

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

TUESDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 1954.

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

## PRESENT

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

*Ex-Officio Members:—*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Mr. John Gutch, C.M.G., O.B.E.

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

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

*Nominated Members of Executive Council:—*

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

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

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall.

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E.

The Hon. G. H. Smellie.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj.

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

*Deputy Speaker:—*

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

*Nominated Officials:—*

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

*Nominated Unofficials:—*

Mr. W. A. Phang.

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

Mr. C. A. Carter.

Mr. E. F. Correia.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb.

Mr. H. Rahaman.

Miss Gertie H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dey.

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

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

Mr. R. B. Jailal.

Mr. Sugrim Singh.

Clerk of the Legislature—Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—Mr. I. R. King.

*Absent:—*

Mr. T. Lee—on leave.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo.

The Speaker read prayers.

## MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, the 12th day of February, 1954, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

The following documents were laid on the table:

## (i) By the Chief Secretary:

The Report on the Drainage and Irrigation Problems of British Guiana by Mr. Gerald Lacey, C.I.E., M.I.C.E.

## (ii) By Sir Frank McDavid, Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines:

The Trading and Profit and Loss Account and the Balance Sheet of the Milk Marketing Organisation for the year ended 31st December, 1952, together with the Director of Audit's certificate and report thereon.

The Trading and Profit and Loss Accounts and the Balance Sheets of the Controller of Livestock and Meat for the years 1950, 1951 and 1952, together with the Director of Audit's certificate and report thereon.

## UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

SCHOOL CHILDREN AND  
THE CINEMAS

Mr. Carter gave notice of the following motion:

"Be it resolved:

"That this Council recommends the enactment of legislation to prohibit the admission of children of school age, that is, between the ages of six and fourteen, to cinemas or other houses of entertainment between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. on such days when schools are in session, except when films or shows are sponsored by educational or cultural organisations with the approval of the Department of Education."

## ORDER OF THE DAY

## BUDGET DEBATE

Council resumed the debate on the Bill intitled—

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

**Mr. Speaker :** Miss Collins, have you concluded your address, or would you like to add to the remarks you made yesterday afternoon?

Miss Collins I am finished, Sir.

**Mr. Ramphal :** If I were to say that I rise with some degree of hesitation I know that my credit would fall to the ground, so I shall bear my trepidation in silence and say that I am encouraged to speak particularly because of the open invitation the Financial Secretary gives to us on page 12 of the Budget Statement. There, he says:

"...Members of Council may no doubt have in mind and may want to discuss and propose a number of other principles in defining and shaping budgetary policy."

I take that as an invitation to Members, including those who have spoken before, to shake off their hesitation and to speak their minds as they desire. I wish to make one or two general remarks on the Budget Statement and then I shall proceed in greater detail to criticize a few points. My first general impression of the Budget Statement is that it is orthodox and cautious. It follows very closely the pattern of the Budget Statements of preceding years and in that way it pays a great tribute, to my mind, to the person who occupied the position of Financial Secretary previous to the present holder of the office. Tribute has already been paid to this Officer by the Financial Secretary and other Members of this Council who quoted from the World Bank report as to the adequacy of the Budget Statements of the past. But, Sir, this is the time when we should be bold—when we should not be hidebound to the past. I mention that merely to encourage our new Financial Secretary, perhaps, to

break new ground but with due circumspection.

I have said that the Budget Statement is very cautious because it appears to me that it is bound by a rigid application of the principle that the Budget must be balanced and that there must be a surplus. Many years ago a beggar was travelling on the public road between Abary and Belladrum, and passers-by saw him sitting on a mile stone and saying to himself, "I would rather die than do this", but nobody knew what he meant. Later he was found dead and a *post mortem* examination was held when it was found that he died of hunger. It was also reported that a \$100 note was found somewhere between the beggar's peg leg. My point is that we may have produced a budgetary surplus at very heavy cost. It may be that we would have fewer services—fewer beds in hospitals, fewer schools and so on. I say this by way of encouragement to the Financial Secretary that he should not starve the services merely to produce a balanced Budget and provide a surplus. It may be that the caution exercised on this occasion was due to the fact that this was his first Budget Statement as Financial Secretary. It must be remembered, however, that he acted many times in the past for the previous Financial Secretary and had the privilege of preparing Budget Statements before. Therefore, I cannot debit him with caution on that score.

I have also thought that this caution may have been dictated by the fact that this *Interim* Government was considered to be a caretaker Government, but on that score I wish to remind the Council and myself at all times that His Excellency the Governor has said that we must think and act as the

Government. We are not just a caretaker Government to hold certain posts until others come to take them over. That leads me, more or less, Sir, to what I consider to be our function as a Government. I feel that, first and foremost, as His Excellency has said, we must think and act as the Government. In this respect I remember an old English caution which says:

"Beware of trawlers and crawlers"

And there is an old English doggerel which says:

"The more of mouth, the less of meat  
The more of talk, the less of feat."

We are to think and act as the Government.

The second point as regards the Government is that I feel we must be a pattern for future Governments. I think that the conduct and deportment of Ministers in charge of Departments must be such that it can stand the fullest examination in future. A code of conduct for Ministers was published in the *Gazette* recently, and if we look at the past we would find that there has been disregard of that code of conduct. Only two or three weeks ago Mr. Grantley Adams, when he became Prime Minister of Barbados, immediately resigned his position as President of the largest union in that island. I wish to commend that code of conduct to our Ministers. I am not saying that the Ministers now in charge of Departments in this Colony have not acted in a similar manner. I only refer to this to emphasize that we, as Members of the Government, should so conduct ourselves that we would be a pattern for the succeeding Governments.

With respect to the ordinary members of the Council, like myself, I feel that our conduct must always be such that we would be considered vigilant in the interest of

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the people whom we have been put here to represent. The people are looking out to see whether we would be anxious after our interest and not after their interest. Therefore, we should conduct ourselves with such a standard of correctness that we would be a pattern for representatives of the future. Our conduct must be settled so as to remove, as much as possible, that truculence and complacency which struck fear in the hearts of many people. Not so long ago, those of us who are in the Government Service were so upset that we found it exceedingly difficult to carry on our work. When people came to us to make representations, their behaviour was so bad that it made it very difficult for everybody in the Government to conduct the affairs under their charge.

Shortly after the arrival of the troops in the Colony the truculence of a certain group suddenly disappeared, but there was truculence among another group. I want our conduct in **this Council** to be such as to help to remove any such behaviour in the future. I do not think that the truculence on the part of the people to whom I have referred is a credit to themselves their education or their social standing. I hope that our conduct would be such as to lift those people, gradually and smoothly, and cause them to abolish such an attitude of mind. That attitude is deep in the hearts of many people—some 49 per cent of the adult population.

**Mr. Speaker :** The hon. Member is now speaking away from the subject of the debate—the Budget.

**Mr. Ramphal :** I think it has all arisen out of my observations on the Budget.

**Mr. Speaker :** I cannot anticipate how long the hon. Member is going to speak on the Budget, but I am very anxious that references to the past should not arise under this Budget.

