

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 17th December, 1942.

The Council met at 12 noon, with 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., Com-
missioner 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. Gonsalves, O.B.E.,
(Georgetown South).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus, (Western
Berbice).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee, (Essequibo River).

The Clerk read prayers.

 MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meeting of the
Council held on the 16th December, as
printed and circulated, were confirmed.

 ANNOUNCEMENTS.

DR. ROSE'S INVESTITURE POSTPONED.

THE PRESIDENT: I would just like to mention to the Council that I had hoped to have the honour of investing our Dr. Rose with the award of the Honour of an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. The Badge and Grant of Dignity reached me some days ago, but, as you know, Dr. Rose is ill and in hospital and I have thought it better, rather than to defer for an indefinite period the investiture, to send the Badge and Grant of dignity to him. I have accordingly done so, and I am therefore recording that Dr. Rose is in full possession of the honours.

As regards the proceedings of the Council I have, personally, an extremely busy day to-morrow. I have a very important interview with an American Officer in the morning, which is very unlikely to be finished in time for me to come to the Council at noon. I have also an engagement with the personal representative of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and later in the afternoon I have to preside over a meeting of the Food Production Committee. I propose either not to preside to-morrow or, if hon. Members feel we may defer the business to next Wednesday, we may do so. Hon. Members may consider that, and we can decide at the adjournment.

ANN'S GROVE-LANCASTER DRAINAGE
WORKS.

Mr. CASE (Consulting Engineer) communicated the following Message:—

MESSAGE No. 5.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

The Council will recall being informed earlier in the present year that Government proposed to carry out a number of schemes to improve drainage of the coastlands.

2. The following works were recommended by the Drainage Board and the Consulting Engineer to be carried out in the Ann's Grove-Lancaster drainage district, and as proper to receive priority:—

Ann's Grove W.S.L. check sluice opposite Mahaica Canal	§ 1,700	
Unity Road trench—check sluice 5 rods east of Unity W.S.L.	1,000	
Unity W.S.L.—check sluice between road and railway line.....	1,200	
Arrest seepage through Clonbrook Middle Walk dams	2,000	
Canal to Mahaica River and sea sluice to Mahaica River	35,000	\$40,900

3. The Consulting Engineer now recommends that these works should be started

as soon as weather conditions permit. Owing to the existence of sling mud on the foreshore this district has recently been badly flooded.

4. The Drainage Board have for some time been very much concerned regarding the inadequate drainage works for this district. If very heavy rains occur, such as the rainfall recently experienced, flooding will be inevitable until the proposed works are completed.

5. The reason why the Consulting Engineer and the Drainage Board have recommended building a new sluice at the Mahaica river is that there is deep water inside the river and the channel is never blocked with sling mud so that when the works recommended are carried out, drainage could be obtained during every tidal period.

6. It is proposed with the consent of the Development Trust Fund Committee that the cost of the works be paid for from that Fund. I should be glad if Honourable Members will approve of these proposals.

GORDON LETHEM.

Governor.

16th December, 1942.

(M.P. 33/35).

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESTIMATES, 1943.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I move that the Council resume consideration in Committee of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1943.

Mr. AUSTIN seconded.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: Before you put that motion I would like to make reference to the remarks made by Your Excellency just now concerning the proceedings of the Council. I think we should try and complete everything this week, as next week is a very busy week. I know perfectly well that you do not like to see a sparse attendance here, but it will be very inconvenient

to hon. Members to attend next week. I think with a little pressure we may complete the business. Perhaps, we may continue with business late to-morrow. I do not feel that we should go into next week.

THE PRESIDENT: You prefer to sit late to-morrow. We can agree on that at the time of adjournment.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I support that suggestion. It may be convenient to finish the Estimates by to-morrow, and so we will not have the cause to resume next week. I agree with the hon. Member that next week is a very busy week. Especially with the rains still continuing to fall those of us resident in the country districts will like to be near home.

THE PRESIDENT: We need make no decision at the moment. Leave it to see how we feel at 4 o'clock.

Mr. JACOB: I am inclined to agree with you that there should be no sitting to-morrow. If we are not finished to-day we should adjourn until next Wednesday. I have an important appointment with Sir Cosmo Parkinson to-morrow. I would like to see him and be here as well. If it is possible to defer the business until next week I would be pleased.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I think I should add my quota to this discussion. I would much prefer to finish the business of the Council to-morrow as I will be very busy next week and do not want to be absent from the Council. I come here sometimes at very great inconvenience. Next week will be an exceedingly busy period for me.

Mr. AUSTIN: Can we not try and get through to-day, even if we went on to 6 o'clock this afternoon, rather than sitting to-morrow and next week? I think most hon. Members are inclined to sit through to a late hour in order to get through our unfinished business rather than to carry on to-morrow or in Christmas week.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am inclined to agree with the hon. Member. It is purely a personal view. I cannot be here to-morrow. I have arranged to go to Mahaicony to-morrow on account of the rains.

THE PRESIDENT: I have another engagement with Sir Cosmo Parkinson at 5 o'clock to-day and will hand over to the hon. Colonial Secretary. Then you can sit until 8 o'clock perhaps.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried and the Council resumed consideration in Committee of the Estimates.

PUBLIC WORKS—ANNUALLY RECURRENT.

Mr. JACOB: For record purposes I would like to suggest—I think it is generally known now that Government proposes to increase the rates of wages paid labourers in respect of the repair of roads, bridges and buildings—that the rate of wages be not less than 96 cents for a male able-bodied worker and not less than 72 cents for a female able-bodied worker. The prevailing rates of wages, I understand, are 60 cents for a male and 28 to 32 cents for a female with a war bonus of 15 per cent. That should be the rates for an eight-hour day, but when it comes to over-time it should be at least at the rate of time and a half and double pay for holidays and Sundays. I know, and I think it ought to be very well known, that in Georgetown the wages for waterfront workers are for instance—80 cents per day for a female worker and from \$1.04 to \$2.08 per day for other workers, and for Sundays and holidays the rates are double pay for females and in respect of the others double pay in three instances and a little less than double pay in two other instances; for over-time it is double, the hours being from 4 to 6. As that exists in Georgetown among a certain class of workers I see no reason why it should not be continued throughout the Colony. I recommend this to the careful consideration of Government.

If it cannot be granted immediately I think something substantial ought to be granted from 1st January.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will record the remarks made by the hon. Member and action will be considered later.

Head agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS—EXTRAORDINARY.

THE CHAIRMAN: AS I had explained in Finance Committee and also by the Director of Public Works, the first works to be undertaken will be, no doubt, works which it was not possible to commence in 1942 and where the money was re-voted in supplementary estimates. It therefore follows that some of these works will have to wait their turn.

Mr. De AGUIAR: Can you not detail the works that are not likely to be carried out, or is it too early to express an opinion?

THE CHAIRMAN: When these estimates were drawn up there were a number of works which were started or, it was hoped, would be started and finished by the end of the year. That is why they are not included here. Progress has been slow. Can the Director indicate the likely re-votes?

