are well attended to, and we should show our appreciation of such services.

I would like to find out from Government whether the Surveyors who have been seconded to the Bauxite Company are being paid their salaries out of Colony funds, or by the Imperial Government or by the Bauxite Company, as I have learnt they were recommended to do certain work there on account of the arduous nature of the work and their past good work. I would like to know whether that has been done or not.

Under this Head I would also like to appeal again to Government to institute at some future time, next year, an examination whereby the boys who have served their apprenticeship will be able to sit and get some document to show that they have passed their apprenticeship course and are entitled to certain wages from their employers. Sooner or later it will come up and, I think, this is the time to begin. There are different classes of workmen—apprentices, advanced apprentices,

journeymen, and those who have had a little more technical skill. If we are going to have—and I hope Government will accept the principle—minimum wages, we should start now and try to lay the foundation so that in a few years when the Regulations are introduced in this Colony for a minimum wage the workmen will know the wages they are to receive.

Mr. JACOB: Is Your Excellency going to take the whole Head?

THE CHAIRMAN: Unless any question arises I can put the whole Head. If hon. Members prefer I can put the Personal Emoluments together. Have you any particular item in mind?

Mr. JACOB: It would be preferable to take page by page.

THE CHAIRMAN: Very good! I have not given the Director an opportunity to reply. I think he may do so before I put the items under the Head, or he may prefer to wait until we are finished debating the Head.

Item (14) — Yard Superintendent (\$1,800 by \$72 to \$2,880)—\$1,800.

Mr. LEE: I certainly object to the increase. If this Officer was receiving his maximum salary of \$1,680 last year, it should remain so instead of increasing it to \$1,800.

Mr. JACOB: I would like my dissent recorded against this whole page as a protest.

Page 68 — Personal Emoluments—Items 1 to 18 put and agreed to.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wonder whether Your Excellency has addressed your mind to the reason why all these new appointments are put above the line?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it is better to ask the Director to reply.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer) : The Committee specifically considered that point. Where you are introducing new staff appointments of this seniority which call for pensionable status, it is better to make them pensionable from the beginning although it is recognised that in some cases it may be desirable to make appointments under Contract which nevertheless will permit the officer to retire without bringing in the Pension Rules. Of course there are certain other appointments which will have to be filled by pensionable Officers from other Colonies. Although the Committee did agree to some extent to what the hon. Member said, I do not think it was opposed to have all the appointments put above the line unless there are specific appointments which are made under contract.

Mr. SEAFORD : The Committee decided that where possible, as has been done, every Officer may be brought under a three years' contract. It means that if he remains after that period he becomes pensionable from the beginning of his service. If such Officers are in the Government Service over there you cannot bring them here and not place them above the line.

Mr. LEE : Do I understand the Driller and the Resident Engineer of the Pure Water Supply Scheme, who have come out under contract, will be pensionable from the date of commencement of their contract?

Mr. McDAVID : No, sir. As a matter of fact his case is specifically referred to in the Committee's report. It was pointed out that his post should be made pensionable. He came out under contract, in view of which and of all the circumstances the Committee recommended that he should not be pensionable. Paragraph 25 of the Committee's report, page 5, states:—

The Committee considered a proposal for placing Mr. T. S. Harrington, Resident Engineer, Pure Water Supply Scheme, on the pensionable establish-

ment. Mr. Harrington joined the Pure Water Supply Scheme in July, 1929, on a two-year contract which had since this date been renewed from time to time. The Committee is unable to recommend that the officer should be put on the pensionable establishment. To do so would, in its opinion, give rise to claims from other officers in a similar position. The Committee also feels that Mr. Harrington's salary when he was first appointed was fixed with special regard to the fact that he would not be pensionable. However, the Committee recommends that when the officer's agreement next comes up for renewal it should be extended for five years or for such other period as would permit of his being employed until he attains sixty years—the age of compulsory retirement.

Mr. LEE : But he is above the line?

Mr. McDAVID : No. The Resident Engineer is a non-pensionable post on page 69 of the Estimates.

Mr. LEE : I beg your pardon. Do I understand all these Officers who are now being placed above the line will be medically examined in order to see whether they can be made pensionable?

THE CHAIRMAN : That is a *sine qua non* of appointment.

Mr. McDAVID : All Officers have to be medically examined on appointment whether pensionable or not, and I feel sure that on transfer from one Colony to another a medical examination takes place too.

Mr. ELEAZAR : The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) has taken the point entirely out of my hands. The point I am making is that if a person is transferred from a Colony he is not going to leave a pensionable post there to come here without pension. He is always so appointed and is put above the line when the time comes. We cannot anticipate that the Officers here will be of that standing. Why are we putting even the Assistant above the line at the start? Is that a new policy we are going to adopt? It is a distinct

departure from the ordinary rule. It is the first time it has been done in this Council. This Committee or Commission to enquire into the finances of the Colony says "Put so many men and give them pension," contrary to the Rules of the Service altogether. Your Excellency, I do not approve of all these people being put on the Fixed Establishment at once, as it means not only salary but pension, and I do not think it is fair to the other subordinate officers. This is giving pension at the start before knowing whether they are able to carry out their duties properly. One hon. Member said it is usual to appoint them and if they give satisfaction they are put on the Fixed Establishment. That is all right, but here we are appointing them on the Fixed Establishment.

Mr. McDAVID: I would not like it to go out that we are making a change in procedure. Wherever you introduce a permanent post you always put it on a proper basis by making it pensionable. However, when an officer is taken on temporarily or the post is one in connection with which the policy is not quite definite it is made non-pensionable. That is the reason in Mr. Harrington's case. At the time he was taken on there was no intention of carrying on the programme indefinitely. That is why he assumed it under contract. But wherever it is decided to increase a staff permanently we make the post pensionable. That does not include appointments under contract or on probation.

Mr. ELEAZAR: What I am talking about is that in this Council we have to vote the money and not at the direction of this Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is a definite proposal to increase the permanent staff of the Department. That is what the Committee recommends and that is what most Members expect. If it means an increase of the permanent

staff then it means they are pensionable officers under the general scheme and may be transferred to other Colonies. It does not preclude appointments under contract. It depends on the amount you are offering. The Council is accepting this permanent liability of a salaried staff of engineers, and that being so the normal thing is to make them pensionable, or we may have to put on substantially bigger salaries, something like 30 or 40 per cent. higher before we get them. It might be worth while to avoid pensionable liability but as the Committee recommends a permanent increase of staff we should face the implications of it. If you want some of these engineers to come without pensionable rights then I would have to recommend salaries 40 per cent. larger.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Your Excellency, I am surprised to hear that. You engage an engineer, you do not know whether he is good, bad or indifferent, and you put him above the line. Put him below the line until you discover whether he can produce the goods, and then put him above the line. I cannot see that by just putting him above the line right away there can be any excuse for that. But that is not the point. The point I am making is that it is a new departure. Practically every Member here is new and they may think this thing has been going on all the time.

THE CHAIRMAN: In other words you want just a temporary arrangement to see how it works, but that is not the recommendation of the Committee.

Mr. SEAFORD: The Committee did consider it in detail. It had been found in the past very difficult to get suitable men for the job by doing that as you limit the field in which to obtain the people.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Government puts these things and means to push them through. As regards the hon. Member

saying they had found it difficult to get suitable men. I have never known it difficult to get a non-pensionable officer to do work here. We had one man here who did not want to leave and Government kept him under contract.

Mr. SEAFORD: Does the hon. Member realize how short the Department is of engineers at the present time?

Mr. McDAVID: It is very difficult to get engineers.

THE CHAIRMAN: The remedy is to ask for a division against the appointments. I can put page 68 again and those who favour accepting the implications of the Committee's recommendation can do that. But before putting anything the Director should be given his chance now to answer. There are quite a number of points for you to comment on.

Mr. E. A. BOYCE (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences): Yes, sir. I would like to express thanks and appreciation to the hon. Members of the Committee and also to the Secretary for the careful consideration which they gave to the needs of the Department and also for the excellent report which they have submitted in a memorandum to this Council. There is little I can add to the report itself except, perhaps, to emphasize the fact that the activities of the Department have expanded enormously during the last 12 years. I have here a diagram which illustrates at a glance how the expenditure has actually increased over the past 13 years, and you can see how it has progressed from 1930 up to 1943, so that the actual expenditure in 1943 is approximately six times what it was in 1930. I think there are very strong grounds to proffer that the activities of the Department and its work will continue to expand, because almost every scheme of development involves some engineering work at some time or other,

With regard to the question asked by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee), I may say that the difficulty in regard to building work at the present time is the acute shortage of materials. The Department had very great difficulty during the past six months in obtaining supplies of building materials and the 1942 programme of works has been very seriously delayed and we shall have to come to this Council early next year and ask for supplementary provision to be made for revotes. Quite a number of items provided for in the 1942 Estimates have not even been started yet, the reason being that there has been an acute shortage of building supplies. If this shortage continues I am afraid that the 1943 programme of works is going to be very seriously delayed also.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River also asked about Surveyors. I may say that at the present time quite a number of Surveyors in the Consulting Engineer's Department are actually carrying out works under a Welfare Scheme, that is the River Survey work, but I can also say that no surveyors connected with the Public Works Department have been seconded for service with the Bauxite Company and I do not know to what the hon. Member is referring. They may be surveyors from some other Department.