**Mr. Ramphal:** I am hoping that the complacency to which reference has been made will disappear. I should like to read, with your permission, Sir, an extract from the last Pastoral letter by His Grace the Archbishop of the West Indies. His Grace says:

"I am disturbed to find that many people do not yet grasp the meaning of present events, nor do they see the threat to all that they believe and hold dear, which is already seriously and rapidly developing. We stand today in great peril, not so much on account of the evil machinations of the few, but because of the dangerous and smug complacency of the many. Those who continue in present circumstances to think that it does not matter very much what political opinions are held by those who teach in the schools, or run youth organisations, or lead trade unions, or hold public offices in the country, are living in the past and are woefully ignorant of, or culpably unconcerned about what is now at stake. It is our business to awake these dreamers before it is too late, or put them on their guard before both they and we are overwhelmed by the pitiless forces of materialism which are creeping up upon us from all sides. The watchman cannot neglect his duty and be guiltless."

I hope that the conduct of the Members of this Council will be such as to help to remove that smugness and complacency. Other Members feel that this Government should go all out to recapture the confidence of the ordinary man but, Sir, all the pious expressions in this hallowed Chamber will avail us nought unless we go out to the people. I wish to remind hon. Members, however, that they must go out with sincerity and with love. If they do not go out,

with sincerity, people would discover them very quickly. President Lincoln once said: "God loves the common people and that is why He made so many of them." That is what we should remember. Our people do not want patronising, and if only we would go out to them it would prevent us from making mistakes.

The hon. Member, Mr. Macnie, wanted to find out whether it was Mr. Eleazer or Anthony Trollope who described British Guiana as "The Magnificent Province." Whoever it was, he did so because he felt that the people here are a good people, a magnificent people. These people look up to us, and Milton puts it in these few words:—"The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

My humble opinion of the Budget is that it leaves little room for criticism. The real Budget which will give rise to criticism in its widest sense—constructive and, maybe, destructive—is the Development Budget which will come before this Council shortly. When that time comes we will accept the invitation of the Financial Secretary not only to pay tribute to the International Bank Mission for its report, but to pay tribute also to the Governor for all he has done for us.

May I be permitted now, Sir, to make a few criticisms on the Budget that is before us. On page 11, in the last paragraph, the Financial Secretary says:

"Since by its very formation and structure, revenue through *ad valorem* duties of Customs and profits in regard to income tax, is bound to be sensitive to changes in price levels, it would in this circumstance seem financially prudent to aim at providing a cushion in revenue against any untoward eventualities."

This only brings me back to the point I have made before—that we

might provide such a cushion at a very high cost. We might have a discontented Service, perhaps, by starving members of the Civil Service of their just consideration. When the Financial Secretary framed his Budget nobody thought that he would have had to deal with \$22 million for important improvements this year. It seems to me that we can look forward to a larger surplus at the end of this year than what is provided for in this Budget. I think that the Financial Secretary, therefore, should feel very pleased to know that his Budget will be balanced with a tremendous surplus. I wish to say that when we are making our Budget we should not be guided by providing cushions. In other words, surpluses must not be our sole aim, a surplus must not, it appears to me, be the criterion.

My second criticism arising out of that same paragraph relates to the statement by the Financial Secretary that revenue is not keeping pace with expenditure. If the provision of a cushion is partly responsible for that—and that is a correct statement of fact—we should begin to examine our method of taxation. I think our method of taxation is rather simple; it follows the traditional method of direct and indirect taxation, and I do not think that in this day and generation anyone would quarrel about direct taxation. Let us take income tax for example; no one can attempt to say that it is not an equitable tax. We all believe in a direct form of taxation—where the tax falls best upon the shoulders that can bear it. It is admitted that there is quite a good deal of income tax that is uncollected, but I should like to offer my sincere congratulations and those of this Council to the Commissioner of Income Tax and his staff for the im-

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provement shown in this respect. In 1950 the income tax collected was \$5,914,000; in 1951 it was \$6,677,000; in 1952, \$8,145,000; and in 1953 it is expected to be in the region of \$11½ million.

That, Sir, is a wonderful record for the Commissioner of Income Tax and his staff, and I believe he deserves the commendation of this Council. Many persons, however, would argue against the principle of indirect taxation. It falls upon the essentials of life in which food, clothing, medicine and many other things play a part. Even the Financial Secretary has admitted that this tax is very sensitive to price levels. I hope that during the conduct of this *Interim* Government we shall make an attempt to progress steadily as regards direct taxation and also make efforts to reduce or remove indirect taxation. In that way we might be able to reduce the cost of living of the ordinary man and finally improve his standard of living.

My third criticism is that there is an absence from the Budget of any provision for a revision of salaries for civil servants. There is one slight reference which the hon. the Financial Secretary has made in the closing paragraph to the cost of public services. I hope he is not hoping that whatever is done towards revision of salaries would have to be looked after in the next budget. I am very happy that he has a cushion for it. We had expected the hon. the Financial Secretary would have been able to tell us there would be a revision, and I am anxiously hoping that even before the debate ends he or the hon. the Chief Secretary may be able to intimate to us that a decision has been arrived at for this year.

On this question of the Civil Service, the hon. Member, Mr. Bobb, and the hon. Member, Miss Collins, both expressed their anxiety. We are indeed very grateful to them. They called the word, and, I think both of them aimed at the 'Guianisation' of the Service. Permit me for one moment to speak of the anxiety in the minds of the civil servants today. They acclaim the Governor's development programme and they feel happy about it, but there is anxiety in their minds that they would be overlooked in the selection of personnel. I have done my best to allay their fears because of the result of a deputation which met His Excellency shortly after his arrival in this Colony. He assured us that the Guianisation of the Civil Service is one of his primary aims, and during his regime here there would be very few occasions on which to quarrel with him on that score. That is our charter and on that we rely.

The hon. the Financial Secretary in Finance Committee gave us the assurance that there was active implementation of that policy. May I be permitted to tell our expatriate friends when they leave Guiana to take up their tasks, 'Yours is a job well done', and to refer to the high ideals expressed over 100 years ago by Lord Macaulay when speaking on the India Education Bill:

"It may be that by giving to these people a standard of education and culture equal to our own, they may in time demand from us an equal place. When that day does come, it would be the brightest day in British history."

Having given to Guianese an education and a culture equal to their own, and having taught them the arts, I think the expatriates should feel today that their brightest hour has come. May I be permitted in this very trend to refer to the great industry of the South, which has adopted the

policy of drawing Guianese—actually men of colour—into the ranks of their senior staff. The people of Mackenzie now go to their work in the full assurance that they and their children have a place there. This identification of worker with industry is bound to reflect itself in greater production and greater industrial peace.

I wish to ask our commercial houses in Georgetown to take a leaf out of the book of Mackenzie in that respect.

I wish to refer also to the most important industry which sprawls from Tuschen to Crabwood Creek and to express the hope that they would accelerate the implementation of a policy which I know they have already accepted, and which I also know one head of the industry has said everything would be done to promote it. I wish the industry would take courage in their hands and get senior staff from among the ordinary workers or from among their children. If they would but do that, they would find that it would pay wonderful dividends not only to the industry itself but to the Colony as a whole.

May I be permitted to say that the Civil Service stands four-square behind His Excellency in his work and there would be no call which would not be faithfully and loyally answered.