Mr. De AGUIAR: Before the Director speaks may I make a further enquiry so that he can deal with both at the same time? It is just a general observation I would like to make and some information may be supplied. The total of this vote is \$538,169 and of that amount \$137,015 is for Roads and Bridges Extraordinary. No details are given as regards that. I was wondering whether the Council could be informed as to how and where that money would be spent. The point I wish to make is that apart from that \$137,015, and \$70,000 for reconditioning drainage works throughout the Colony there will be a sum of \$330,000 and the amount put down for buildings repre-

sents \$250,000. I was wondering whether perhaps you may indicate what works are expected to be carried out during 1943. For instance, Mental Hospital, Berbice—\$12,000. That I think is ideal. I do not know whether it is hoped to complete that in 1943. Then there is this reckless expenditure on the Tuberculosis Hospital, Best. Members, I am sure, will be very anxious to see the end of expenditure there so as to be able to find out how much it is finally costing us. Up to now we are still in the dark about that. I know we have exceeded the estimated expenditure, but I will not go into that now. I would like to see the end of it so as to know what we are in for.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): Before the Director answers the enquiries, I would remind the hon. Member that Appendix F on page 44 sets out in detail the allocation of expenditure under the items of the sub-head—"Roads and Bridges Extraordinary."

Mr. De AGUIAR: I had looked for it this time but did not see it.

THE CHAIRMAN: You will see there that the largest item is for repairing and reconditioning the East Bank road between Providence and Craig, \$87,500, and from the marginal note it is a re-vote. Owing to lack of materials the work could not be done. As regards the Tuberculosis Hospital, Best, this provision, I take it, is for the completion of the original plan, some of which is going on now. I was over there on Sunday and saw that the Nurses Hostel is very well done.

Mr. BOYCE (Director of Public Works & Sea Defences): That is the Medical Officer's quarters Your Excellency is referring to.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is not the Nurses' Hostel started?

Mr. BOYCE: Not yet.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am sorry. What about the extra accommodation at the hospital? You have not put that forward yet and they are asking for it. I should say about the roads that going down to New Amsterdam on Monday over the East Coast road I thought it was not at all bad. In very few places there were bad holes. It shows that something was done by Government that it should have stood up to the rains. I was told that the Corentyne road is much better.

Mr. De AGUIAR: In view of that remark I desire to say that the Department has a very artful way, as soon as the Governor is going to travel along a road, to fill up all the holes. The last time I went over it, it was very bad indeed.

Mr. SEAFORD: I travel fairly regularly over that road, and I must admit that during the last few months it was better than it had been for a considerable time.

Head agreed to.

SEA DEFENCES.

Mr. JACOB: Under this Head I would like to repeat the remarks I made under Head XXXVI—Public Works, Annually Recurrent—page 72. But, sir, there is something more here. I am authorized to state that a communication was sent by the Guiana United Trade Union to the Secretary of the Sea Defence Board, dated 24th November, making specific complaints in regard to wages overtime and wages on holidays. We have not had a reply to that letter, though I have no doubt we will get one in due course. The point I wish to make now and to put on record is that the Union has been told quite specifically that certain Officers of the Government are definitely discouraging workers from joining any Trade Union. In fact I think a few of them were actually dismissed a few weeks ago and, after the matter was taken up and a second letter sent in,

the majority of these workers were re-employed. I am not making any definite and specific statement about it. I merely want to draw attention to the fact that from my knowledge I know in various quarters there is definite discouragement of workers joining Trade Unions and becoming organised. There are two names I can mention. If the reply is given that the statement is not correct there will be no hesitation on my part in mentioning the names of those persons who were discouraged and their services terminated because they are members of Trade Unions.

This Sea Defence Board is far from satisfactory. It is composed of twelve members. I do not pretend to know but I have reason to believe that a good many of those members hardly attend the meetings. I think a rule should be made that if any member of any Board or Committee absents himself from three consecutive meetings, his seat would become *ipso facto* vacant. If I can gauge from those Members' attendances on this Council, I have not the slightest doubt that my observation under this Head is correct.

Mr. SEAFORD: For the hon. Member's information! There is such a clause that if a member absents himself from four consecutive meetings his seat is declared void.

Mr. JACOB: I hope it is not with the reservation "provided a satisfactory excuse is not forthcoming." I have a little idea about these things. A member can show his face for a few minutes at a meeting and walk out. If these Boards are going to function properly—and they have not been functioning properly for nearly a century—it is time that their composition be gone into. Several Boards, to my mind, should be composed of a substantial majority of Elected Members of this Council, or for that matter Members of this Council. These Boards have double, if not treble, representation of certain interests. You have got

members of certain bodies, (I don't wish to call names) which are represented in this Council, and when you go to these various Boards you find them there and other interests are not represented at all, with the result that there is great dissatisfaction throughout the Colony. I have no doubt Your Excellency has been able to discern something about it. Sea Defences, Drainage and Public Health are all vital to the progress of the Colony, but the Boards are definitely hindering the development and progress of the Colony. I have no hesitation in making that statement. Whatever the law might be, it should be no barrier if the thing is not working satisfactorily. Let the law be amended if Government feels everything is not going right. I have nothing more to say. I am definitely of the opinion that if a proper survey is made it will be found that things are far from satisfactory, particularly on the Sea Defence Board.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member may remember that I made an announcement during yesterday touching the Drainage & Irrigation Board. I said I will make the appointments so as to give much more substantial representation of this Council on that Board.

Head agreed to.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): Under this Head an increase of \$600 has been recommended by the Finance Committee, making the total \$10,757. It is an addition to item 3—Fees—District Registrars, Marriage Officers and Superintendent Registrar.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed as amended.

SUPREME COURT.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is a vacancy in the post of Second Puisne

Judge and I am not sure it will be desirable to reconsider the salary. The actual amount in the Ordinance is not as it is in the Estimates. What is it in the Ordinance? I see the Ordinance actually says £1,250. That is a matter which will come up later with the question of the appointment and any recommendation the Chief Justice has to make. I am just recording it here that my attention has been drawn to it.

Head agreed to.

TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS.

Mr. McDAVID: This Head was reserved for discussion in this Council. One hon. Member at least desired it.

Mr. De AGULAR: I regret that I have assigned myself the painful task every year of offering some criticism concerning the activities of this Department. Whether those criticisms in the past were considered to be constructive I am not aware, but nevertheless I feel that again I must make some comment in respect of this particular Head. The position to-day is this. It is estimated that in 1943 the Deficiency will be something like half a million dollars—to be correct the total estimated deficit is \$570,402. What concerns me is the fact that the deficiency under Transport Services alone represents nearly the whole of that sum, according to the figure appearing in the Estimates, \$528,902. I am sure that Your Excellency, and in fact this Council, will agree with me that despite the fact that this is a Public Utility Service operated for the benefit of the people of the Colony, there must be something wrong with the policy, and I am going to take Government to task to-day on the general question of its policy in operating this service and to ask Government to make a public pronouncement once and for all, as it may save me the trouble of having to deal with the matter in the way I propose to deal with it again to-day.