With regard to the question of House Allowances for the Well Driller and Resident Engineer, Pure Water Supply Scheme, I may refer the hon. Member for Essequibo River to page 69, item (31)—"House Allowances—\$660." There is an explanatory note which says "Resident Engineer, Pure Water Supply Scheme, \$360. Well Driller, Pure Water Supply Scheme, \$300". These items have been included for a considerable number of years and they have not been inserted for the first time in this year's Estimates.

With regard to the remarks made by the hon. Member for Berbice River I should like to say that quite a number

of the appointments have not been placed on the permanent establishment; for instance on page 69 you will see item (24)—“2 Superintendents”—who have not been placed on the permanent establishment of the Colony, and so some of the Drawing Office staff and also the Junior Assistants' staff are not placed there. But generally speaking, I can confirm the remarks made by the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) that most of these appointments, if they happen to be new ones and the people are appointed for the first time to the Colonial Service, are invariably on agreement for 2½ or 3 years. If during that time they prove to be satisfactory then they are considered for permanent appointment in the Service, but unless an officer happens to be transferred from some other Colony to this all the appointments will be on agreement for terms of 2½ or 3 years as the case may be. I think those are all the points to which I may refer.

THE CHAIRMAN: I shall proceed to put all the items on Page 68.

Mr. ELEAZAR: What is the use of protesting, Government says it must go through.

THE CHAIRMAN: Your views will be recorded in the debate.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Putting what I say that they change the rules at their own sweet will, will not achieve anything.

THE CHAIRMAN: The new contracts will be for 2½ years.

CHAUFFEUR, GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

THE CHAIRMAN: Item 33 — “2 Chauffeurs, \$720”—includes provision for the salary of the Chauffeur, Government House. That was brought up in Finance Committee. I actually pay the chauffeur more, \$52, plus bonus—practically \$60 per month,—and of that \$30 goes through the account as refunded by me. The reason is simply to give this man the status of a Gov-

ernment Officer with an allowance on retirement, having been 18 or more years partly at Government House and partly in one of the Departments.

Mr. JACOB: On that point I wonder why the actual amount paid to this chauffeur is not shown on the Estimates? \$30 is put down but he is actually paid more. If we are to do this thing in the proper manner I suggest that the whole of the salary of this chauffeur be put down. It creates a wrong impression.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that is the rate of salary of the Department, and I am not asking for it to be more.

Mr. LEE: This is a personal matter. You, sir, are provided with certain conveniences at the expense of this Colony. You say this man is deserving of this salary. Why should the Colony not pay it? If he is entitled by his service we should pay it, and not allow it to come out of your pocket. That is the principle the hon. Member wants to point out.

Mr. SEAFARD: The hon. Member may take the opportunity of moving it under another Head but not under Public Works.

Mr. JACOB: I have risen to support the remarks of my hon. friend, the Member for Essequibo River, as regards item (41)—“2 Cooks for Colony Houses at New Amsterdam and Suddie, \$96”—and I would like to take this opportunity to say that it is time this Government decides that something be done. I want my remarks on a living wage recorded. I cannot stress it too often and I propose to stress it as often as possible whenever I get an opportunity. \$4 a month for a cook, 60c. a day for a shovelman and 28c. for a woman worker—it is time this Government becomes realistic. It is time every officer of this Government think in terms of what is right and proper, and I say we must fix a living wage. We must pay everybody employed by

Government, whether a cook or any other officer, something that he can live on. I think \$4 a month is a disgrace. I object very strongly to the continuation of it and I urge that a remedy be made.

Mr. McDAVID: I am not as certain of my facts as I would like to be. \$95 is not a wage for people who are continuously employed. The Housekeepers of Colony Houses get \$18 a month and quarters. Those are the people who look after the domestic arrangements at the Colony Houses. As far as the local cooks are concerned they are only employed temporarily to assist when a large number of officers or visitors go there. I have not the facts by me but I feel sure they are temporary assistants to the Housekeepers. I shall, however, make a note and look the point up. I had promised a few days ago to look up another point made by the hon. Member for North-Western District, and at the moment I have discovered that the particular individual in the North-Western District to whom reference was made was in continuous employment in another post.

THE CHAIRMAN: The wording is misleading!

Mr. LEE: I would like the hon. Colonial Treasurer to send for the Attendance Book at the Colony Houses. We would find that apart from the attendance of Government Officials and others the Cook in order to keep the job has to cook for the Housekeeper and remains there continuously.

Mr. McDAVID: Of course there is a General Order which, I am quite sure is in operation. It reads: "Each Government Officer who visits a Colony House and employs a cook there is to pay one shilling per day for the use of the Cook." (Laughter).

Mr. LEE: And the cook gets nothing save and except the job,

Mr. McDAVID: The cook is to be paid one shilling per day by the Officer.

Mr. JACOB: I want to say that it is true the Bailiff in the North-Western District is also the Village Overseer.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member did not mention that fact during the course of the debate.

Mr. JACOB: It did slip me at the moment. I recollected that he could not do both jobs properly. His entire pay is only \$30 a month and that is not a living wage for a man doing two jobs—Bailiff and Village Overseer. As a matter of fact if he is paid a decent salary as Bailiff he would give up the other job. I do admit that I did not give all the facts.

Mr. McDAVID: Thanks!

Mr. JACOB: As regards these cooks, the hon. Colonial Treasurer referred to Housekeepers getting \$18 a month. That is only item (35), but item (36) relates to 14 Caretakers, the amount being \$1,634. I could have taken the amount for 1942, \$1,486, which would have been less. The pay works out at only \$11 odd per month, so there again whenever Government wants to make comparison it takes the highest figures, but when we want to make comparison we must naturally take the lowest. The caretakers cannot live on \$11 a month but, if they can, the cooks cannot live on \$4. It is true that whilst some of these people are not continuously employed, in the present circumstances with the existing arrangements the cooks can do nothing else but be present when they are wanted, and so it becomes very hard. I quite agree they may do something else during the intervals when there are no visitors, but there is no permanency.

My attention has been drawn to the fact that there is a note against item (36)—"Increase to allow for substitutes

during illness or leave." Therefore the caretakers' pay if properly gone into is \$10 a month. But the point I wish to make is that these cooks should be paid something more. It is quite fair to say that not being employed full time \$4 is sufficient, but they are required to be there at any time visitors go there, even at short notice. Therefore they should be given a living wage. I do not want to refer to the recent controversy in the Press, but from what I heard over the air on Sunday last from the Rev. Welton-Ward it is time Government set the example as it is having disastrous effects throughout the Colony. Government is looked upon as agreeing to this low wage and other people take that as an example and are guided by it. As a matter of fact whenever Government fixes a standard of 60c. a day, other employers feel they must pay less. It cannot be denied, and even if it is denied I will insist that I am sure of my facts, that Government employees are not giving real full time service even when employed by the day. I am urging on this Government to fix a living wage and pay a living wage to employees.

THE CHAIRMAN: If that is done it would mean that all perquisites would have to go into revenue. That is one way of doing it. It will require a little working out.

Mr. McDAVID: We must be certain of the terms of the people's employment. I have a note—"Caretakers do get \$11, but it is not continuous employment"—and what is more, I am told that some of these caretakers and probably most of them are the wives of the Non-Commissioned Officers at the nearby Police Stations. One would understand it is casual employment and the money is in the nature of an honorarium. It is not continuous employment. I think the Director of Public Works will go into the matter and be satisfied that the people are not underpaid for the amount of work they do.

THE CHAIRMAN: It still remains that the wording is unfortunate. It still looks as if the cooks are employed whole time at \$4 a month!