Now, Sir, may I refer a challenge by the hon. Mr. Singh who is not here at the moment. He pleaded with and invited the Civil Service to co-operate with him. It seems to me that it is suggested in an undertone that the Civil Service is in opposition to Members of this Council. I cannot speak for *ex-officios*—they will do so themselves. But I think I can speak for myself and for the Commissioner of Lands and Mines—two simple Civil Servants. We want to say the hon.

Member is mistaken if he believes that we are any kind of opposition whatsoever. I joined the Service at a more or less advanced age. My ideas were formed and my way of thinking was formed. I had felt that Government would call upon me to forsake some of those principles. Eleven years have passed and there is not one single instance that I have been asked in some way to forsake those principles. I therefore would assure the hon. Member and any who may hold any opinion of that kind that Civil Servants here are prepared to be behind other Members of the Council toe to heel in anything undertaken and if perchance they fail or falter to lead the way.

My fourth criticism, if criticism it can be called, relates to page 6 of the Budget Statement where the Financial Secretary refers — in one bright spot in a pretty black picture — to the operation of the African Manganese Company. What I think the country wants at the moment is the correct political climate in which to operate. I think this Interim Government could produce such a climate, to win the confidence not only of foreign but of local capital. May I refer to a telegram from Lord Reith, read at the opening of the new C.D.C. Sawmills, in which he stated:

“If not burdened with too onerous obligations, industry has now great potential for expansion and should make a much larger contribution than hitherto to the country's prosperity.”

I feel it should be our aim and ambition to provide the right political climate so to do. I think we have an ordinance which allows us — it is sometimes called the “Tax Holiday Ordinance” — to let up on taxation of new companies.

For all my years—and some of you have longer experience — I have been looking forward to the day of greater

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 industrialisation of our country, and when I find reference to the existence of iron ore and oil in the Budget, I cannot treat it lightly. I feel there must be something in it more than just a statement. I wish to say that I hope the hopes that give rise to that statement will be realised.

I do not think I can leave this subject without paying a special tribute to those 'backroom boys' who are working every day for industrialisation. I refer to the members of the staff of the Geological Survey. Nobody seems to remember them. Only on occasions like these when these particular matters are brought before the public. As a member of the Civil Service and as a Member of this Council I extend congratulations to the Geological Department and I hope that greater success will attend their efforts in the days to come. (Members: *Hear, hear*).

I want to make three explicit enquiries of the Financial Secretary—the first is in the nature of a reminder. In Finance Committee I remember we were promised that the decision of Government with respect to certain things would be conveyed, to us, if not in Finance Committee, at least before the debate on the Appropriations Bill. I wish to remind the Financial Secretary that that promise is yet to be redeemed.

The second is, that I wish to ask Government for a statement of policy in regard to the setting up of a Public Accounts Committee. This Council passes the votes and having done so, it is left to the Administration to spend those votes. That is as it should be: there is no other way. But I think this Council, the more closer we progress towards self-Government, must examine how moneys which are voted are spent. In the House of Commons, nearly 100 years ago, a Public Accounts Committee

was set up. I will read what is said about it in the standard work of Erskine May's "Parliamentary Practice":

"The Committee of Public Accounts is appointed under S.O. No. 90 'for the examination of accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and of such accounts laid before Parliament as the Committee thinks fit.'"

It goes on to say:

"The main function of this Committee is to make sure that the parliamentary grants, for each financial year, including supplementary grants, have been applied to the object which Parliament prescribed and to re-check the official audit created by the Exchequer and Audit Department Act, 1866. For this purpose they have the assistance of the Comptroller and Auditor General in his capacity as an officer of the House of Commons."

It adds:

"The Committee also scrutinizes the causes which have led to any excesses over parliamentary grants, and the application of savings on the grants to the three Service Departments."

Now, I feel the time has come when we should ask Government for its policy on the establishment of a Public Accounts Committee.

The third enquiry is closely related to the others. We have been told there will be a schedule to the Appropriation Bill which will include an Appendix to the Estimates. In the Estimates funds are placed against items but the vote is considered as a block vote. I want the assurance from the Financial Secretary that amounts allocated to each item in the schedule will be devoted to the particular item, and that one item cannot be shifted from one head to another in the same vote. Until a Public Accounts Committee is set up this Council should be assured in this respect, otherwise there can be juggling of figures from item to item. Those are the enquiries.



Before I take my seat I wish like other members to congratulate the hon. the Financial Secretary on his Budget Statement. It was clothed in simple, non-technical language, but over and above that simplicity it appeared to be invested with sincerity and honesty. I want to congratulate him also on the tolerance he exercised with us in Finance Committee. I think it was a degree of tolerance which can only be matched by yours, Sir, of members of this Council.

Finally, I shall refer to the statement in the last paragraph of the Budget Statement that this Council must endeavour to pave the way toward a regeneration in all fields: political, economic and financial. To that prayer, I say, "Amen." But one more adjective I would have wished the Financial Secretary to add—"religious". There is also need for regeneration towards religion. Let none delude himself. The issues are very clear. The battle-lines are distinct; democracy, decency and godliness on the one hand, and communism, violence, hate and ungodliness on the other. I wish that our conduct in this Council would help to regenerate our country in respect of religion so that scales may fall from the eyes of our countrymen and that men may see the abyss from which we have been rescued. It is not a case of God being on our side; we have got to be on God's side, for unless God blesses this house we all labour in vain.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** It was not my intention to speak at all, except for one thing: to offer my sincere thanks to the Financial Secretary for the very graceful tribute which he paid to me in the opening part of his Budget address. In doing so, I wish also to say this: he has made use of the words, "I, who have served for so long under him and have had so many opportunities for judging, desire to make my personal

acknowledgements. . . ." I, too have had an opportunity of judging him, and I can say this, that I congratulate myself on my successor. It has been a great privilege to me to retire and to see my colleague take my place and sit beside me in this Council, and knowing him as I do, I think he will attain the highest success. So, I thank him for his very kind and flattering remarks about me in his address.

Some of the remarks of the last speaker have induced me to make a few observations on the Budget. I begin by saying that hon. Member must have been very greatly embarrassed by being given only a part of it. Indeed, the Financial Secretary referred to that in the last paragraph when he explained that the Development Budget, it was intended, should be presented at the same time. But owing to certain transactions which had to be completed with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, it was not possible to do so. I admire the restraint by those hon. Members who spoke on the Budget and who refrained from trespassing on the Development Budget. Having had some advanced information from his Excellency in Finance Committee and other public utterances, they were aware of it. They were drawn into speaking about it and they did so with restraint.

They were undoubtedly embarrassed because Mr. Ramphal was led into error. He took it as his main theme. He criticized the Financial Secretary for rigid adherence to the principle that the Budget must be balanced. Of course, nothing is more far from the truth. The Financial Secretary presented a balanced budget which showed a surplus of \$29,000, with a contribution to the capital budget of \$1,000,000 or so, but hon. Members have heard of a programme of spending on the capital budget \$44,000,000 in two years. While that

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is so, how can the Financial Secretary be accused of caution and undue circumspection? How can those words which fell from the lips of the hon. Member be consistent? One cannot break bonds with due circumspection. The point is this: I am trying to break down this argument that these figures which have been put before us have been reached as a result of undue caution. One must take the picture as a whole.