If you turn to Appendix A you would find in all the services—I take for the purpose of my remarks page 10—an adverse balance on their operation. East Coast Railway—the estimated gross receipts total \$331,450 as against an estimated expenditure of \$363,252. The West Coast Railway—\$69,050 receipts as against \$87,540 expenditure. Steamer and Launch Service—\$237,250 receipts as against \$290,833 expenditure. I will not quote Harbour and Pilotage as there is nothing to quote, the receipts in that case being considerably higher than the expenditure every year. In the case of the Bartica—Potaro Road Transport Service—\$61,120 receipts as against \$101,260 expenditure. It seems very strange that in a Department of this kind operating so many services, in each of them there should be such an adverse balance on the operation. I would like this Government to make a pronouncement as to whether it is the policy of Government to continue to run these services at a loss and, if so, why.

I feel, sir, that unless something is done the Deficiency in the Transport Service will continue to rise year after year. In fact, it has been rising to such an extent that I am inclined to think that the services are deteriorating. Some years ago, in this Council, I drew attention to the fact that very small sums were being put aside annually for replacements and renewals. It might have been all right in those days to set aside small sums, but to-day one sees at once that it was false economy. We have to operate these services greatly curtailed—the railway and steamer services—and what is more the services that are being operated now are being overloaded. I do not know what view Government is taking in regard to the risk, if there is any. I am inclined to think there is some risk. You have only to stand on the street and see the trains pass by and the number of people inside and outside of the carriages, not to say the least of the number of complaints that have reached me from

time to time, of discomfort in travelling. The curtailment is not only there, which is bad enough and very serious, but what is also serious is the fact that they cannot even take care of the ordinary traffic. I refer particularly to goods traffic which, as Your Excellency knows, must be regarded to-day as a very important service. There have been minor complaints about delay and so on, which I am not concerned about. I may say in passing, that in making the changes due attention was not paid to the needs of the public. I know of recent changes that have been made where an important branch of the service was left without one experienced man in it, the changes having taken place through the retirement of a very responsible officer of this Department. This is a matter, I think, for the administration to look into.

This Department is managed by Commissioners and men for whom I have the highest regard. Probably they have not been able to go into such matters. I am not so concerned about that as I am with the efficiency of the service on the whole and the cost to the Colony, and I do ask that something be done and speedily. Let us take the West Coast Railway for example. It is absolutely the goods traffic that has suffered there. At the present time there are no trucks. A little over a year ago the question of a shortage of trucks was raised in another place and representations were made. What happened to them? I do not know, but the fact remains that the position is even more serious to-day than at that time. Whether they have increased the number of trucks operating on the two services I do not know, but the complaint is there and the complaint is more serious. A number of complaints have reached me that people have rice, etc., to bring to town on the railway and they cannot get them through. What is serious, it seems, is that very little effort is made to get the traffic through. It is bad enough to be unable to remove the

traffic that is available, but a thousand times worse when some effort is not made to give assistance. It can be summed up in this way. If you have something to be despatched by the railway and they refuse to take it, it is none of their business whether you take it away. No assistance is afforded to those people and as a result there are very serious complaints in that connection.

I am going to be told it is extremely difficult in these times to obtain renewals of rolling stock. I see here the re-appearance of items on last year's Estimates for locomotives. I suppose they will be there again next year. I have no doubt it is extremely difficult to get these things to-day, but I want to put on record that this is nothing new. These replacements should have been attended to before, and Government should make a plea to the proper quarters. If the Commissioners made representations to Government and Government shirked its responsibility and did not place the orders for replacements in time, then say so but do not allow a large number of people to feel that the Transport Department is not doing its duty to them. I am sorry to say it is my view, despite whatever information may be available to Government, that unless decisive changes take place very soon this service is going to continue to deteriorate and, I have no doubt, before very long perhaps—I hope that will not be the case—a good many more services will have to be suspended. It is for Government to consider what effect such an unfortunate occurrence will have on the community. I do hope, although I have expressed that opinion, that I am wrong but I cannot help feeling that to some extent I am right in expressing it, and I do so because I want Government to take immediate action or give the matter immediate consideration before it is too late. The present deficit is exceedingly large and, I have no doubt it will be larger still. We have to pay for past mistakes, but let us at least

try in forgetting the past to correct those errors and so save me the trouble of having to refer to them again.

I do not recall having referred to it last year when you arrived, but if I did you will pardon the repetition. In so far as the constitution of the Board is concerned, it was my considered opinion when the Ordinance was passed that the chief Executive Adviser of this Government should not also be the chief Executive of the Department. I do not make that point now, and it is a bit unfortunate at this stage to make it appear that it is the general feeling that the chief adviser of Government is also the Chairman of this Board who is responsible for the present state of things. I do not say that, but what I do say is that it places any individual in a rather peculiar position to sit with his colleagues on a Board, listen to their representation or advice and agree with them, and when the time comes for him to consider the matter from the Government viewpoint either to advise that the time is not ripe or that Government cannot afford it, and the recommendation made by the Board has to be postponed. If that is the feeling in the minds of certain people in the community, I am inclined to think they are justified, I do urge again and I hope for the last time, that Government will consider this remark with the view of remedying that position.

So far as the Estimates are concerned it is the practice—and I think in using the word "practice" I am quite in order—not to make any comment on any individual item appearing on the Estimates. The view has been expressed—I have been trying to find out where but I have not been able to do so—that this Council is mainly or should only be concerned with the actual deficit in the working of this Department. In other words, it is not within the scope of this Council to make any comments on any matter other than the figures that appear here

on the Estimates. I certainly would like to obtain a definite ruling on that point. It has been mentioned before and I would like to have it definitely settled now, whether that is the interpretation put on the section referred to—section 2, sub-section 7 of Ordinance No. 19 of 1931. If that is the correct interpretation, that this Council should only concern itself with the Head as it stands and in no way concern itself with the appendix here, then it seems to me that the sooner that position is remedied the better it will be for all concerned, because it is only in that way the Commissioners of the Board will be able to obtain any valuable suggestions. I take it the Members around this table can give valuable suggestions which may be given consideration. I subscribe to the view that that is the interpretation to be put on it and, therefore, I ask that some definite pronouncement be made because such a large department of this kind, despite the fact that it is being administered by a body of competent men, should come in for greater scrutiny by Members of this Council. It is not sufficient to say that Members should confine themselves merely to the deficit, because there is representation of a very opposite view. If that is the interpretation—that this Council is not entitled to raise any question,—then it seems to me that was never the intention.

I am speaking generally on the principle. This Council is concerned with the several Departments of the State and I want to make my position perfectly clear. Whether or not this or any Department of Government is able to pay its way, I say, that as long as I retain my seat as a Member of this Council I am entitled to raise a question or to criticize or make suggestions regarding the activities of that Department. I certainly do not accept the view that the section is meant to debar Members of their rights and privileges in Council to criticize any matter of detail concerning this or any other Department, and I do ask that a

definite pronouncement be made as to whether that is the interpretation, because if it is I shall make every effort to have that situation remedied. I consider it will be interfering with the privileges of Members of the Council. I do not know that I care to make any further observation on the Estimates as a whole. I have already stated how alarming it must be to Government and to the general taxpayers that these Transport Services are costing us so much money, and I foresee that they will cost us more if it is the policy of Government to continue to run these Services at a loss. It is the duty of Government to settle the question once and for all as the taxpayers will always be called upon to bear this heavy burden.