Mr. ELEAZAR: There is no need trying to white-wash the thing. The people are engaged there and are given at the end of the month \$4. The perquisites they get now and again do not make any difference. If you have a cook at a Colony House she will have to be on the alert whenever somebody visits that place. You cannot say she is doing something else, even if you give her something respectable for the time we know she is working. I am asking that the amount be carried out at \$192 instead of \$96, so that each cook will get \$8 a month.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid I cannot allow that to go forward unless we really know what we are doing. I am quite prepared for the Director to have a look into it and let us know precisely what we are doing.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That again is an innovation which does not seem to be a reformation. You call a Committee and that Committee tells you certain things and you then come to the Council, which is certainly the responsible body, and say the Committee says so and so and it must stand. But the rule has always been when this Council is considering the Budget, Members suggest to Government as they can delete but not initiate and can ask for an increase if a reasonable ground is shown, as in this case. I am surprised to hear Government say it has to enquire into that. A cook is a cook and \$4 a month as her salary is inadequate. Every person in the Colony will agree with that. It is almost a shame, and the amount should not have been there in the first instance.

THE CHAIRMAN: You must give us an opportunity of finding out that she only gets \$4. You are alleging that she does, and we have reason to believe she gets much more from other

sources. We must have an opportunity of knowing the facts before accepting a proposal for an increase. I would ask the Director to find out and let me know. The wording is misleading and probably we may find it is when we get the report.

Sub-head 1 passed as amended.

Item 2.—Travelling Expenses, \$16,100.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I would like to say something on this item. What I do feel is that this \$14,000 per annum for travelling expenses is a waste. I think Your Excellency's recent visits must have satisfied you that the money is not properly spent from what you have seen. I have property on the Coast and I must get there by motor car but I cannot get petrol for it. I get about 12 miles to the gallon from my car and I am given a paltry 8 or 9 gallons. What is that to me? I have to revert now to using a borrowed bicycle. I think the thing should be more carefully gone into. I know a considerable portion of this money is spent wastefully. I can give instances of it. I do not come here and say things I cannot prove. I do feel and know we have at the present moment an excellent Director of Public Works who does not suffer from the snobbery that prevailed in that Department for the last five years. I think we will get a proper handling of this money.

Mr. BOYCE: I would like to say I appreciate the hon. Member's attitude very much and I must say he has set a fine example in riding a bicycle. I have seen him on many occasions doing so. I think he deserves a tremendous amount of credit for it. I may assure him that the expenditure under this vote has been very severely cut down. I know that this year, for example, the amount spent has been very much less than the amount provided for. The reason for that is I have seriously restricted officers of my Department from travelling around the way they

used to before. That is partly due to petrol. They have been doing an enormous amount of travelling and I have done my very utmost to cut it down. That has had certain repercussions. Many have not been able to get around and supervise works as they should, but I assure the hon. Member that the amount provided in the Estimates will be very carefully watched by me and no unnecessary travelling will be done.

Mr. LEE: With respect to the remark by the Director that no surveyors from his Department have been seconded for service with the Bauxite Company either in the Demerara River or the Berbice River, I have recently visited the Demerara River and seen two Surveyors at the Colony House. From information received I think they were seconded for duty there.

Mr. CASE (Consulting Engineer): I can assure the hon. Member that they were previously employed in the Public Works Department but they are now employed by the Bauxite Company.

Mr. LEE: I have seen their names in the Civil List. Mr. Wong was in the Hydrographic Survey Service of the Government and he is now working along with the Bauxite Company in surveying the dredging there. I thought he was in the Government Service and also the Assistant to Mr. Wong.

Mr. CASE: As far as I know they were previously employed in the Public Works Department on a temporary basis and gave it up for employment with the Bauxite Company.

Mr. LEE: I will make investigation in respect of it. I am not satisfied with the answer. I know as a positive fact that Mr. Wong was in the Hydrographic Service and at no time resigned to take up a better job. If it is in writing I would like to see it. I am positive in respect of his being seconded

from Government to assist in the Dredging Survey of the Bauxite operations up the Demerara River. I do not know whether it is under the supervision of the Bauxite Company or the Imperial Government or this Government, but he was sent by this Government to assist in that work.

Mr. CASE: At an earlier stage when the work started a man was lent and then afterwards they obtained a man of their own. It is perfectly true that in the earlier stage that was so but it is not so now. No one is seconded from the Department. I will, however, make enquiries again tomorrow and inform the hon. Member.

Mr. LEE: Mr. Wong and his Assistant are under the impression that they are still in the Government Service, and that is why I am asking. I have learnt that the Officer or Official who was sent out by the Imperial Government recommended that their salaries should be higher than what they are receiving, and I would like to know whether that recommendation is being carried out by this Government with the co-operation of the Bauxite Company.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think I can throw some light on this matter. A Surveyor was urgently required in connection with the dredging of the Demerara River and there was no one available outside the Service who could do that work. That Officer has been seconded and is being paid by the persons who are paying for the dredging. His post is being retained. Another Surveyor employed in the Lands and Mines Department is actually working in the Demerara River. For that type of work no other Surveyor can be got.

THE CHAIRMAN: He is a Surveyor of the Department of Lands and Mines who has been seconded to work with the Bauxite Co.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: He is doing very responsible work, a type of work for which no other surveyor could have been obtained.

Mr. LEE: Do I understand from Government that this surveyor's service with the company is not being acknowledged as service with the Government?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it will be.

Mr. McDAVID: I do not know of this specific case but I know of two other surveyors seconded for war work and there was a special ruling which protected them and allowed their service whilst in the particular employment to count for pension.

Mr. LEE: Do I understand that this officer is not seconded for service with the Bauxite Co.?

THE CHAIRMAN: He is not one of these officers under item 7. If you wish to bring the matter up you will have to do so later.

Item 12—Engineering Surveys, \$7,000.

Mr. JACOB: I wish to say that I do not like the manner in which the question raised by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) was answered from the Government side just now. The hon. Member stated specifically that an officer from this Department has been seconded to do work for a private concern. That statement was stoutly denied.

THE CHAIRMAN: That statement is not true. I gather that no surveyor from this Department has been seconded. It has emerged that a surveyor from the Department of Lands and Mines was seconded.

Mr. JACOB: Technically that may be correct, but we are here to co-operate with Government and we expect to receive correct answers.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must really intervene. The Colonial Secretary intervened to give the correct answer. The Consulting Engineer had no means of knowing, and as soon as the Colonial Secretary realized what was the question he went outside, got the information, came back and gave it. I can regard nothing as being more correct.

Mr. JACOB: Your Excellency has been here only a short time. My impression is that the tendency here is to make out that the majority of hon. Members are not acquainted with anything, and when they raise any question it must be just brushed aside. I want to say quite plainly that I disapprove of such methods by the senior Government Officers. I raised a point this morning and on a previous occasion about engineering surveys at Craig village. No attempt has been made to answer it. I complained that the design of the Craig drainage reconditioning works was all wrong. I am not an expert or a surveyor, but as a layman I have the assurance and the authority of those concerned to make the definite statement that the surveys which have been carried out there are all wrong, definitely wrong, and a scandalous waste of money. I raised the point here but no attempt has been made to answer it.

I am going to refer to another matter. I raised the question two years ago and asked that an expert be sent there. Mr. Morrish, a mechanical engineer at Pln. Diamond, went there and made a report. I was told that the report was there. I asked to be allowed to see it but I have not seen it up to this moment. As a Member of this Council it is my right; I want no favour. I am entitled to see any report issued on any point I have raised. That report has been denied me. Now we raise this question about those wonderful engineering surveys it takes me nowhere. Here we have an opportunity to get specific answers in order that they may be put on

record, but the whole thing is brushed aside. I think the question about the drainage of Craig village should be answered in this Council. All the technical officers are here to-day. What is the reason for not answering them? I have a letter here from the Colonial Secretary dated October 27, in which he stated:—

“The various points raised at the meeting will require considerable investigation and survey work and the preparation of estimates before the Drainage Board can consider them. Some time must necessarily elapse, therefore, before any decision is taken.”

Here we have a definite statement. For three years Government has been messing around the drainage of Craig village, a small area. When I raised the question in Finance Committee and asked why not get surveyors the Colonial Secretary said it was most difficult to get surveyors. Now we have it that Government surveyors, whether from the Public Works Department or the Department of Lands and Mines, have been loaned to private interests. Government work must be subordinated to other work, and the whole Colony flooded year after year for a century. I am thoroughly disgusted. When will this matter end? My statements are wholly true, definite and authentic. As a matter of fact I accompanied the Consulting Engineer—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the hon. Member said that a surveyor has been seconded to work for private interests. I would like to get that clear.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. Member referring also to the dredge on the river? I think the Colonial Secretary wants to correct any impression that it is private work. It is being paid for by the Ministry of Aircraft Production in England.

Mr. JACOB: The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) said that Mr. Wong is engaged by the Bauxite Company, and we find that his name appears in the Civil Service List.