**Mr. Ramphal :** I beg, Sir, to say that the Estimates before us do not include—

**Sir Frank McDavid :** I do not think he can try to correct what he has stated in that way. I wish to say it is the most superficial criticism. The Government of this country are going all out in finance and that is the reason why the Governor went to England. He was satisfied that the whole of the Budget could not be left on our own resources and local power of borrowing. So I am very surprised indeed to hear criticism from a public officer that there was undue caution—

**Mr. Ramphal :** I never said that—

**Sir Frank McDavid :** I do not wish to withdraw. I think the hon. Member would have to withdraw—

**Mr. Ramphal :** I refuse to let the hon. Member—

**Mr. Speaker :** The hon. Member is speaking.

**Mr. Ramphal :** All right, Sir.

**Sir Frank McDavid :** In the larger countries of the world, such as the United States and Great Britain, they use a single Budget. That is to say, they put all their expenditure in one Budget—current expenditure and all others. On the other side they put their revenue and what is left as deficiency they borrow. If hon. Members have ever examined the accounts of the United States of America, fantastic as they are, they

would see provision for a deficiency and might hear that there was criticism of the House by the President for voting too much money or for not voting “so much” money. That is their method, but in this Colony the other method is used. One is a recurrent Budget and the other a capital Budget. In a recurrent Budget it is easy to make revenue follow expenditure; in the other Budget you may borrow or raise public loans to meet expenditure, and that is what is being done here. Therefore, it is superficial to talk about exercising caution in handling the Budget at this present time. We are embarking on development schemes and that is why Her Majesty’s Government has come to our assistance at this present time.

Sir, I shall have the honour and privilege of introducing the Development Budget and, therefore, any further remarks I have to make I shall reserve for that occasion. But, I hope hon. Members will remember these particular remarks that I have made, and not continue in the fallacy which I have heard this afternoon. As I am on my feet, and as the hon. Member to whom I have just referred also implied a criticism in regard to a particular matter which was discussed in Finance Committee, I shall also refer to another speech made here by the hon. Member, Mr. Ramphal. I desire to refer to what is a minor point, and that is the increase which is proposed in the emoluments of the Director of Audit. That increase is an amount required to bring the salary of that post up or equivalent to the salary of the Treasurer. It is an adjustment which was made a year ago. The Treasurer’s emoluments were adjusted at the time when there was a re-arrangement of the functions of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer. One officer had the responsibility for both posts, but when the old Constitution was discontinued we had a Financial Secretary and a separate Treasurer. Because of that, it was

considered that the emoluments of the Treasurer should be at a certain increased figure. That was quite in order, but hon. Members might have thought it was also not quite regular that the salary of the Director of Audit should be below that of the Treasurer. That should have been rectified since last year.

I am sorry to hear an hon. Member say that that was the subject of objection and criticism because it embarrassed him in his dealings and his talks with the small man. I have every desire that the small man in this Colony should come into his own, but we are never going to get this Colony to progress if we use that as a means of being unjust to our Officers. I think the small man would say that there is no objection to paying the proper salary to an officer, and I think it is unfortunate that an objection of that kind should be made in his name. We are not going to get anywhere in this Colony in this way if our Specialist Officers—and I think that this Officer is a Specialist Officer—are treated in this manner.

I have heard Mr. Ramphal suggesting the appointment of an Accounts Committee, but I do not think the time is ripe as yet for that. We rely in this Colony on the Colonial Audit Department. It is a very good Department set up in London to handle the audits of a large number of countries in the Commonwealth. They are specialists and they carry out their work in accordance with strict rules and regulations framed by the Secretary of State. They work for a large number of British Colonies and for the Legislatures and Councils attached to them. I know myself that that organization does an extremely good job, and I have no hesitation in saying that the Secretary of State and this Legislature do place the utmost reliance on the Colonial Audit

Department in London, owing to the proficiency it has exhibited. I feel that that job is being carried out very much better by the Colonial Audit Department than it can be done by a Committee of three or four Members of this Council. I was surprised to hear that the hon. Member thinks it should be left to a small Committee to see that votes are properly charged. I do not think that a small Committee should see that votes are properly charged; I think it should be left to the Colonial Audit Department.

I myself desire to offer congratulations to my successor as regards the presentation of this Budget. Members here can speak, but I know myself what the presentation of this document involves. I know the immense strain which it involves, and in this particular year in which this budget appears, Mr. Fraser, my successor, had a very difficult time indeed, because he was doing the work under the most trying circumstances. I myself have never experienced that—and I hope never to experience it—having to produce a Budget in circumstances of a sudden switch over in the Government. I think the Financial Secretary certainly deserves the congratulations offered by this Council.

**Mr. Speaker :** Perhaps I might refer to one remark made by the hon. Member, Mr. Ramphal. He used the expression "juggling with accounts," but I do not know exactly what he means. I know something about the method of dealing with these accounts. I think that unexpended amounts under one head of expenditure are sometimes spent under a different item of expenditure, and I do not think the auditors mind that. I think I am right in saying that the Director of Colonial Audit has a right to sanction the use of an unexpended balance. At one time we were entirely absolved,

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but I do not know what exactly is the position now with regard to the Legislature. I have not been able to discover that, but I know that he is very very anxious to perform his duties.

**Mr. Ramphal :** I think he is also very anxious about the appointment of an Accounts Committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** We are using a Finance Committee for authorising supplies.

**Mr. Phang :** I myself desire to offer congratulations to the Financial Secretary for his presentation of a very able Budget. I do not know much about the preparation of accounts, but we quite appreciate the fact that when accounts run up to millions of dollars it must be a difficult matter to handle them. I have no criticisms to offer with respect to the Budget. I am very thankful that there has been no increase in taxation, and when we recall what happened last year, I think we are very fortunate indeed that that is so. I also desire to join my colleagues in thanking His Excellency for getting so much money for the benefit of the Colony as a whole. The spending of \$44,000,000 in two years is certainly a lot of money. I think someone has said that it is "money like peas."

In the last Legislature I moved a motion asking Government to appoint a Committee to investigate the question of the depressed conditions in the North West District. The Committee was appointed and did a considerable amount of work — taking evidence and so on—and it submitted a report containing both long-term and short-term recommendations. Since the short-term recommendations do not call for very much money I thought that Government would have implemented them, but I want to say that I have not seen any-

thing in the Estimates indicating that this matter is receiving the attention of Government. I should like to know, therefore, exactly what Government intends to do in the matter.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there any objection to the hon. Member's mentioning what particular recommendations he is referring to ?

**Mr. Phang:** The recommendations referring to health conditions in the district, for one thing. It was felt that certain things should be done relating to Tuberculosis, but it seems to me that nothing is being done for the district although it is a very important one. In the last House of Assembly I asked some questions about whether Government had received the report of the Committee and whether it intended to implement the recommendations. Now that we have \$44 million for expenditure on various schemes, I think Government should do something for the North West District.