Mr. JACOB: I agree in the main with all that has been said by my hon. friend, the Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar). I do not think it is very necessary for me to stress the point that Members of this Council have the inherent right to question every item of expenditure under this Head. I would be sorry to think there is some section restricting the rights of Members to criticize expenditure on the Estimates but, if it is so, I agree with my hon. friend that some pronouncement should be made and that section should be amended without much delay. I am alarmed at the figures on page 79 of these Estimates. The actual Deficiency for 1941 was \$124,809, the estimated Deficiency for 1942 is \$177,871, and the Estimated Deficiency for 1943 is \$570,402.

Mr. McDAVID: I hope the hon. Member is not drawing an analogy with these three sets of figures. It is fully explained in the memorandum. The reason is that in 1943 the surplus revenue of the Harbour Section will be credited to revenue directly—page 10 of the Explanatory Memorandum printed on the draft Estimates. For a true comparison the figures shown as Net Deficiency, \$528,902 should be compared

with \$435,925. I may quote what is printed on page 10 of the Explanatory Memorandum—

“ The draft estimate under this Head has been prepared so as to show in the main Expenditure Estimates the net cost to the Colony of operating the Railway, Steamer and Road Motor Services, apart from the net surplus receipts derived from Harbour revenues after meeting the cost of Harbour and Pilotage Services. The total vote under this Head in 1943 will therefore represent the estimated amount to be provided as a subsidy for the Transport Services to cover the “ net deficiency ” on their operation together with the estimated requirements for further expenditure on capital account. The amount of this subsidy in recent years is shown below:—

	Net Deficiency.	Expenditure on Capital Account.
1940—Actual	\$305,737	\$ 1,997
1941—Actual	356,253	4,580
1942—Estimated	435,925	41,000
1943—Estimated..	528,902	41,500

These are the comparisons that should be made.

Mr. JACOB: The figures are so many and the note is so complicated that I prefer to deal with the page before me at the moment. The figures here show the Estimates to be voted this year for 1943 call for \$570,102, but I am inclined to think that figure is over-estimated. When I look at page 10 of Appendix A in the Draft Estimates I find that the revised estimated gross receipts in respect of the East Coast Railway for 1942 is put down at \$351,398 and for 1941 at \$321,432. Therefore there is a definite increase in 1942 as compared with 1941, but when I look at 1943 I see a decrease—\$331,450 as compared with \$351,398 for 1942. I do not know if it is anticipated that there will be less passengers, parcels and so on in 1943. The principle of estimating nowadays is to show expenditure as large as possible and to show revenue or receipts as small as possible. I cannot understand why it should

be presumed that in 1943 the estimates under this particular head will be lower than in 1942. On page 10 of the Appendix the East Coast Railway receipts anticipated for 1943 are lower than those for 1942, the receipts for the West Coast Railway, the steamer and launch receipts, and the Bartica—Potaro Road Transport receipts are lower than those for 1942. The total receipts in respect of those four services are roughly \$40,000 less for 1943 than for 1942.

I do not know if these things are shown in this light to this Council in order to disarm criticism of the inefficiency (I will not call it unsatisfactory) of the services that are run for the convenience of the public. When one speaks about these things he is told that these are war conditions and they cannot be helped. I refuse to believe that they cannot be helped, but that there is something sadly wrong with this Department. I do not mind if there is a deficit, provided the services are satisfactory. Why should this Department be run at such a huge loss? It is not fair that the Department should be run at such a loss so that other services might benefit. I make that statement knowing fully well what I mean about it. If this Department cannot be run to show a small margin either way then the whole thing requires reorganization.

It has been suggested here by one of the members of the Board that the Chairman should be relieved of this responsibility. I was particularly pleased to hear a member of the Board make that suggestion. The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) has made the same suggestion to-day. I have done so over and over again and said that it is unfair to the officer who is Chairman of the Board, and to the general public, that the Board should be so composed and so run. I understand that the Chamber of Commerce has been asked to suggest someone in the place of the late Mr. F. A.

Mackey who, it is supposed, was a member, nominated by the Chamber. That gentleman was a Member of this Council. The remarks I made about the Sea Defence Board are equally applicable here. A member of the Chamber, who was also a Nominated member of this Council, dies and his place on the Board is to be filled by a member of the Chamber of Commerce. When I look at the composition of the Board I see the names of several businessmen, prominent members of the Chamber of Commerce. When the matter was discussed at the Chamber of Commerce recently I took the opportunity to say that the Chamber should not submit any name, but the Chamber has been treated with that courtesy. I do not think it is right at all, and I am going to urge on Government not to extend that courtesy to any organization at all, whether it is the Chamber of Commerce or any other organization.

It is said that the Transport Department being a commercial concern, it is of advantage to the commercial interests to be represented on the Board. I do not know whether that is true, but that is what is said. If Government realizes that such a statement should not be made, and that there is any cause for it, that cause should be removed. I suggest that the composition of the Board should be changed; that there should be all Elected Members or Members of this Council. It may be possible to have one or two experts. I do not know if there are any experts in the Chamber of Commerce, but I am making the definite suggestion that the composition of the Board should be changed and that no organization be asked to submit names.

I feel that the deficiency shown on page 79 of the Estimate is over estimated. I do not know whether those concerned have gone into the matter carefully. My friend the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) referred to the lack of proper facilities for the

transportation of produce. I am of the strong opinion that the decrease in production of many items in the Colony is responsible to some extent for the deficiency in respect of these services. Now that there is going to be increased production of various items—I hope there will be increased production—there is going to be less motor and other transport facilities in the Colony, and in spite of those two factors the estimated receipts have been put down at a lower figure. Is it the intention to further curtail the services? Are the services in such a state that they must be curtailed? That is an obvious conclusion for one to come to. In fact I think the position next year ought to be better than this year. Production and population are increasing; why shouldn't there be increased revenue?

I have said it before, and in other places, that the best brains are on the Board, but on paper. Whether the members of the Board are giving the necessary service I am not in a position to say. I do not know whether all the members of the Board attend the meetings regularly, go into every detail and give the best possible advice, but I do urge that some radical change be made, and I appeal to the members of the Board, particularly those who are members of this Council, to go into these things more carefully.

I would like to get an explanation why the estimated receipts for 1943 are \$40,000 less than those for 1942. Under Harbour and Pilotage I see it is estimated to collect \$283,237 this year as compared with an original estimate of \$423,400, and actual receipts amounting to \$355,811 in 1941. While the estimated receipts for this year are \$283,237 these for 1943 are \$351,400. These figures beat me; I cannot follow them at all. I think there is something wrong, and the figures on page 10 of the Appendix are all very misleading.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I understand that the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) wishes to leave the Chamber for a few minutes, and at this stage I wish to reply to one point he made. He was dealing with the constitution of the Board and the power of the Board and the Governor-in-Council regarding the estimates of the Department, and asked for some authoritative ruling as to what the position was. I would like him to recall that in 1935, when the amending Ordinance to which he referred came before this Council, there was a full dress debate on that point lasting for about two days. Sir Geoffrey Northcote was then President and he gave an authoritative ruling which the hon. Member now seeks. I also remember that the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) spoke at length and gave a legal interpretation which was followed by an exposition by the then Attorney-General. I have here the Hansard report of those debates, and there are some extracts which, if the Council would permit me to read, would settle the point once and for all in the hon. Member's mind. Winding up the debate the President of the Council used these words in regard to the Transport Department. He said:—

"In modern legislation in other Crown Colonies, so far as railways, harbours and so forth are concerned, the control of the detailed estimates has been taken away from the Legislative Council by the Legislative Council themselves, because they do not wish what is a business matter to be subject to the delay which parliamentary control entails. The principle is recognised also in Great Britain, and I think it is a very sound principle."