Mr. McDAVID: The matter is perfectly simple. That officer has been seconded for work on a matter of Imperial interest. It is true that it is in connection with the Demerara Bauxite Co., but I have in my hand a rule passed by the Executive Council which reads in this fashion:—

Pension rights — Council decided in terms of Section 30 of the Pensions Ordinance, Chapter 204, and Section 22 of the Pensions Ordinance, 1933, that any period during which a public officer has been seconded from the Public Service for special duty on emergency war service of a civil character should count in the computation of his pension.

His Excellency the Governor concurred in the advice tendered by the Council.

Those words describe the nature of the duties the officer is now engaged on. It is work of a civil character, very necessary in the war effort, and that is why the Council has safeguarded his pension rights. He is still a public officer and will resume his duties as such. He is in the Department of Lands and Mines.

Mr. JACOB: I am not asking about his pension at all. I am asking about the man to do this necessary work so that we can get along with our drainage and irrigation schemes. My point is that I am told that there is a shortage of surveyors. We cannot get the necessary staff to do urgent works to carry on the Grow More Food Campaign, and I gather that a surveyor could not be obtained. If the Bauxite Co. wanted surveyors why didn't they advertise for them? Why loan men to them whom we cannot afford to spare?

My next point is that here we have surveys made years ago and it is admitted definitely in a letter that the entire work will have to be done over again. The Consulting Engineer and I went to Craig one Sunday morning about two years ago and we looked at the works there. Whether he will admit it or not I was perfectly satisfied that the whole design was bad. I am not an expert—not a civil engineer,

drainage engineer, irrigation engineer or sea defence engineer. I am nothing, but the fact is that the village is perpetually under water, and I have raised it under this head expecting that Government would make a specific statement as to what will be done. As it is beyond the ability of Government to put the place in order I am of the opinion that Government has proved itself hopelessly incapable of doing it for three years.

It has been reported in the Press that the interests of the Board are not well served, particularly by the Chairman. Until the Constitution is changed Government officers must assume responsibility for drainage and irrigation. The Director of Public Works is the person to look after such matters. Why put it on other people? Surely they have quite a lot of their own work to do. The other day I looked into the Civil Service List and observed the names of several persons on several Boards and Committees. Can they spare the time for such work? They do the work and Government officers say this or that was done by the Committee. The Director of Public Works has been here for a long time and has been in close contact with the Consulting Engineer. I want to know whether those officers have found it impossible to remedy the situation at Craig village?

Mr. LEE: I can read only from the Civil Service List, 1941, under Lands and Mines—

THE CHAIRMAN: Public Works Department.

Mr. LEE: Under Lands and Mines—

THE CHAIRMAN: You are out of order.

Mr. LEE: This Civil Service List shows that on the 27th July, 1936, the officer was seconded as Assistant Draughtsman to the Sea Defence Board in connection with Hydrographic Surveys. In January, 1938, he was

appointed Assistant Hydrographer, Public Works Department, and on February 1, 1940, he was appointed Surveyors' Assistant, Lands and Mines Department.

THE CHAIRMAN: His substantive appointment is in the Department of Lands and Mines.

Item 16—Miscellaneous, \$240.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I crave Your Excellency's indulgence to refer to a particular matter under item 16—Miscellaneous. I do not think I am quite in order but I came late, for which I apologize. Some time ago a well was being bored at Rosehall for oil, but water was found at a considerable depth. I understand that the well was offered to this Government for the paltry sum of \$400, but it was refused. It was such an appalling statement to me that I called on the Colonial Secretary about it and I think he verified the statement I had heard. The well cost something in the vicinity of a quarter of a million dollars and had an excellent flow of water, but when a certain depth was reached rock formation or some other obstruction prevented further drilling for oil. I have had the matter brought to my notice again. People in this Colony will not believe that this Government could be so silly as to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, and so allow an opportunity of that description to pass through its hands for the paltry sum of \$400. I would like a statement on the matter made public. The Director of Public Works is not conversant with the matter. It was brought to Government's notice by your humble servant, but I have not had a satisfactory reply to it. I know that Your Excellency has been communicated with on the subject.

THE CHAIRMAN: This matter was brought up to me by the Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) many months ago, and I remember asking for certain papers to satisfy my-

self how the matter was disposed of, but I cannot remember the particular details, and I do not think any officer here can. Precisely that point was raised by the hon. Member, and I did have it looked up at the time. It must have been as long ago as last March, and I am afraid I cannot remember the details. I doubt whether we can get them in three minutes, but I propose to look into it and give the hon. Member the information as soon as we can.

Item 1 (27)—9 Office and Stores Assistants—4 at \$450 x \$30—\$600; 5 at \$288 x \$24—\$480—\$4,384 was amended to read:—9 Office and Stores Assistants—5 at \$450 x \$30—\$600; 4 at \$288 x \$24—\$480—\$4,415.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am under an obligation to the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) to give him an opportunity to move his motion. We will therefore hold over the other Public Works heads.

The Council resumed.

THE PRESIDENT: What I propose to do is that after the hon. Member has addressed the Council I will call on the Director of Agriculture to reply to any points raised, which might be useful to other Members.

DEVELOPMENT OF A FIBRE INDUSTRY.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Sir, I have very great pleasure indeed in moving the following motion which stands in my name on the agenda today:—

THAT Government be requested to obtain from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund a loan of \$250,000 (two hundred and fifty thousand dollars) free of interest for a period of 10 years for the development of a fibre industry in the Colony.

In doing so I think I am in very good company, because in the midst of the conflict which we know is being waged for liberty and justice the chief combatants are still able to stop for a

moment to consider what should take place after the war. Therefore I need not preface my remarks by stating what we are all agreed upon—that the war is the all-absorbing topic of the day, and the question is what should be done to assist in winning it? In considering what we should do by way of post-war arrangements, which I see is being considered by all the belligerents, I observed in the telegram which Your Excellency was pleased to circulate a little while ago, that the Secretary of State has sent out a programme of what he considers should be done by the Colonies, including British Guiana, in their own interest. He referred to them as post-war problems, and began by saying that the economic development of the Colonies included the establishment or enlargement of secondary industries.

That is not a new topic. It was dealt with by the Wilson-Snell Commission which came here in 1926. It is remarkable that only yesterday the name of Mr. Roy Wilson was being discussed by me, and this morning I observed that he has gone to join the Great Majority. He was instrumental in taking away from us the old Constitution, and in recommending the 1928 Order-in-Council which is in a comatose state now. That Commission recommended for British Guiana the development of secondary industries, and it even went so far as to name one or two of them, among them being peanuts. The Department of Agriculture embarked upon the cultivation of peanuts, and the then Governor who had the temerity to cultivate it as an example to the people, produced peanuts at double the price he obtained for his crop. Therefore that single attempt to establish a secondary industry laid to rest the question of the development of secondary industries in this Colony. The gentleman on my left (Mr. Wood) says "No." I do not know of any other industry which Government tried, but if there were any others they went the way of the peanuts at least.

The war has brought the question of the development of secondary industries to the forefront again, and looking around for something which might be produced here, and which we can consume in considerable quantities, I came across the idea of a fibre industry. This country is teeming with fibrous substances, and speaking of those which have been tried and reported upon favourably by the Imperial Institute in London I find that one of the first is cotton, which is reported as being grown by the Macousi Indians in the Mazaruni river. There is also mention of silk grasses used by the Indians for making hammocks, fishing lines, and rope. We also have the wild ochroe and plantain fibre. With Your Excellency's permission I will read a report by Sir William Holmes who was a Director of Kew Gardens and represented British Guiana at the World Exhibition in 1862. This is what he wrote to the Department of Agriculture:—

"The Colony is so renowned for the excellent quality of its cotton—that although for many years we have ceased to export a single bale, Demerara cotton remains stereotyped in the Liverpool prices current and occupies a place next to Sea Island. The sample exhibited quite kept up our former repute and afforded a variety of qualities from the silky green seed to the coarse qualities obtained from the Macousi Indians.

"It is generally known here that we have an unlimited amount of most suitable land for the growth of this plant; in fact, if we had hands British Guiana alone could supply the demand of the English market. It is most unfortunate that we have not hitherto been able to utilize the fibre of the plantain whose fruit may be said to be the staple food of the Colony. Thousands of tons of this material are annually allowed to rot on the ground, and yet a very complete and inexpensive machine was exhibited with which the writer with his own hands readily obtained from a banana tree kindly contributed for the experiment by Sir Henry Hooker from the Royal Gardens at Kew, fibre valued at £40 a ton."