**Mr. Gajraj:** I too, Sir, rise to support the motion for the second reading of the Appropriation Bill. In so doing I should like to join my hon. Colleagues in paying a tribute and offering congratulations to our Financial Secretary for what the hon. Member, Sir Frank McDavid, has referred to as a Budget prepared in most difficult times and in circumstances far from normal. I think, Sir, that we are all satisfied in our minds that our Financial Secretary has proved himself a very worthy successor of that very illustrious son of British Guiana, the hon. Sir Frank McDavid, and that we are particularly fortunate in that we still have the services of Sir Frank in this Legislature, especially when we are considering the big Development Programme which we have ahead. I think we must also consider ourselves fortunate in having him as Vice-Chairman of the Economic Council.

This is the first time in the history of this Colony that the Budget has been divided into two parts. We have presented for discussion on this occasion a recurrent Budget, and we have also had presented in this Council the Development Budget which will be discussed perhaps in the next week or two. In doing so we have carried out one of the recommendations of the International Bank, and I feel that in the circumstances in which we are placed, the change is a very useful one in the sense that we would see very clearly as we set about to arrange our finances year by year, whether it is necessary for us to carry the ordinary expenses of the Colony as a whole, as against the larger needs of preparing the land and the people for increasing production and the economic returns of the country as a whole. The Development Budget is not yet before the Council but, as I have said just now, it has been laid on the table and its contents have been made public.

Whilst it is not the subject of debate, nevertheless I feel that the force of its impact upon the public mind makes brief reference to it in this Council excusable at this time. It cannot be avoided as a matter of fact, for we see with reference to our Concurrent Budget that a sum of \$1 million has been transferred to the credit of our Development Budget. Therefore, if we use that as a means of commenting somewhat on the Development Budget, I think we have a right to do so. I feel that it is necessary to make this brief reference, particularly as the Development Budget is very closely connected with the recent visit of His Excellency the Governor to London where, in a short period of time, he was able to accomplish very much for the good of this Colony and to obtain from Her Majesty's Government a free grant of a considerable sum of money and the promise of a loan of a not incon-

siderable sum. We have all paid our tributes to His Excellency for what he has accomplished in that short period of time, and I do not think it would be wrong for me to refer to the fact that His Excellency, on 52 occasions during 11 days, had to meet individuals and groups in order to discuss the affairs of British Guiana and with particular reference to its future. Therefore, I do join with my colleagues in placing on record in this Council our very deep appreciation of His Excellency and also of the Development Secretary who shared in some measure in the task.

The Recurrent Budget which we have before us provides for an expenditure of roughly \$33½ million of which nearly \$3 million would be spent on Development projects. I said a while ago that \$1 million had been earmarked for the Development Budget, but we would find a further sum of \$1 million from C.D. and W. funds which goes to the Development Budget. While there is so much for capital works, we cannot escape the fact that \$33 million is a large sum of money to be spent in any one year to carry on the Administration of a Colony like British Guiana. It is a severe strain on the country's economy, and so we have to be extremely careful in making sure that public funds are properly spent and correctly allocated. It therefore becomes necessary that those persons placed in charge of the spending of such funds should exercise the greatest vigilance and the greatest caution.

I am not suggesting that this vigilance and this caution may not have been exercised in the past, but I do say that having due regard to certain statements made within the last year or so—statements from the street corners — that public funds have been wasted, and that other things of that nature have been done—it becomes all the more necessary for this Govern-

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ment to ask of the officers of the Civil Service who are charged with such responsibility, to exercise a greater degree of care in the years that lie ahead of us.

Particularly, Sir, have criticisms been levelled by the public at large on the way in which public funds are spent by the Public Works Department. That is a thing which we have heard for many a year and, unfortunately, it is a charge which is still being made. I am not in position to judge whether the criticisms are justified or not but, for my part, I would like to feel that they are wholly unjustified. We have heard those criticisms from time to time, however, in this Council, and we know there is a saying to the effect that "there is no smoke without some fire". Therefore, I would appeal to this Council to endorse my remarks, particularly with regard to the Department I have mentioned, and to request Government to see that its officers exercise their supervision over works which come under their care, a little more than they might have done in the past. Perhaps the officers charged with the supervising of these works may have had great distances to cover without adequate means of doing so. In such cases, the Department concerned should face the problem and come to this Council and ask for more allowances for supervision. I feel that if there is greater supervision of these works, in many cases we would be able to get better returns for the money spent.

I do know that there is a feeling amongst workers — particularly those engaged on public works—that as soon as a particular project has been completed the chances are that they would be laid off and no work would be avail-

able for them for some time. That has been told to me as one of the reasons why workers are sometimes accused of going slow towards the end of a project—so as to make sure that some work remains to be done. I wish to appeal to our Guianese people, however, to realize that this is a false approach to the problem and that if they are employing such tactics they are doing a wrong to their children and to their children's children. We have to live, to work and to die here and our children and their children who come after us would have to inherit what we have left for them. If in the course of our lives we fail to carry out our duties as their trustees, they would be hard put to find the means of paying for these improvements.

What we want to implant in our people's minds is the desire to think of this country, wholly and solely, as their own; not one in which they want to live only for today. If they do that their actions would soon indicate whether there would be prosperity or otherwise to be left for our children. I feel, Sir, that it has become necessary when we are building for development, when we are embarking upon new schemes, that we should explain to our people that the completion of any one project would not be the end of our needs. When one portion of the programme has been completed—when one segment of the circle has been drawn—it merely points the way to further expansion and greater progress. In other words, if we reach a stage where we can embark upon further expansion and envisage greater progress, then we shall have achieved one of the things which this country needs.

It is true that this is a poor country. With that no one can quarrel. But what I feel it is necessary for us to have is faith in our country; and if we, Members of this honour-

able Council can so show faith that it will shine beyond the walls of this Chamber and touch the working man, then hope will be written in his heart and that perhaps will be a more tangible form of fighting the great monster whose tentacles were felt a short time ago seeking to strangle the people of this country. Merely talking that the ideology is poisonous and not offering something better will not accomplish anything. We have to get down into the hearts of the people. We have got to present them with an economic stability before we can hope to win them back to the fold and lead them along the path to prosperity.

British Guiana, although a poor country, is a vast country, and from the time I was growing up and attending school I have heard of its great potentialities. I still hear of them now. Time was when, in school, I was able to compare the electric power potentialities of the Kaieteur with that of the Niagara, and my dreams of those days included the use of that vast drop of thousands of tons of water according to man's ingenuity and man's skill to provide power for driving the vast machines in building up the industrial potential of this country. Time has passed, and the black hairs that covered my head in those youthful days have turned grey. That dream is still far from fulfilled, but there is still hope, for one private company has gained a licence to harness a waterfall to provide electricity. It is my fervent hope—although for the time being the energy to be derived from that hydro-electric installation would be just enough to furnish power for the lights for the private concession of that company—that it would prove so successful that plans should follow for greater electric power for farms and homestead builders.