That, of course, settled the principle here. The detailed estimates are first considered by the Board of Commissioners, which is a statutory body, and they have power of control and management, and those estimates are submitted to the Governor in Council who has the right and power by law to sanction those estimates. When once they have

been sanctioned they become the authorized estimates of the Department. If the estimates, as submitted for sanction, show a deficiency which calls for a vote from this Council then obviously this Council must, and has every right to criticize and go very fully into those estimates. That is why the Governor of the time proceeded in this way. He said:—

"It is quite competent for any Member of this Council to raise any question of public interest and to have it debated. So far as the Board may be over-ridden by the Governor in Council, quite apart from the undertaking I gave to give full scope to the Board, there are several Members of this Council who are also members of the Board, and it is always quite possible for them to raise any question here; so I do not think there need be any fear that the rejection of the amendment will do any harm."

Here is a very important extract which answers another point raised by the hon. Member:—

"Even if there were to be a surplus in the revenue of the Department at any time it would always be within the competence of any Member of the Council to raise a debate upon its management or upon its finances. I do not think the Council is in any way being deprived of the control it has over the Transport and Harbours Department if this amendment is negatived."

That is the ruling. The position is that the estimates are authorized by the Governor in Council. When they come before this Council for a money vote to cover a deficiency this Council has the right, and always exercises that right, to go into the details of the estimates, and as the Governor pointed out at the time, even if there was a surplus which would make it unnecessary to come to the Council for money, points can still be raised in this Council by hon. Members. That is the position, and I think it is desirable that it should continue.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I would like to make a few remarks but I have been

anticipated by the Treasurer. Reference to the parent Ordinance of 1931 makes the position quite clear. I refer to Ordinance 13 of 1931, of which there appears to be only one copy in this Chamber: all the others have disappeared, and the Orderly had considerable difficulty in finding this one. If, of course, the Legislature has to consult past legislation from time to time, and can only find one copy to do so, it will always lead to the position which has misled the two hon. Members who have spoken. It is quite clear that that was the position which was created, not by the present Board or the present Government, but has existed since the Ordinance came into being. The Ordinance, No. 19 of 1935, referred to by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar), was an amendment of a particular section with which I am going to deal, and that was section 7 which reads:—

7. The Board shall on or before the fifteenth day of June in each year submit to the Governor in Council the estimates of revenue and expenditure and of net deficiency or surplus of the Department for the ensuing year. The Governor in Council may alter or amend such estimates and those sanctioned by the Governor in Council shall be the authorised estimates for the ensuing year, and the Board may, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance, levy, collect and receive the revenue therein stated, and may appropriate the same for defraying the expenditure of the Department for which provision has been made in the authorised estimates: provided that with regard to the dues, fees and charges mentioned in Part III. of this Ordinance, the Board, with the previous sanction of the Legislative Council, may at any time fix, levy and collect such dues, fees or charges other than those contained in the estimates as it may deem necessary for the purpose of this Ordinance.

That is the position. It is open to any Member of this Council to move an amendment for the repeal of that particular Ordinance, but not to say that there is lack of opportunity to give effect to the wishes of this Council. After all Members of the Legislature

should know the procedure, and it is my complaint that in a good many cases the proper remedy is overlooked. They have the remedy in their hands, and when they do get this expected majority I hope that many of these representations will be entirely unnecessary, because it is open to any Member to move an amendment or repeal of an Ordinance. Although I do not agree that it is open to any Member of this Council at this time to move the deletion of any item of these estimates, he has another and a more powerful and effective remedy which he does not make use of. I hope that next year the same representation will not be made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara, although I think he should be fully apprised of what the position is.

I have risen to say that there appeared in the public Press a communiqué which, if it were read and understood, could not possibly lead to these constant misunderstandings in Members' minds, or even in the minds of the public. Let us go back to 1914 when this Government acquired steamers for the purpose of running these services. What was the position before that? Everyone of those services was run by a private firm, but it is a fact that subsidies were being paid to that firm for steamer services to Morawhanna, Essequibo, Berbice, and for the ferry. That firm naturally asked for an increase in those subsidies, and after many disagreements, both in this Council and outside of it, Sir Walter Egeron determined to inaugurate this service. He did that in the public interest because Messrs. Sproston were implacable. Mr. Laing was then Financial Representative for Georgetown, but he was also Chairman of Sprostons and Chairman of the British Guiana Bank, and in order to meet their obligations to the Bank Sprostons were pressing Government for those increased subsidies.

The firm of Sprostons was then differently controlled, and the greatest

influence was exercised on the Government at that time to give Sproston those subsidies. It is to the credit of Government that they were able to resist a powerful influence like that. What I would like Members to appreciate now is what would have been the position of the Colony if those subsidies had been maintained over the period of years. Wouldn't we have had Sproston appealing to Government from time to time for further assistance? I want to know what Member can say what subsidies Government should have been asked to make? I hesitate to name the figure, but instead of complaining about the net deficiency I rather fancy that Sproston would have been asking for more than double the subsidies only to continue the services.

Is there anybody here who has lived in the Colony and benefited by this service not appreciative enough to know that it is a public utility service run for the benefit of what seems to me to be the travelling members of the public, and not for the average individual? What would the business community think of being charged the tariffs they pay? It is the cheapest "common carrier" service in the world. The railway fares are the least expensive and the tariff charges to merchants and rates generally are undoubtedly the cheapest in the world. It is all very well to point to the net deficiency, but if the Members of the Council, representing their various constituencies, would like to see the net deficiency disappear from our estimates and something like revenue appear instead representations can be made to the Department and then to the Governor in Council that there should be an increase in fares and tariffs. I wonder how their constituents would enjoy that.

For instance the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) knows that that part of the railway service between Georgetown and Mahaica is one from which the

East Coast railway derives its main traffic. Not long ago I asked the General Manager to supply me with the figures for the first nine months of the year, and the Board reviews them every month. The position is that for the nine months ending on the 30th September the loss on the general working of the Department was \$13,482.56. On the East Coast railway alone, with an increased passenger traffic of 152,000 persons, there was a deficit in the working of \$36,000; on the West Coast railway, with an increase of 84,000 passengers over the previous year, there was a deficit of \$20,000. On the steamer services, with an increase of 101,889 in passenger traffic, there was a deficit of \$71,000, while on the Bartica-Potaro road service there was a deficit of \$22,000, although there was a decrease of 2,589 passengers on that service.