Your Excellency, I wish to emphasize the words: "If we had hands," be-

cause this bogey of not having hands has resulted in keeping back any attempt whatsoever at developing subsidiary industries in this Colony. It is a fact that British Guiana has never had a superabundance of labour, therefore whenever any attempt was made to develop a secondary industry the question arose: what would become of its major industry? It was said that it would ruin that industry, and there was a smack of truth in that in those days. Those interested in that industry are still apprehensive to-day, but I venture to say that their fears are not well founded.

While it was a truism in those days when Sir William Holmes wrote those words the position is not quite the same to-day. We have been building up a class of unemployed first and unemployables afterwards. We have had for years women, girls and young children who had never and will never be found in the employment which the major industry offers, and which the rice field offers. We can never hope that certain of the female element in this country will take to the cane field or the rice field. What are they to do in the meantime? Absolutely nothing, but remain a positive drag on the economic system of the country. While the ordinary working man finds something to do in the cane field or rice field he has no desire that his wife or his daughters should follow him there. They remain at home with very little to do, and he becomes dissatisfied with his earnings because he has several persons dependent upon him. It is not the fault of his wages; he has too heavy a load to carry. The other members of his family should have some occupation of their own so as to assist the family budget.

A fibre industry would enable the people I have described to earn something without injuring the major industry. I have not very long to go, I am sure, but I cannot visualize beyond any short period on this side that we can do without the sugar industry, and we

will have to enter into economics more than we have done in the past to maintain our sugar industry. So that while I advocate the establishment of secondary industries I also advocate the protection of the major industry of the Colony. We are now subsidizing flour in order that it may be sold cheaper. What is there to prevent us from subsidizing sugar so that the people might buy it at a reasonable figure? I have only mentioned that in passing in order to alleviate any fear in the minds of those who are interested in our major industry.

I was careful to investigate it and I find that in 10 years this Colony imported 1,620,000 bags, and from what countries? We got them from the United Kingdom. I do not know what fibre is grown there but I have a shrewd suspicion that fibre is obtained from the East Indies and the bags are manufactured in England. We also import bags from Canada, from the British West Indies, from the United States and from India.

Mr. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs): The bags really come from India.

Mr. ELEAZAR: In a country overrun with fibrous substances we allow countries not only where fibre is grown—because I understand that Bengal is the only place where jute seems to flourish—but even the West Indies to manufacture bags from Indian jute.

Prof. DASH (Director of Agriculture): No.

Mr. ELEAZAR: We have a country teeming with fibrous substances and we are clamouring and searching for subsidiary industries. Here is one. The picture is still more appalling when I find that during those 10 years I referred to this country importing bags to the value of \$3,786,670. That is exclusive of cotton twine and cordage, all of which can be made here. I have in my hand samples of rope and twine

made from fibres which are growing wild in this country. They have been made with very crude machinery if any machinery at all. While we have the material here and people idling we are purchasing bags to the tune of nearly four million dollars in 10 years. The Director of Agriculture may say in his usual way that it cannot pay. If it cannot be done economically in British Guiana; if the cost of production is always higher than the cost of the article when produced, we cannot follow a worse example than that of the United Kingdom.

When Great Britain began to experiment in the growing of beet and they were told that they could not produce beet sugar to compete with the sugar market the British Government subsidized beet sugar to the tune of £37 million, and when they were remonstrated with and told that £5 million would enable the West Indies to flood the British Isles with sugar the reply was "It is true that if we gave you £5 million you would be able to give us all the sugar we need, but we have so many people unemployed, and we are subsidizing the beet industry so that those people may find employment."

If it came to that, why should we not subsidize a fibre industry so that the women and girls especially might find employment? It would astonish you, sir, if you knew the extent of female muscles running waste in this country. If you advertise for 30 wardmaids for the Hospital and you do not get 300 applicants I would change my name. The same thing applies to pupil teachers. Those are not the people who go into the cane fields or the rice fields, and there is nothing else for them to do. They are therefore simply parasites and a drag on the wheels of the country's progress. It is a stupendous paradox that in this country we are always complaining that we have not sufficient labour, yet we have such a large number of unemployed people, not to mention the unemployables—people who would not

work if they could and could not if they would. Every country in the world has such people. I am not speaking of such people but of those who are anxious to do something.

The programme which has been sent to us by the Secretary of State states that our first business here as a post-war problem is the economic development of secondary industries. Here is one which I stand here and present to this Government. We get Canadian flour here in Canadian bags; we get flour from the United States in American bags. They manufacture cotton and send bales of cotton here. From Rosignol to Kitty one can hardly pass two villages where you will not find a clump of cotton growing wild. The Americans send their flour here in cotton bags. We export 180,000 tons of sugar in bags but do not manufacture a single bag. We are sending tons of rice out of the Colony but we do not manufacture a single bag in a country teeming with fibrous substances. Japan sends rice to Martinique in sacks or some contraption made from the rice grass. This is the time for us to try to do something.

When some years ago I moved a motion for development some Members who would have liked to oppose it but could not find any reasonable or logical ground for opposition said to me: "But you have not put any scheme before us." In order to offset any argument of that kind in this case I have allocated in my own way this amount of \$250,000 which I am asking Government to provide. I suggest \$50,000 for the acquisition of lands. That figure may be too little or too much, but estimates would have to be gone into, and that is a job for the engineers. I suggest \$100,000 for machinery and buildings; \$75,000 for materials and \$25,000 for contingencies.

I have also gone to the trouble of earmarking a piece of land for Government. Chapter 170 empowers Government to acquire land for public pur-

poses. I know of my own knowledge that some of our products here have failed because they were produced away from the centre of civilization, and the surroundings helped to kill the industry. Not 15 miles away from Georgetown will be found Pln. Chateau Margot which was abandoned 40 years ago, and all the land between the railway line and the public road has not been beneficially occupied. I do not think it has yielded \$200 to the owner, and Government is maintaining the old chimney which stands there as a landmark. That place is eminently suitable for a fibre factory. It is easily accessible from the railway and from the public road. Government has only to negotiate with the owners, and if Government is serious about it and the owners refuse to part with it Government could invoke the aid of Chapter 170.

There are thousands of people idling because they cannot get work. Unemployment is not a disease, it is only a symptom of disease. My seconder is anxious to speak and I am anxious to get his support. I therefore commend the motion to the favourable consideration of Your Excellency's Government in the fervent hope that Government will at least start to prepare and plan for something after the war. This is a project which is certainly equally useful during the war. If we are to export our sugar why can't we send it in our own bags? We cannot get bags from India for a long time. Even if we can get them now we should not continue to import them all the time. Why should we provide other people with employment when we have a number of people in this Colony unemployed? I commend the motion to the favourable consideration of Government.

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to have the motion formally seconded and then I shall hear the Director of Agriculture.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I wish to second the motion, and in deference to Your Ex-

cellency's desire I had intended to defer my contribution to the debate until the Director of Agriculture had spoken. As a matter of fact I would have preferred to speak after the Director had spoken if, as I fear, he will not look very favourably on the motion, but unfortunately I have a very pressing appointment in the next 10 minutes, and I therefore crave Your Excellency's indulgence to say a few words on it.

THE PRESIDENT: Very well.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I look upon the motion as a very timely one indeed, although it is true that perhaps it has come at a time when it is very difficult to obtain supplies in the way of machinery and so on. Nevertheless it is my belief that the matter is so important and so urgent that some immediate steps might be taken to give effect to the proposal as outlined by my friend on my left. It has always been my opinion, and I think I stand in good company, when I say that the chief ill of this country is the lack of industrial establishments. I will always welcome and support very strongly any attempt that might be made either on the Elective side or the Government side for the establishment of an industry which, in my view, has every chance of succeeding, and I submit that a fibre industry has every chance of succeeding.

The hon. Member quoted some figures in regard to the importation of bags into this country during the last 10 years, and he briefly referred also to the imports of twine and cordage during the same period. I think the figures he quoted in respect of bags are sufficient to indicate the value to this Colony of an industry of that kind, but apart from that—and this is the point I wish to make, and I make it with some regret—it is a pity that we have not yet got such an industry in this Colony, because if we had our position would certainly have been much better than it has been within recent months. We know what the

possibilities of this country are in respect of sugar, but I submit that we do not even know yet how much it may mean in regard to rice. Nevertheless the possibilities are there, and it seems a pity that up to the present no attempt has ever been made either by Government or by capitalists (this might perhaps be a very strong statement to make) to establish or put on a proper footing an industry of this kind. I know that experiments have been made, and the hon. Member on my left has shown us some samples which have been produced by hand, and I also see similar samples in front of the Director of Agriculture. Whether they have come from the same source I do not know, but they seem to me to be quite good and to indicate the possibilities of an industry of this kind.