Although our potentialities are vast I appreciate that our problems are many, and to some people they appear insuperable. I know that problems are like challenges—challenges to man's ingenuity and man's desire for advancement. The greater the problem, the greater should be our resolve that with the help of necessary skill and funds we will be able to conquer them. There is no doubt that skilful engineering is good for this country, and it becomes more necessary at this time of our development that we should encourage men of such skill and as much knowledge as God has blessed them with to come here and contribute to the advancement of Guiana. So long as that is our desire we must face the fact that by and large, when that knowledge is not within our shores we have got to import it. Therefore it would be doing us a great deal of harm if, while pressing for the Guianisation of our Civil Service, we do not let it be known, most emphatically, that we are looking forward to the requisite help from technical officers from abroad who will come here and work in an atmosphere of brotherhood to assist us to make this country the Eldorado of Raleigh's dreams. We must keep that thought in our minds.

I agree most fully with my colleagues that the Service must be Guianised, but we must not pursue that policy to the detriment of good management. We must impose upon ourselves the obligation to make the best use of our country or else surrender our claim to owning it or calling it our own. The good Lord has given us intelligence of our own. All we need is proper education and opportunity to develop our ideas; and so it becomes the task of this Council to further the

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opportunities for educational training in the primary, secondary and technical fields. If we are to make this country what I claim we all feel it should be then we cannot sit idly by and relax. At this time particularly there is a fight in which every citizen is a soldier at the front lines. We must rise to the challenge for increased endeavour on the part of everyone. The gospel of work we must bear in mind, and we must work as never before in our lives. For whatever may have been our failures in the past, let us not spend any more time in recrimination, but put our shoulders to the wheel as it gathers momentum.

I am sure this Council realises the dangers arising from the twin problem of under-employment and unemployment. The good Lord never intended us to be idle because idleness breeds misery; and in it ambitions die and hopes of a happy life recede; and it is in such circumstances that subversive propaganda finds fertile ground.

The Development Programme will be more fully considered in this Council but in the meantime I think we ought to turn our attention to conditions which can, I submit, be improved by our own efforts outside of the Development Programme. In his Budget Statement the Financial Secretary has said at the bottom of page 4 and the beginning of page 5:

"It is unlikely that the 1953 national income will be as high as in 1952 and the best guess is that it will be some 10% lower. What therefore is important at the moment is that National Income and standards of living should be improved."

In that desire we are all unanimous. The question that arises after the acceptance of that statement is, how is that to be accomplished? I feel that however much we might desire it, it will be a very long time before we

see in this country any major industrial development. The International Bank Mission in their report has recorded but little hope in this respect, and the Financial Secretary himself does say, on page 3 of the Budget Statement:

"The concensus of opinion is that development for many years to come must take the form of expansion and diversification of primary production in which the Colony is regarded as enjoying comparative advantages."

An important part of our proposed Development Programme is directed to making more drained and irrigated lands available for cultivation; and I cannot emphasise too strongly in this Council my own contention that agriculture will always be the keystone of our national prosperity. Agriculture, I think, must continue to play a predominant part in spite of our serious labour problems and continued shift of population. To correct this tendency we must carry to the rural areas those amenities of life which are looked upon as natural: we must take to the people there, electricity, potable water supply, facilities for health and recreation, libraries of good books, and build up among them a community spirit. We must inculcate into the people of those areas a feeling of belonging to those areas and that they are not just a lost pebble on the beach rolling hither and thither.

Now, I submit in all humility that in regard to the sugar plantations there is still much to be done. We must remember that on our plantations there live and work a large proportion of our agricultural population and it is there, *moreso*, that we should seek to bring about a proper understanding and a healthy partnership between the employer and the worker. I do not wish any member of



the Council to think that I do not appreciate the many attempts that have been made within recent years to bring about better conditions of life and work on the sugar plantations. But let us not dispute that fact that one of the things which those whom we have charged with having acted contrary to the interests of the country have been able in the course of their peregrinations to bring about forcibly to the minds of those workers is the neglect of previous years; and that has been used in a very large measure to stir up animosity from time to time in the industry.

As I have said already, I appreciate the efforts which have been made, and my purpose this afternoon is not to be merely a critic of the conditions on the sugar plantations, but to make an appeal to those who have the industry in their hands and the welfare of their workers before them. I want to appeal to them to realise that one of the best ways in which they can maintain or rather, cultivate and then maintain a healthy understanding between themselves and the workers is to improve not so much the wage structure as the conditions of life and of work.

The trade union which has been described at various times as a private union had made a very great appeal to the workers when it urged that, given the opportunity, it would see to it that the workers' homes would be lit with electricity; they have water to their doors and in the fields; somewhere to take their lunch, away from the noon-day sun. When they are thirsty they must drink water from the punt trenches and navigation canals. I think those are the conditions which call for sympathetic consideration. After all, we who live in the City and enjoy the many amenities which we have been able to provide over a period of years can hardly appreciate what it must mean to people

working on such plantations. If we were to be placed in their position I am sure we would rebel forthwith, but when one is born and grows up in such an environment he accepts it as part of his life. In this age when people have come into contact with writings and other things, particularly since the last war, they have become very anxious to enjoy what they consider as amenities for human beings; and so we cannot close our eyes to the needs for such improvements for the workers.

I was particularly impressed as I listened to His Excellency the Governor as he declared open the new C.D.C. Sawmills at Houston (if I may digress for a moment, this Council may offer to the Corporation its best wishes for its success) when he referred to the conditions which he found at the forest stations where workers were housed in comfortable homes with electric lights and other conveniences; there were recreation halls and recreation grounds. Here we see a new outlook being put into practice before our very eyes in this our country, and I do agree with His Excellency when he said that making one's workers happy and comfortable is one of the best ways—I am just paraphrasing—in which one can hope for a proper working out of industry and of obtaining better production.

As I said, I am making these remarks particularly as an appeal to those responsible. I was only too happy to hear that Pln. Uitvlugt on the West Coast of Demerara hopes in a year's time to provide electric lights for the workers. I must congratulate those responsible for taking this initial step, and I do hope it will be followed at a rather quickened rate so we can get this amenity, which we accept as automatic in the City, provided for people in rural districts. I feel, if we can make the conditions of life and work more at-

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tractive, and more like what we expect for ourselves there would be less disaffection. Indeed, I venture to say disaffection would be removed when the people are satisfied. The things to which I have alluded are not things which are beyond the capacity of the industry. It might be they were not thought out before, but now that we are seeing the need for such progress I do hope that care will be taken of them and improvement will be reflected in less disaffection amongst the workers and improved human relations between the employer and the worker.

I think it is also fair to say that those particular points to which I have alluded are causing His Excellency a fair amount of concern. He himself would like to see that workers in the rural areas are given such amenities as are within the ability of the industry to provide, and perhaps, when we get together on this matter, we shall have very satisfactory results. It is one part of the agricultural picture. It would be wrong of me to speak merely of sugar and not to bring rice into the picture.

Indeed, there is very much also that can be done to accelerate the prosperity of this country, by increasing the production of rice. The producers, I must say, have had their views very well expressed by the hon. Member, Mr. Jailal, and perhaps all I need to do is to endorse in some measure the suggestions that have been made by him. I do want to say this—to underline and emphasize the point—that rice is the peasant's industry. Of course, we now propose to produce rice on a large scale by the B.G. Rice Development Coy., but apart from that, all the rice produced in British Guiana is produced by the peasant farmer and, therefore, this new Government must continue to give him

every encouragement so that he might produce more of this golden grain. By exporting a larger quantity than we have been exporting of late we would be able to bring more revenue into the Colony.