The point I am making is that under present conditions these services provide the Colony with cheap, and as I contend, safe travelling from various parts of the Colony to Georgetown, and unless this deficiency can be sustained and even justified it would mean that the services would have to disappear altogether. I doubt very much whether any business concern could have survived what this Department has suffered during the last two or three years. It is all very well for hon. Members to say that ample provision has not been made for replacements. We all know what that means. From time to time orders for new locomotives have been placed and sometimes renewed, but did any of us anticipate the war? Hasn't the Department been told that it cannot acquire steamers, and hasn't it been denied things like engines? Hon. Members ought to know the reason for the curtailed services, and that next year there will be a decrease in traffic and a curtailment of services. The estimates have therefore been framed on those lines. In the case of one particular estimate, the Harbour estimate, it is not based solely

on the anticipations of the Board but on the advice of people who ought to know exactly the volume of steamship traffic which is likely to reach this port, and the Board is naturally guided by the people who are qualified to judge. Those are the facts guiding the Board's policy.

I am the oldest member of the Board; I have been there for many years, and I have known people of very great experience on the Board. As a Commissioner I can state that no person in this community has ever addressed a letter of complaint to the Board which has not reached the Board, and which was not investigated first of all by the circulation of the complaint and finally by a decision made at a meeting of the Board. In other words the management does not hide from the Commissioners any of those complaints. I have never known any Manager who did. What are the complaints referred to by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob)? He has not told us anything about them. He has not made the charge that the Board considered them or dismissed them without any investigation. It is perhaps because members of the public consider that the train should wait on their produce, or perhaps on themselves, at various points that we have often been told about trains being late. I wonder if the public knows the reason for its being late? It is not hidden by the management. A report is furnished on causes of delay, intromissions and causes of late arrival at every station, and except of course within recent times, the main cause is usually engine trouble or some mechanical trouble. But I think that if the management took into account the very great demands and unreasonable demands made by the passenger traffic on the service in some cases the trains leaving Georgetown would not reach Resignol at all. There is no doubt about that.

I think Members would like to see something like the service that runs in Barbados where the train runs so slowly that one can join it at any point. The hon. Member laughs, but he knows that was the habit of the trains in Barbados. Here we provide the public with platforms. The hon. Member will soon ask that umbrellas be provided them while they wait for the train. There are more platforms than stations nowadays, certainly along one part of the journey. I think nobody really objects to those platforms which serve a very useful purpose, because it is the policy of the Government to lead people to believe that the trains are theirs and are run for their accommodation, and every person who wanted the train to stop immediately opposite his house was encouraged to think that that would be done.

I want to know if the people would like to revert to the days of the old Demerara Railway Co. when men like Mr. Dorman would not listen to any such thing—and he was right. Even the estate authorities take advantage of the service to my certain knowledge. Whenever they like the Department must send them 50 more trucks than they have requisitioned for, and they must wait on their convenience as long as it takes them to load a sugar bag. The fact remains that a little more dispatch in the loading of trucks would cost the Department less. After all what will the Department do without the benefit that it derives from the sugar estates? It is not generally known that there was a time when estates' supplies did not reach the estates over the railway lines at all. They were conveyed from Georgetown by their own motor lorries and carts. The Department has been able to secure that traffic by providing rates which suited the estate authorities. We have induced them not to send their stuff by water, and in many ways we serve the public interest.

I agree that much more could be shown on the revenue side if the De-

partment were allowed to increase its rates, but after all it is a public utility service. The hon. Member has told me that at the present moment we are bringing foodstuffs on the train which are subsidized. What I wish to emphasize is that there is great difficulty, I admit, in understanding the policy of the Department, but its policy is to serve the public. The moment the Department tries to serve the Government the complaints will be louder and more voluble than they are today, and I am sure no one wishes to see that. I am sorry that the net deficiency is so great, but it is unavoidable, and I have no doubt that in time to come we will have to ask the Council for a very considerable increase on that asked for now.

Mr. GONSALVES: I wish to endorse what has been said by the hon. Member as regards the Department, but I do not wish to be involved in any complications which might result from his reference to Barbados and its railway which I cannot support, although I have heard some stories about it. I do not wish to be a party to creating any intercolonial question.

With regard to the estimates of the Department the hon. Member has said what is exactly in my mind. It is for this Council to say definitely whether it is the desire of Elected Members who represent constituencies which are affected by the services run by the Department, that passenger fares and freight rates should be increased, because that is the only means by which the revenue of the Department can appear on the right side of the estimate. The hon. Member has pointed out, and it must be realized by everyone, that the service is being run for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Colony, and if it has to be run on strictly commercial lines then the means suggested is the only way that can be brought about.

I will not say that the Members who have criticized the expenditure side of

the estimate have not endeavoured to show in what way the increases have come about, but on reference to the Appendix it will be seen that the increase on the East Coast railway is \$35,282. I have extracted some of the items under that head to show some of the increases. Under wages there is an increase of \$2,000; ballast \$1,600; water supply \$1,174; fuel \$12,000; ticket collectors \$5,000, and temporary war bonus \$10,772. On the West Coast Railway the increased expenditure is \$10,885, and again the chief items are ballast, workshop expenses, ticket collectors, fuel, and war bonus. On the Bartica-Potaro Road Service the increased expenditure is \$12,555, the chief items being war bonus \$3,000; maintenance of Issano stelling \$1,000; Rest Houses \$1,000; running expenses of garage \$1,000. War bonus is an item which has been passed by this Council, and if the men are to be paid war bonus it must be provided on the estimate. If the trains and steamers are to be run they must have fuel, and if the cost of fuel is greater the cost of running the Department must be increased. Unless Members of the Council can suggest how savings on expenditure can be effected without a reduction of the services or the staff it is difficult to understand how the present situation can be remedied. It is very easy for one to criticize but it is always exceedingly difficult when that person finds himself in the same position to say why he has not done it himself.

As regards the constitution of the Transport Board there are three Elected Members of this Council and the Colonial Secretary, who is Chairman. The question whether the Colonial Secretary should be Chairman is one which has been discussed here over and over and one upon which Government will have to make some decision at some time, but so long as the Board is constituted as it is the Colonial Secretary remains the Chairman. If it is thought by the commercial community that the

present members of the Board do not do what they should it is up to them to change them. Similarly, if Government thinks that the Elected Members of the Council are not giving service to the Board—and no Member has been bold enough to say that—then similar changes would be made by Government. Your Excellency will have observed that in all these debates Members have not suggested that the Elected Members on the Board should be removed. If the other members of the Board are appointed on the recommendations of an association then it is for that body to make some change, especially when the Members who criticize the Department in this Council happen to be members of that association.

On the revenue side I do not want to say too much because the Colonial Secretary is Chairman of the Board and is expected to say something. The General Manager is also here. The steamer services are expected to show a drop in receipts. For instance, in the Essequibo river the amount of employment provided at the Naval Base has been reduced considerably, therefore there will be less traffic on that route. There will also be less traffic to the interior, and in other ways it is felt that there will not be the same activity during the coming year as there has been this year. That is the position of the Department as I see it. As the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) has explained, it is a public utility service, and the deficiency must be met by a vote in this Council.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: There is nothing more I can add than to say that the last two speakers have taken the two previous speakers much too seriously. The estimates of the Board are considered far more seriously than the estimates of this Council. I can assure this Council that the members of the Board spend a considerable amount of time on them, and every member is present at those meetings.