Now, sir, whatever attempts may have been made in the past, if any—personally I do not know of any, it is true I am not very old and am still a very young man—perhaps they were not approached with that same spirit I think is now in the mind of every person in this country. There is at the present time a very strong desire on the part of the community to assist and to establish any new industry. The hon. Member suggested that perhaps it may relieve unemployment, but I personally think it will go even further than that. I think it will improve their living standards. After all, I think, it is worth while trying. I am going to urge, despite the difficulties that are in the way at the present time in obtaining information or even in obtaining supplies of the machinery required for an industry of this kind—because you can do nothing without machinery—that early steps be taken to collect the information and, if it is at all possible to obtain the machinery, that something be done in order to make a start with this industry. I know there may be some agricultural difficulties. I want right here to accept that.

Professor DASH: There is none!

Mr. De AGUIAR: I am glad to hear there will be none. I was going to digress to say that whenever we want to get our own material we are up against a number of agricultural difficulties. I am not thinking of finances at the moment. I am very pleased to hear that so far as the cultivation of the fibre to be manufactured into bags is concerned there is no difficulty agriculturally. If that is so I think we should make an early start in this matter.

There is one further comment I wish to make, arising out of the remarks made by the hon. Member on my left (Mr. Eleazar) when he dealt with the economic side of the question. I think he made reference to the fact that—I presume he anticipated this in reply—that we may not be able to produce an empty bag here as cheaply as in British India and, perhaps, in other parts of the world. I know he had in mind not the present-day conditions but the cost of manufacture under pre-war conditions. If he was referring to present-day conditions I would like to refer him to the price of bags today, which is very high indeed. The point I wish to make is that as far as I am concerned, Your Excellency or Government would obtain the support of every Member if it is found possible to manufacture bags, or for that matter anything at all, in this Colony. Of course the question of price comes in, but that is what we have our tariffs for. We can prevent anything from coming here to compete with us, and I do not think that any member of the community would oppose that on the ground of being able to import the article cheaper. If they do, I am very sorry for them for obviously they will be enemies to themselves, as whatever is produced here will mean the circulation of money in the community. As far as I am concerned I do not think there can be any question at all about the cost, because if it becomes a necessity—I am not suggesting the imposition of a high tariff, but it seems to me

a wise step to take—to impose such a tariff to prohibit what I now describe as inferior competition from the East, I have no doubt that even those people who may be opposed to that view will give way in the long run, having regard to the benefits that are likely to be obtained through the establishment of an industry of this kind. After all it is a community matter. I conclude by saying a motion of this kind will receive my unqualified support and I hope early steps will be taken to implement it.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): Sir, I think we have all listened with a great deal of interest to what has fallen from the lips of the two hon. Members who have spoken in connection with the motion, which I think is of tremendous importance at the present juncture. As I said to my hon. friend a few days ago when we had a chat about the problem, he was pushing an open door as far as I am concerned and as far as Government is concerned. I agree in principle with everything the motion purports to obtain. There are, however, a number of points connected with such a motion which I think are important and it is my duty to make clear. In the first place, I think, my hon. friend referred to old reports on fibre which had been sent forward for examination from this Colony. That is the sort of thing that has been going on in this Colony for a long number of years, but conditions at the present day both agriculturally and economically speaking, have changed so much that much of that material, however available it may be, forms no practical basis for consideration of the facts pertaining to the development of some of these highly specialized industries as they stand today.

In connection with fibre, generally it is not sufficient to say the plants will grow here. There are certain standards of quality that are essential

on the field side. First of all there is the question of yield, then there is the fineness of the strand and the quality of the fibre for the specific use to which it has to be put. Some of these local fibres can be of very good quality but, on the other hand generally speaking, they have not so far measured up to the other standards which I have mentioned. I would just give a brief general picture of the factors as I see them, and refer specifically to the steps which are being taken to get development speeded up as far as we can in the present circumstances.

At the outset, let me say that a substantial amount of experimental work has been carried out in this Colony on the subject of fibre production. A large number of plants, both local and imported, have been tried out. A summary of the position was recently communicated to the Berbice Chamber of Commerce where the matter was brought up, and this report was duly acknowledged by the Chamber and appreciation and thanks expressed concerning the action taken by Government. That report was also published in the Press, so there is no need to go over the whole ground with reference to the species of fibres, some of which have been mentioned by the hon. Member who moved the motion.

Whilst results in the past have not been favourable, due for the most part to low and uneconomic yields, more recent experiments with Roselle, a specie of the Hibiscus, which I was able to obtain from the East about two years ago, have shown distinct possibilities, and promising field yields have been obtained on the coastal belt under a wide variety of conditions. A considerable amount of work has been done on Roselle in Java and also in India. It is possibly one of the best substitutes that we have for jute at the present time. Here are some of the samples of twine and cord made from it. The fibre itself, you will see, is extremely

long. None of those plants the hon. Member mentioned is going to produce fibre this length. Whilst we are sympathetic, some of these points are important and have to be borne in mind.

Sizeable samples of Roselle fibre got out after the ratting process were despatched early this year to the Imperial Institute. Unfortunately, recent advices indicate that all those samples went to the bottom of the sea. All that material was lost and fresh lots have been sent forward. The Imperial Institute have been asked to report in general on the value and yield of those samples for bag, cord, rope and twine making etc., and to give all possible information on the subject, together with estimates for the equipment and machinery necessary. Meantime, trials with hand equipment at the Georgetown Prison have indicated that, as I have reported, this material is very excellent for twine and cord making and of very high quality indeed. A search is being made at the present time for combs and twistors in order to get ahead a little faster with the manufacture of twine in particular. These samples I have shown were made at the Prison for us with material grown at the Government Station and which is being used for sewing padi bags.

Another important point is that Washington is also very interested in the production of fibre of this type, because with difficulties of transportation their jute and burlah, so largely used in industry and which came almost entirely from India, are not available to the same extent as formerly and they have to use substitutes or something of the kind as we would like to do ourselves here. In the meantime, preparations are in hand for the extension of seed blocks throughout the coastal belt in an effort to do precisely the same as hon. Members who have spoken have in view—to speed up development as much as possible,

The hon. Member's motion then is timely and appreciated by Government, but the sum necessary for the purpose in view is quite unknown at this stage. I will refer to that a little later in some of my detailed remarks on further information I have received. Considerations on the economic side and particularly the ability of the Colony to compete with countries with cheap labour will also arise. That is to say, they will arise when we come to tackle the problem of large scale manufacture with machinery. Apart from that, in view of the importance of a twine and bag industry to this Colony the Authorities, especially the Colonial Development and Welfare Authorities, and all those in a position to assist financially will, as I definitely feel, take a very sympathetic view and encouragement will be given to an industry of this kind. There is much more to be said. I have been assured that the Sugar Industry will also be anxious to take part in any fibre development project if economic success is assured. Already the Sugar Industry is helping us materially in getting seed blocks established. I would say, and I think it is Government's view, that it is too premature, however, to accept the hon. Member's motion in the way it has been put forward, but Government feels that nevertheless it should be recorded and the fullest assurance given that everything possible will be done to establish such an industry. That sets out very generally some of the more important considerations that have arisen.

Yesterday afternoon I received a long letter from the Imperial Institute in reply to some of the correspondence sent them and in particular after the first lot of samples had gone down. I still hope to receive word of the duplicate lot sent them. There are one or two points in the letter and report which I think should be mentioned here. I have made a short precis of several of the outstanding ones. The

first is they have said that Roselle is used for all purposes for which the equivalent quality of jute will serve. A cottage, hand or very small factory industry may do well now but will hardly prosper in normal times. A large-scale industry especially as regards bags may have to be established on a regional basis and fiscal protection may have to be arranged. What that suggests is that we may find our requirements too small to run a factory on our own, in which case the neighbouring Colonies can join in and supply any material for bag-making as well. As hon. Members know, many of these industries are not economic from the point of view of manufacture and cost, below a certain unit of production. In the case of sugar, for example, below 10,000 tons is not an economic unit. So the same sort of consideration arises in fibre. What I said a moment ago in reply to the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) in connection with the agricultural side of the industry, I repeat here. The stuff will grow but the agricultural part is not the prime difficulty when all these other factors come into the picture. We shall need, if we are to aim at supplying all requirements 10,000 to 12,000 acres under this fibre, and I do not think this acreage will be unobtainable. That brings me back to the figures my hon. friends have mentioned. I think the land is available without any need for setting aside any money for it, but a large sum of money will be needed on the processing and manufacture side.