The hon. Member, Mr. Jailal, has also referred to the need for improvement in the manner in which gasoline for industrial purposes is being permitted to be bought by people, duty free. There is no question whatever that the present system does not help the rice farmer in the slightest degree. As a matter of fact, the farmer loses more time and spends more money than he would save otherwise, in travelling from one end of the country to the other in order to arrange for getting a 50-gallon drum of gasoline duty free. The principle is a good one, however, and all we need to do is to improve the mechanics of it so as to make it less expensive to the producers concerned.

There is a great need also for the further encouragement of co-operative societies among rice farmers so as to enable them to purchase their own machinery. I do know of a very successful case—I think it was at Bush Lot, West Coast, Berbice,—where some farmers got together a few years ago and bought their own machinery on the hire-purchase system. They were able to pay for it within a reasonably short time, and were so happy that they began to turn their attention to the purchasing of a rice mill so that they could expand their operations and keep the profits for themselves. So long as it is Government's desire to create a prosperous peasantry and help the small man to get on his feet, I think all such things should be encouraged. We do not want the people to feel all the time that they have to depend upon someone for a job. We want to make them feel that they can create employment for themselves. In other words, we want them to get away from the feeling that

there is nothing in this country for them and that they have got to seek other avenues for earning a livelihood.

In the past and even at present, one often saw young men and women leaving the country and going abroad because they felt that there were no prospects for them here, but I do not agree that they should continue to do so. Possibly the avenues for white collar jobs are more or less filled, as in most other countries, but I think that parents in general should not encourage our children to look for white collar jobs only. This is an agricultural country and there is very much to be gained if we desire to turn the good earth and get more production. That is where the Government has to do something for the people — to teach them what they should do and how they should do it.

That brings me, Sir, if I may digress for a moment, to what I consider to be a very prime necessity in the Agriculture Department. In spite of the large sums of money being spent on this Department year by year, and in spite of the fact that there are Agricultural Superintendents and Instructors in the rural areas, one fails to find a farmer who would say that he has benefited practically from any of these Officers in the Department. We want to establish such things as farm schools so that Officers could be made to leave their desks and give courses in practical farming to young men and women of the country. I feel that this Government should teach the people to work for their independence on the land. The hon. the Financial Secretary is very much interested in dairy farming and that is one of the things which could also be taught by the Agriculture Department. There should be schemes for the utilization of land and people would have some idea of

what they intend to do by way of making this country more productive and bringing in more revenue. The more revenue they bring in, the more would the country become suitable for expansion.

With regard to rice, we have laid out Blocks I, II and III on the Corentyne for a development scheme and, therefore, there would be a fair acreage there for development. Then there is the Tapacooma scheme which would also assist considerably. I think there is a very great need for improving the conditions relating to rice farmers so far as the future of the industry goes. In the case of sugar, there are conferences where the price of the article is fixed for the next two or three years, thus assuring the producers of a guaranteed price over that period. The idea of a guaranteed price for rice is a recent one, and it was not until the Rice Marketing Board came into being that one heard of a guaranteed price such as we have today. Farmers claimed that in the war years and even in post-war years, they did not get a full return for their produce. We were bound by contracts with the neighbouring islands to sell them rice at a certain price, and thereby farmers were made to lose considerable sums of money which should have benefited the country as a whole. I am not thinking of the individual producer who would have squandered his portion of this money by enjoying himself with a case of rum and things of that kind, but of the benefit that would have accrued to the majority and to the country as a whole.

Those days are gone, however, and might never return again. I have mentioned the matter, however, because the rice farmers have said that it has been pointed out to them—and

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I think the Financial Secretary has said it also—that the time is coming when they would find themselves faced with serious competition. The words of the Financial Secretary are these:

“ . . . Those engaged in the industry would, however, be well advised to have an eye to the future and use present prosperity to consolidate their position in preparation to meet competition which must sooner or later set in.”

We are being told that a period of competition is at our door-step, but I think that the Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines (Sir Frank McDavid) does not think it is as close as some members of the Rice Marketing Board feel. I think, however, that the time has come when British Guiana rice would have to face competition on equal terms in the West Indies as in any other place where we are marketing it. In Australia—a country which has not produced rice for a very long time—the industry has been mechanized and they are producing large quantities whereby the country can feed itself. Let us think about the Caribbean and we would see that the position of the rice farmers is a sorry one, because we were bound hand and feet in the making of contracts with the West Indian Islands.

I think those arrangements were made with the best intentions, but the fact remains that the rice farmers did not get the best result. If in those days they did not get the best prices, it seems but fair to expect that those persons who are in charge of the making of the agreement with the same parties should be able to get from the contracting Governments some consideration for what has been given to them in the past. I do not mean financial consideration, because I know that trade

is of such that if a man wants to buy an article for a penny and finds that he can get it cheaper elsewhere, that would be done without delay. What I mean is that we should use all the persuasive measures we can to get those territories—the contracting territories of the West Indies—to give us an even break. The farmers want an assurance that they will continue to get a fair guaranteed price for their produce.

Before I leave the subject of rice, I want to say that the country as a whole has watched with a great deal of anxiety the formation of the B.G. Rice Development Coy., and we in this Council think we would be voicing the feelings of the people of British Guiana when we say that we wish that Corporation all success in its endeavours. This is the first time in British Guiana that rice would be produced, milled and marketed by one organization on such a large scale and the success of this organization would, I feel, mean the success of the rice industry as a whole. If it does succeed, then we stand every chance of getting private enterprise to come in on its own and assist in making this country the granary of the West Indies, as referred to by the hon. Member, Mr. Rahaman, a few days ago. I know that with Sir Frank Mc David at its head, the Corporation will have a fine Chairman and very fine staff. All that is necessary is that there should be good managerial efficiency and good fortune as far as weather conditions are concerned, and we should be able at the end of this year to arrange for contracts which would leave a fair margin of profit for the Company.

On the question of cattle, I would like to make a few remarks — and I hope I am not exceeding my welcome to the floor. I do remember Your Honour's saying that in this particular debate you would not impose any restric-

tion as regards time. It is the one opportunity that a Member has to indulge in a roving commission and speak without any restriction; therefore, I hope hon. Members will forgive me if they hear any repetition of my remarks. I too want to refer to the subject of cattle in the Estimates before us, and to endorse, most heartily, the views expressed by the hon. Member, Dr. Fraser. I shall not endeavour to say much on a subject so ably and lucidly dealt with by an expert, but I do wish, in a few words, to endorse all the points he made with regard to the building up of the cattle industry.

If there is one thing that has given me a fair amount of bad feeling, it is to see what has happened to our coffee industry. Our coffee industry has completely vanished, shall we say, from the local scene. It is with a great deal of regret that I wish to suggest that one of the causes of the disappearance of the local coffee industry, was the lack of foresight on the part of the Price Control Authorities during the war and the post-war periods. When coffee from Brazil and other South American countries was fetching \$1.05 per lb., our own locally-produced coffee was being pegged at a paltry 1/- per lb. That was not even enough to pay for the cost of picking, packing and transporting the beans to Georgetown, and the result was that the farmers preferred to leave the berries on the trees and not pick them at all. When one does not make use of a thing it just dies and they lose it. Bush took over the coffee cultivation, and then we had bad weather for a long period in the North West District. I was very pleased, however, when I met the Director of Agriculture in Finance Committee and he assured us that the Department had set thousands of new trees and that it was the hope of the Department that in another two or three years we would

have local coffee on the market. World prices in the meanwhile continue to be high, and I think that those Members of this Council who have bought a cup of coffee in New York for a nickel, will be surprised when I tell them that the price has gone up to 15c.