Mr. SEAFORD: Every public utility service throughout the world must expect criticism, and always gets it. Many complaints have come to me and I feel at times that a little more efficiency might have been shown. We know the difficulties which not only this Department but all other Departments which have to deal with mechanical instruments are experiencing. They are in the unfortunate position of not knowing when they can get spare parts or replacements, and the cost of such things has gone up 60, 70 and in some cases 200 per cent.

What I feel about the matter is that Members of the Council have not expressed their opinion on the question whether fares and freight rates should be increased or not. If fares and freight are not to be increased the cost of running the Department is bound to be increased, but perhaps it might meet the point if we took off the increase in the net deficiency and put it on the subsidization vote. We are subsidizing cheap transport for the benefit of the poor people of the Colony, and whichever head it is put under the result will be exactly the same.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Other speakers who are members of the Board have answered most of the questions, but there are one or two to which I would like to reply. I am sorry the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) is not here now, because I would like to assure him that his remarks do not go unheeded. I make a point of submitting the Hansard reports of the debates to the General Manager who answers any questions brought up, and then the Board deals with the matter. The policy of the Board has been dealt with by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford). The Board endeavours to serve and satisfy the public, and I can assure hon. Members that when the Board does not satisfy the public, the public

is not backward in coming forward and telling the Board what should be done.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara asked whether Government proposes to take immediate action to prevent what he called the deterioration of the railway. The Board is very worried over not being able to get engines and trucks. We are short of trucks and we are having great difficulty in getting coal, but the General Manager keeps a very close eye on the railway and brings to the notice of the Board any point which he thinks might lead to improvement.

The hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) referred to the late Mr. Mackey who was a Commissioner and happened to be a Member of this Council. He did not sit as a Commissioner because he was a Member of the Council, but because he was one of the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce. Under the 1931 Ordinance two persons have to be chosen by the Government from a panel submitted by the Chamber of Commerce, and when a vacancy occurs the Chamber is asked to submit a panel of names.

The hon. Member also asked whether members of the Board attend meetings regularly. I have sat on a good many Boards, but I can assure the hon. Member that I have never seen members more frequent in their attendance than on the Transport and Harbours Board. Meetings used to be held once a month but now they are held once a fortnight.

With regard to the estimates of the Department I should like to inform the hon. Member that two special meetings were held to deal with them, and we sat for two hours on two days, so that the draft estimates were very carefully considered.

As regards the large deficit I should like to point out that on the outbreak of the war one of the first recommendations put up by the Board was

that the freight rates on agricultural products should be reduced by 50 per cent., and those rates have been in force ever since. I think that has been a help to the people of the Colony. When *increases in salaries* had to be made a year or 18 months ago the Board considered whether they should increase the revenue of the Department to offset the increased expenditure, and recommendations were put up to increase the tariff charges, but it was decided by Government not to increase any of the tariff rates. I should like the hon. Member for North-Western District to know this: that no less than \$178,000 of that deficit is represented by increased wages. The amount paid in wages has been increased by that figure during the last five years.

Mr. G. I. GORING (General Manager): The whole question is the question that has been raised by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford), and that is: Is the Transport Service a public service, or is it a commercial undertaking? For 20 long years that question has been raised in this Council. For 364 days of each year every Member of this Council and every member of the general public has regarded and will continue to regard the Transport Service as a public service. For one day in each year some Members dance to the other point of the compass and the General Manager is expected to join in the dance. The viewpoint must be quite clear. Is it a public service or a business undertaking? If we regard the Transport Department as a business undertaking we must consider it from its inception—how it was formed. It was bought by the inhabitants of the Colony but they had not the money; they had to borrow it. They borrowed it in the form of annuities and loans, and today the amount of interest paid is over 5 per cent. on the capitalized value. In other words we are running a company with debenture stock at 5 per cent. and no other assets but that debenture stock.

In the case of an undertaking like Sprostons, with which I was connected in my youth, when it was taken over by the Bank it had very valuable assets, and the only debenture stock issued was a small amount, perhaps about one-tenth of the capitalized value, and that was its working capital, but it had all its assets. Sprostons continued for a good number of years, but all the firm was able to do was to pay the debenture holders. No interest at all was paid on the ordinary stock of the company, and it was only when it was sold at an enhanced value following the outbreak of the last war that it was able to give quite a small return to the shareholders of the company. I do not think it amounted to one per cent. That is the first point as a business concern the Transport Department has to face—a debenture stock of 5 per cent. on a capital of \$3,644,604.

The next point we have to consider is the working expenditure. To give you the figure alone it will convey nothing, and so I will compare it with the year 1936. That was the first year in which there was a distinct rise in prices both in labour and materials in this Colony. The figure for 1936 was \$565,184 and for 1942 it was \$927,423, an increase of \$362,249 or 60 per cent. I do not think that is an unreasonable increase when one considers the tremendous increase caused by the War both in materials and labour. The Chairman has pointed out that to labour we have given \$178,000 that year more than for 1936. It is on the materials side that the increase has mounted to such a high figure. To give you an illustration of what I may call stable commodities that we use, in 1936 Wood fuel cost \$2.03 per ton and to-day we pay \$4.00 per ton; in 1936 we could have bought Patent fuel at \$9.36 per ton, but to-day we are paying \$25 and \$30 per ton and we may in the course of the next few weeks have to purchase coal at \$40 per ton.

With regard to replacement, the hon. Member for Central Demerara has accused us of lack of foresight. I wonder if he remembers that this War has been going on for four years. At the commencement of the War we were first of all asked by the people of the United Kingdom to make no demands on them for steamers, because every ton of steel was needed for war purposes. To-day we are not asked but are told that we will not get material for replacing the rolling-stock. We had started to increase the number of trucks before the War, and at the time when the War broke out we had on order material for building several trucks. We got that but we were told we can expect no more. To-day I am making every effort to turn everything I have got on wheels—it does not matter how rotten the wheels are—so that we can carry on.

As regards locomotives and equipment, all that we ordered. We ordered a complete replacement for the West Coast Railway, and I think next year they are going to send us one small locomotive. That will not be of any good to us because the scheme is for a different type of rolling stock to what we have now. As regards the shortage of material to-day I am much concerned as to where I am going to get fuel to run the East Coast Railway. Orders for patent fuel were forwarded to the Crown Agents in September, 1941, but shipping space has resulted in that programme being three months behind hand. The next shipment, it is hoped, will arrive at the end of January but to-day there is only patent fuel on hand enough to last until the beginning of January. The situation of wood fuel is equally as bad, and I only explain this to show some of the difficulties which cannot be said to have occurred through lack of foresight.