There is another point. A quotation for a small plant to make three to four thousand bags working 48 hours a week, put the cost at \$6,000, eighteen months ago, but it is stated that manufacture on such a limited scale would not be economical. As I see it, the Colony's requirements would be something like 45,000 bags a week. The quotation given for the smallest twine and rope plant likely to prove economical, is \$95,000 F.O.B., Liverpool, with no provision made

for freight, erection, spares and housing. So if the smallest rope and twine making plant is going to reach \$95,000 first cost, what is your bag plant going to cost? We do not know. These are some of the things we have to find out. Hence I say to accept the sum in the motion will be unwise.

Just a word or two more on what we ourselves are planning in connection with development. We are hoping now from these preliminary trials to learn something of what to expect. We hope with the aid of many of the sugar estates to be able in 1943, about mid-year, to have enough seed to plant about 500 acres and establish 50 acres for seed blocks. We are sowing all the seed we have with a view to securing a seed supply for as much as we can plan. We have not yet been able to determine whether Roselle will seed in mid-year, or whether its cycle will carry it on to the end of the year. I think some realize that the common sorrel, closely related to it, produces seed only around Christmas time. At any rate we are putting in now as much as possible, in the hope that at the end of the dry season in 1943 it will come into bloom and produce seed sufficient to plant 500 acres and have 50 acres for seed. From that substantial planting we should get adequate information as to yield, cost, labour requirements etc. We have a certain amount already, but I am not suggesting it is the final word. As a rough example, from the small trials it would appear to cost something like 6 to 8 cents per lb. to produce. I have just given that to show how carefully we have gone about this fibre study. If we get the area mentioned established, it will enable us also to do some instruction work and teach labour how to handle it. We may not be able with the hand equipment we have here to utilize all the material obtained from that production, but I have no doubt that we should be able to dispose of it abroad. It can be baled and shipped away. I

believe the United States will be very glad to get it. We have been greatly helped in the matter through the courtesy of the U.S. Consul. After that stage has been reached, then you can begin to plan a long range policy and to find out much more than we know at present about the probable manufacturing plant we will need and the cost.

As I have tried to stress, it is not merely a question of cultivation. I believe that Roselle will grow here as readily as it does abroad. It yields 600 lbs., roughly 300 bags per acre. With careful attention, manuring, and good cultivation, I see no reason for not getting up to 1,000 lbs. The fact is, on the agricultural side it is a good proposition, but when we come to the manufacturing side on a scale large enough to justify our putting money into it or asking our friends to help us with money, that is where the problems are sinister. Governments, I know, are in full sympathy with the views expressed by the hon. Member and his colleague who seconded the motion—and they are in line with my own views—and I will suggest that Government now accept the motion for record but without the sum of money as stated. It may cramp our style in getting the assistance, to name a figure which is going to be very insufficient.

Mr. JACKSON: I think the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) deserves to be complimented for bringing prominently before this Council the motion that he has moved. There is no doubt about it, that any industry that can be established and any attention to those we have will be of immense benefit to us all and the Colony in general. But I am strongly of the opinion that the motion as it stands may not find favour in this Council. I had drafted an amendment which I thought would have met the case, but after listening to the views given by the hon. the Director of Agri-

culture and the assurance given that the matter is engaging the attention of the Government I am inclined to think that the hon. Mover will be going on right lines if he adopts the suggestion of Government as envisaged by the hon. the Director of Agriculture and allows the principle of his motion to be adopted on the assurance that Government will continue making every effort on its part to solve or find out the real possibility of establishing a fibre industry in this Colony. According to my way of thinking, there are plants which may yield abundantly and may make it possible for the industry to be carried out but more research is necessary, and I do think it will be wise on the part of the hon. Mover of the motion to accept Government's assurance and ask that his motion without the amount suggested may be accepted in principle by Government and the matter kept constantly before the mind of Government and of us all.

Mr. STAFORD: I would like to join in the expressions which have been made here by the speakers on the motion now before the Council, and if anything I say appears to be a criticism I wish the hon. mover of the motion to feel it is not given with the idea of obstruction but merely of assistance more than anything else. The first point is, we know that these various fibre industries had been tried out in this Colony in the past, but for various reasons, chiefly the cost of labour, it was found that it was not possible to compete with the other countries in the East where the standard of living is very much lower than it is here. That does not condemn it altogether, for the reason that fibre can be got to grow here to an extent better than anywhere else and owing to production we may be able to compete. For that reason, if no other, we are quite justified in giving it a further trial.

As regards the work to be done on it, as the hon. the Director of Agri-

ture has said, experimental work has been going on for some time and the prospects appear to be good. I am quite satisfied that there will be no difficulty in private enterprise going ahead with such an industry as this, but naturally before spending any large amount of money they will ask for certain guarantees. By that I mean, after the war, this fibre may be grown in other places and no one is going to spend a large sum of money without asking Government to guarantee every protection or, as it is called today, subsidization. But Government cannot accept that quite light-heartedly. If Government agrees to protect it and, as said by the hon. seconder of the motion, imposes such a tariff as to prohibit importation from the East, that has a very wide ramification. We have got to remember that if we prohibit the importation of bags in order to protect our local industry, we may be hitting another industry. If the cost of bags produced here is 20 cents more, it means that every bag of rice sent out of this country will be costing 20 cents more. You will have to get that 20 cents more or produce at 20 cents less because after the War we will have to compete with other Colonies in rice, and a great deal depends on what is going to happen to the Empire and the Colonies after the War. I do not think anyone at the moment knows just what is going to happen.

I do feel, and I agree with the hon. Director of Agriculture, that it is a thing Government should assist and do everything it can to aid, but I do not think we can here agree to any fixed sum, as has been already pointed out. I think we should ask Government at the present time to give such sum as may be found necessary to aid in the setting up of an industry such as this. I believe that can be done and that it will be done, but I do not think we can ask for a specific sum until we are sure of our facts. I feel, sir, that perhaps the assistance you may get from the Imperial Government may be one of

putting up a factory, because I do believe that we can get all the loans we require in this Colony. I join in congratulating the hon. Mover for putting forward this motion. We all sympathize with him. Sometimes we say his sentiments are nebulous, but I feel he has the good of this country at heart.

Mr. JACOB: I think that this motion deserves the unanimous support of this Council. The question of the cost of developing the industry is a very big one, I agree, and some further investigation should be made as regards the amount that is required. I would suggest to the hon. mover that he amends his motion to read after deleting the amount of \$250,000: "and that a small committee be appointed to go into the cost of establishing a factory for the manufacture of bags, rope etc." I think that Committee should be appointed to go into the various details, and that should be done as promptly as possible. It is time that we look around and see if other industries cannot be established in this Colony. We have had it from the hon. Director of Agriculture that experiments have been made and there are suitable fibres here or can be grown here. The question of whether we can economically manufacture bags, ropes etc., from them is something to be carefully considered. I agree; but since the trend of world affairs is changing so rapidly, it is time that we in this part of the world make arrangements to become self-supporting. We have been depending almost entirely on the East, and we do not know what is going to be the position. This hemisphere is quite expansive. The whole of the West Indies can be benefited by the establishment of a factory here for the manufacture of bags, ropes, twines, etc. I cannot imagine we will not be able to manufacture those articles almost as economically as the East. I think our lands are very fertile and we ought to

be able to do this job very efficiently. We have got two good examples in sugar and rice. We can grow those two very successfully and, I hope we all agree, profitably. I commend this amendment to my hon. friend and, if he accepts it, the whole question can be gone into very carefully. I have no doubt if we do this we would find employment for a large number of women and girls who at the moment cannot find employment.

THE PRESIDENT: In the first instance the Colonial Development Welfare Fund is, strictly speaking, un-created. There is no such fund. The correct phraseology is the Colonial Development Welfare Act. You obtain funds under the Act. I was going to suggest that the motion be amended to read: "That Government be requested to obtain under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act . . ."

Mr. ELEAZAR: The motion which I handed in had that originally because I had made that discovery.

THE PRESIDENT: Personally I suggest that but it is not material. Then you say "a loan." Why confine yourself to a loan? Why not simply say "to obtain under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act funds of such sufficient amount as may be found necessary," following the wording of the suggestion of the hon. Member for Georgetown North? Will that suit?

Mr. ELEAZAR: That will suit me.

THE PRESIDENT: Now we have the further proposal that a small Committee be appointed.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I am entirely with the motion, but I think if the records can be turned up you will find that this thing has been before this Government through private enterprise. Land was acquired in the Colony; a gentleman came out here—an expert—and investigated it. He acquired an estate and ventured on the

project but found that the price of labour was such he could not hope to compete with India and in addition, I think, Government would not give him the assistance that he asked for. He wanted some protection and this Government turned it down. I cannot quite remember the estate though I happened to have sold it in the first instance and had to re-sell it at a sacrifice.