**Mr. Speaker:** What the hon. Member may or may not know is that one of the contributory causes of failure on the part of our industry, is that our coffee was merely used as a blending coffee in foreign markets.

**Mr. Gajraj:** I appreciate that point, and I must thank Your Honour for filling up my evidence. I think, however, that while we could not expect the same price as the Brazilian producers the margin of difference in the prices was too great to enable us to compete with the Brazilian coffee.

I want to support my hon. friend, Mr. Farnum, in the remarks he made with reference to the feeling of frustration which has been engendered in the minds of some of the bushmen, as they are called. Members of this Council, I am sure, will unanimously agree that this new Government must do everything possible to encourage the exploitation of our mineral resources. There have been in the past many reports of the occurrence of various minerals in the hinterland of British Guiana. Because of the late Government's actions, there has been a halt in the proposals which came from various companies for the exploitation of these resources, but I think we should go ahead with faith in ourselves and see what, by God's grace, we can accomplish while we are in office. I feel that these investors will come back and, indeed, they are doing so already, so far as I know. But we must give them every encouragement.

We must not forget, however, those hardy pioneers — those Guianese who

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have trekked for years into the interior, going about without food and undergoing severe privation while seeking for deposits of minerals there. In those days there was no well-established Geological Survey Department, and so those men had to work from scratch without the information and technical skill of the University-trained geologist, and without any instruments except the bushman's instrument in the Guianas which is still to be found among many of our miners. I know of several cases where bushmen of the present are sons of men who have lived all their days in the bush, endeavouring to locate hidden wealth there.

Recently complaints have been made that when a "find" has been located and application made to the Department of Lands and Mines for permission to work the particular area, the matter is, quite rightly, referred to the Geological Department, but within a short while one hears of the area being closed and listed as a reserved area. That may or may not be true—I do not vouch for its being absolutely correct—but, nevertheless, it is something which must give us serious thought, because the feeling has been expressed that when these areas are proven and reserved, the chances are that persons in that particular Department would encourage other people who are better placed financially, to make application for those lands and in due course the applications are granted. As I have said, I do not know whether that is true, but I do hope that the hon. Member who is the Commissioner of Lands and Mines would go into the matter and see that things are kept along the right lines.

**Mr. Speaker :** Would the hon. Member like to interpose now?

**Mr. Lord:** I propose to rise to a point of correction. There is no one in the Service encouraging other people to apply for lands discovered by small miners at all. Quite recently the Lands and Mines Department put before Council regulations which permit the granting of a claim licence over a plot of land containing valuable minerals, and they were accepted. No small miner is precluded from applying for such a thing as a small licence, but it will be appreciated that a small miner cannot tackle an iron mining proposition.

**Mr. Gajraj:** I am grateful for being given the assurance that the small miner is not prevented from claiming. But I do feel if we are to understand our people correctly, and rather, create less misunderstanding between ourselves and our people that their fears must be brought before this Council and answers must be given to them unequivocally, and they must be satisfied. I am glad the hon. Member moved over from licences to iron ore. I do agree with him that the small miner is not in a position to tackle the exploitation of iron ore on the scale we would like to see it tackled, but in equity one must not deny the small man who has borne the heat of the day to discover where deposits are, from getting some benefit. He loses that benefit completely if he is not given opportunity. So I come to the point to which one hon. Member has alluded: government must protect strongly the interests of the small man who has borne the burden of the day until we are called upon to inter his body into Guiana's soil. Let him get something while he is still alive to build up his prosperity. That is something which I feel will have the backing of all of us.

I did not intend to speak on Customs but I just want briefly to say that in Finance Committee it was re-

commended that a committee of the Council should go into the question of anomalies in the Customs Tariff. There is no doubt that the tariff was compiled when time was at a premium. I mention it here so that it will be on this Council's records too. I do feel that with the changing conditions of trade, particularly with the increasing supply of essential articles—as in other parts of the world—there is need for revision or reconsideration of the control policy of Government.

Before I take my seat I want to say that I have tried in my limited way to indicate to this honourable Council the way in which we might tackle this gigantic problem which faces this new Government. If I have made any criticisms which are considered severe, I want to assure hon. Members of this Council that they are made with the sincere desire that we should co-operate to remove the causes which have given rise to our recent troubles. I feel that unless we in this Council, by our statements here and by our actions in the course of our work, are able to recognise those things which have given rise to our troubles, and promise to make every effort to remove them, we cannot hope to justify the existence of this new Government, and get into the hearts of the people and try to bring them around to the correct way of thinking.

It is very re-assuring that, at least so far as we have been able to see following the inspiring lead given by His Excellency the Governor, that the Government is making every effort to eradicate those causes. Now it is left to all of us, to all the members of this Council, members of the Civil Service—although the hon. Member Mr. Ramphal would take umbrage—the workers in general of trade industry and commerce to pull our proper weight, and give honestly of our time and effort in a desire to at-

tain the maximum degree of success. With the steady increase in population, demands become stronger. Our national income must be increased and the average income of the people of this country must also be increased. The greater the challenge the greater the need for action. We must vigorously tackle our task, and with God's help and their co-operation they should have a new deal in this country, the country of our birth and adoption.

**Mr. Macnie:** I did not intend to speak this afternoon. In fact I only intended to join with other hon. Members in congratulating our friend the hon. the Financial Secretary and to confine my remarks to the actual examination of the Estimates, and therefore get on with the job which I regard as most important, the Development Budget, as quickly as possible.

During the last half or three quarters of an hour much has been said about what is described as the major industry and probably the mainstay of the Colony. In view of my relation to that industry, the nature of my employment and the fact that I am here in this Chamber; in view of the fact that I am a Guianese and that during 24 years' service in the Colony I have not been confined to Georgetown, I feel I must reply to some of those remarks.

Although I have been described in the past as remaining on one part of my anatomy and biting my thumb, there are certain occasions when I cannot retain my seat and my silence. I feel it would not be proper for me to say nothing in this event because it might be felt that the industry by which, as I said before, I am employed when I am not in this Council, does not wish to make any statement in regard to those remarks made or does

[Mr. Macnie]

not wish to pay tribute to the hon. the Financial Secretary, who expressed the desire for co-operation and gave the assurance that he would co-operate in the efforts which are now being made to put this colony on the right road to healthy and good living. I hesitate to deal with the whole matter now, since we are going to adjourn until Thursday of next week.

**Mr. Speaker:** This week.

**Mr. Macnie:** I will not be finished this afternoon.

**Mr. Speaker:** It would be better, I think, if the hon. Member continued his remarks on Thursday.

Council was adjourned until Thursday, 18th February, 1954 at 2 p.m.