Mr. ELEAZAR: All I have to do is to thank my hon. friend, the Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) for his suggestion, but from what I know of committees I must, with the best of intentions, refuse to accept that suggestion. I prefer to accept the suggestion Your Excellency has made as well as the suggestion of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford). Also I have to thank the hon. the Director of Agriculture. For the first time after a number of years he is seeing eye to eye with me in something. It is never too late to mend. I have to thank some more people as well. I have gone at some length to get in touch with people not only interested but who have the interests of the Colony at heart, and in doing so I came across two of the Directors of Booker Bros., McConnell & Co., Ltd. I had a hint that somewhere they had in their own way experimented in the manufacture of rope, cord and twine for their own purpose, and they very readily showed me the samples which I have here now. I can show them to the Director, provided he returns them to Messrs. Booker Bros. when he is finished with them. Your Excellency, in the old days men wore bags which used to come from the United States. We do not want bags to make clothes but to hold rice and sugar. I think it is a very good step. I wish to thank Government exceedingly. Government should get a mead of praise when they deserve it. Government too had been looking in the same direction and it shows that they were anxious to find some subsidiary industry to those already established. I cannot conceive

that the Sugar Planters, had they succeeded, would have kept it to themselves. They too look forward to a subsidiary industry, although they stand to get into conflict through it more than anyone else. I have nothing but thanks for all those who have spoken—for the Director for the interest he has taken, and for Government for its promise to do all in its power to get this project going. I hope this is only the preliminary to the development of subsidiary industries and that others will be found later on. I wish to thank the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight). I know the gentleman he referred to. Mr. Fordham came here, carried out experiments on the West Bank and produced some excellent fibres. He even coloured them and had them exhibited. The moment he spoke about protection, Government without any ceremony turned it down and Mr. Fordham took up his traps and cleared out. We did not mind as we could have got it from India then, but we have got wise after the event. It is never too late to mend.

THE PRESIDENT: So you accept the suggested words I have quoted but not the proposal for the appointment of a small committee?

Mr. ELIAZAR: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the hon. Member wish to press his amendment?

Mr. JACOB: I merely made a suggestion.

THE PRESIDENT: There is no other obvious way of proceeding later on!

The motion was amended to read—

“That Government be requested to obtain under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act funds of such sufficient amount as may be found necessary for the development of a fibre industry in the Colony.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion as amended carried.

LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES (TEMPORARY MODIFICATION) BILL.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL Mr. Pretheroe: In moving the second reading of this Bill there is only a short explanation necessary. Section 8 of the Life Assurance Companies Ordinance provides that “all life assurance companies shall every fifth year prepare reports and documents,” and the following section provides that those documents “shall be sent to an Actuary who shall report on them.” Section 10 provides that the documents themselves together with the Actuary’s report thereon, shall be filed with the Registrar of Companies within a fixed period. In the case of the two Companies named in the Schedule of the Bill, they have sent off their reports and the required figures to the Actuaries in good time—one Company very promptly and the other, whose Secretary recently died, with some promptness. It has so happened that a remarkable delay in the mails took place and the letters from England took five months to get here. Although they have got an extension of three months under sub-section (2) of section 10, still those documents and reports did not arrive in the Colony within that time. It was thought that the only thing to do was to introduce a Bill to validate the filing of those documents. The Bill has been drafted in general fashion, because if the shipping delays continue other Companies may find themselves in the same position. It is proposed in this Bill that the Governor may by Order extend the time on any future occasion in the same circumstances. With these few words I beg to move the second reading of—

“A Bill intituled an Ordinance to empower the Governor to extend the time within which certain documents may be deposited with the Registrar by Life Assurance Companies.”

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture) seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee, and considered the Bill clause by clause without amendment.

The Council resumed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved and Professor DASH seconded that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

Question "That the Bill be read a third time and passed" put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

With the consent of the Council, consideration of item IV on the Order of the Day—Second Reading—The Sugar Experiment Stations Bill, 1942 (Professor Dash, Director of Agriculture)—was deferred.

EXPIRING LAWS CONTINUANCE BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that—

"A Bill intituled an Ordinance to continue certain expiring laws"

be read a second time. The Schedule shows the laws are—The Bill of Entry Tax Ordinance (No. 2) 1932, (No. 8 of 1932) and the Sugar Duty Ordinance, 1942, (No. 11 of 1942). With regard to the Bill of Entry Tax it is estimated that about \$400,000 will be collected in 1943, much the same as in the 1942 Estimates. The Sugar Duty is estimated to yield \$166,000 in 1943 as against \$130,000 in 1942. It is necessary to ask hon. Members to pass this Bill as Government cannot see its way to forego any of this revenue.

Mr. JACOB: I had intimated that I am not in favour of this Bill of Entry tax. Looking through the Budget Speech by the hon. Colonial Treasurer, dated 18th November, I notice the statement is made there that no additional taxation is proposed for 1943 apart from the modification of the existing Profits Tax, etc. That statement may be technically correct but practically it is

not. Additional taxation is collected and in this wise—there are two specific duties or taxes collected in this Colony specific duties based on quantity and *ad valorem* duties based on the value of the goods. On the specific duties a three per cent. Bill of Entry tax is collected.

The value of goods has gone up in some cases 300 per cent. and in other cases 200 per cent., and in continuing to collect a Bill of Entry tax based on the value of goods you are certainly collecting additional taxation. With the *ad valorem* duties not being in the same category, I submit with all confidence that if you reduce your Bill of Entry tax then you will collect probably the same amount as last year, but if you keep the Bill of Entry tax at 3 per cent. and values are increasing still further you will be collecting additional taxation. I maintain it would be wiser to reduce the Bill of Entry tax by 50 per cent. That is to make it 1½ per cent., and the consumer will benefit to that extent. I do not see how it can be argued that no additional taxation is collected by the continuation of this 3 per cent. Bill of Entry tax. Additional taxation is collected. I think if there is any shortage of revenue the Income tax and Excess Profits tax should be increased.

The question of subsidization I have always been against, and I am still against it. I am in favour of reducing duties. This is one method of reducing the duties, particularly on certain articles of food that are in use every day. I press that Government see the advisability of reducing this tax to 1½ per cent.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): When I spoke on the substantive motion in connection with the Estimates I made the same point which the hon. Member has just made, but not quite in the same way. I said then that no additional taxation was proposed, but admitted that on account of the rise in prices the effect of the Customs tariff

is more burdensome and thus produces a higher amount of revenue, particularly on goods imported from non-Empire sources. I made that point quite strongly. On the other hand I do not think the hon. Member is serious when he suggests that because the value of goods has increased taxation has increased. He has given me a good hint. When the value of goods falls I will be entitled to come here and say that taxation should be decreased. I do not think, however, it is necessary to debate the point.

THE PRESIDENT: I am fully in sympathy with what has been said and we should go forward with it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without amendment.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved, and Mr. McDAVID seconded, that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

Question "That this Bill be read a third time and passed" put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ANN'S GROVE-CLONBROOK DRAINAGE
AND IRRIGATION WORKS.

Mr. CASE (Consulting Engineer) gave notice of the following motion:—

"That this Council approves of a free grant of \$40,900 from the Development Trust Fund to enable execution of the drainage and irrigation works at Ann's Grove-Clonbrook."

ANTIDESMA IN DEMERARA RIVER DISTRICT.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I crave your indulgence, sir, to say something that has come to my notice. I do not know if Government knows, but the hon. Director knows about it. I have been informed by a gentleman of some stand-

ing in the community that our lands in the Demerara river occupied by the Americans are growing *Antidesma*. That is a plant we have been paying thousands of dollars to exterminate. It is a nuisance. If it is being planted there in truth it will soon make the lands in the Demerara River District valueless. It should not be encouraged at all. I do not know if Government is aware of that.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Colonial Secretary has just intimated that the motion standing in his name will not take more than a minute or two.

SURTAX ON TONNAGE AND LIGHT DUES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move—

"That with reference to Governor's Message No. 1 dated 12th November, 1942, this Council approves of a surtax of fifteen per centum being levied on the amount of tonnage and light dues which shall be collected during the year 1943, under section eighteen of the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1941."

Provision has been made in the draft estimates for next year for \$250,000 Tonnage dues, and \$55,000 Light dues to be included.

Mr. McDAVID seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: This has been circulated in the form of Message No. 1.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed.

THE PRESIDENT: I forgot to say this morning with regard to the Drainage and Irrigation Schemes that I propose to increase the representation of the Legislative Council on the Drainage Board.

The Council adjourned until the following day at 12 noon.