The chief difference between a commercial concern and a public service is shown when we come to the revenue side. There has been some criticism

in regard to the estimates of revenue, and the remark was made that these were too low. If those figures were examined one would see that the percentage is not very far below the figures for this year. It is what one may call a conservative estimate. There is always the possibility that one or other of these services will have to be stopped. If we cannot obtain tyres there is very little prospect of carrying on the Road Service next year. If we cannot obtain fuel the East Coast Service will have to be drastically cut. There is always that possibility in estimating revenue. That has to be remembered. Taking the figures as a whole, the total cost of running the Transport Services in wages, capital charges, operating expenses and replacements is \$1,227,722 and the total revenue is \$698,870. That is, 56 per cent. of the cost of running the Transport Services is collected in fares and freight. Now, if you regard the Transport Service as a public service, then you must regard it in the same way as the Sea Defences which are entirely a colonial question in which the people benefited. The people who own the land that is protected do not pay the direct cost of the wall erected in front of their land. It is the same with Drainage, where the land-owners pay only a portion of the cost and with every public utility service where only a portion of the cost is paid by the people directly benefited, but if you want to turn it into a commercial concern we must take the view that the service rendered to each individual shipper or passenger must be paid for and must be entirely in proportion to the cost.

Then, of course, the question of using the Transport Department to subsidize industry would vanish. No business concern would take a bunch of plantains valued at 5/- from Essequibo to Georgetown for two cents, or a bag of rice valued at only \$3 from New Amsterdam to Georgetown for ten cents. I think that if we run the Transport Department as a business

concern the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) may have to make a few explanations to his constituents. We charge \$6 per 1,000ft. of crabwood logs and our competitors, the sloops, are now charging \$8 and \$10. If we were a business undertaking our price would go up immediately to at least \$14 per 1,000 ft., as there are more crabwood logs than sloops, and I am sure that price would be paid. For instance, with regard to logs, we charge seven cents (7c.) per cubic foot to bring them from Morawhanna and to bring them from Essequibo in a sea-punt they charge eight cents (8c.) per cubic foot. I do not think that there is anywhere in the Colony you can get transport for a half cent (½c.) a mile, and that is what we charge from here to Berbice. Take for instance the question of hucksters baskets. Hucksters coming down on the train are allowed one basket free and charged at the rate of six cents each for the others. Those baskets probably weigh about fifty pounds (50 lbs.). I certainly do not think any commercial concern will do that. The whole thing is, you cannot have it both ways. Either you have to regard the Transport Department as a public service subsidizing industry and allow the general taxpayer who benefits indirectly by the service to pay a proportion of the cost, or turn it into a commercial concern and then I can say the revenue will rapidly rise.

THE CHAIRMAN: Having had the replies of the General Manager (Mr. Goring) and the Chairman of the Board (the Colonial Secretary) I propose to put the question.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I regret I was not here to listen to the Chairman of the Board, but I have no doubt he has given very satisfactory answers to the points raised by several Members. I wish I can say the same thing as regards the reply given by the General Manager of the Department, whose speech in this Council I had the pleasure of listening to. I may at this stage pay him a compliment for having tried to present a very good case in

answer to the criticisms made, but I venture to suggest he has failed in that attempt. In regard to his reference to a commercial undertaking, it is true that possibly the hon. Member for North-Western District and myself in examining these estimates tried to look at them from a commercial angle as they ought to be, but at the same time we did not lose sight of the fact that this is a public service. What I want to say is this. Too much capital is being made of the fact, not only under this Head but in every instance, of war conditions when dealing with the question of public service. The sooner we get down to brass tacks and appreciate that the public generally look at the service as a whole with very keen interest the better it will be for all concerned.

I deprecate very strongly the attitude that is taken up by any Head of a Department when he says that because this is a public service it must be run at a loss. I gather from the remarks by the General Manager of this Department that because this is a public service it must be run at a loss. That is what I understood him to mean, even if he did not say that. I do not share that view at all. I do not think any ordinary person, commercial or otherwise, will accept that view. We should have a true picture of the case presented to us. Why should reference be made to the charge for a bag of rice from New Amsterdam to Georgetown without reference to the charge for the same bag of rice from Mahaica to Georgetown? That is one side of the picture I would like to hear. We have not been told that it was done in order to meet competition. That is not subsidizing the rice industry at all. I say very strongly that when the freight was 14 cents, or whatever it was, it was not fixed with the view of assisting any industry, whether rice or any other produce grown in this country. The rate was fixed,—and this is a fact which may not be existing to-day but

had existed—in order to meet competition from another service. That is the true picture. That service, which I know and I am sure other Members of the Council know, is a commercial undertaking, and, I am positive, in fixing that rate it was not being operated at a loss. They are not philanthropists and they are not the Government.

I refuse to believe that when that service was being operated—I do not know if it is to-day—and when that freight was fixed, not only on rice but on every other package transported from Georgetown to Berbice and *vice versa*, the Transport and Harbours Department had before it the rates which were being charged by that competing line. It seems strange that in his reference to the remarks made by the hon. Member for North-Western District about the freight on crabwood in so far as these services are concerned, the General Manager of the Department should have made capital of the fact that the sloops have been withdrawn. I had occasion not so very long ago to make reference to one of the services in that particular area. To be frank, I was quite surprised when the same point was put up to me as a logical conclusion in arriving at a decision at the time, and yet on the other hand one hears in the same breath this is a public service and it must be run at a loss.

I accused the Department of lack of foresight in the course of my remarks. I have done so before and, so long as the present state of affairs is allowed to continue, I shall continue to accuse the Department of lack of foresight. I say, sir, that is the position in which we find ourselves now in regard to our services. I am not referring to fuel, as I know there is difficulty in obtaining it and at the right time. I know too there is a tremendous rise in the cost, but we have heard very little concerning the rise in the receipts. There is no doubt about it that whilst it is true there has been a rise from 1936, in the figures quoted by the General Man-

ager a short while ago under expenditure, there has also been a rise in receipts. Of course, I have not been able since he uttered those words to make any comparison, nor will I undertake to do so, but I think that in attempting to answer the criticism of Members by making reference to the rise in expenditure—payment of wages, cost of fuel etc.—without any reference whatever to the corresponding rise in the receipts, he is merely drawing a red herring across the trail. I did not expect that answer to the remarks I made.

I understand that when I was absent from the Council one Member made reference to the increasing of fares. I think the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford), a member of the Board, referred to the reduction of the fares. There again I desire to make this observation. Everybody understood that the reduction of the fares at that time was in order to get the buses off the road. It was quite a reasonable thing to do. I submit, however, that in administering a Department such as this it is not sufficient to put that up as an excuse for the continued rise in the deficit of this Department. Maybe it is my commercial way of looking at things and not along the same lines as the Official view. I have said that here, more than once, but I have had the pleasure of listening to many Governors' speeches in this Council and of hearing one Governor refer to working losses and working profits and another Governor to the right side of the account when various matters come up for consideration from time to time. Yet when Government is faced with criticism of this kind the answer is "This is a public service and Members are to decide what should be done about it." That is perfectly true. It is the duty of Members to decide what should be done with the Transport Services.

I think that the whole thing should be gone into most carefully and if reorganization, as the hon. Member for North-Western District suggests, is a solution to the problem then that should be done. I do say this and most emphatically, that this Government should not allow these services to be operated with a rising deficit year by year, unless there is some very strong satisfactory explanation for it, and I submit with all confidence that what we have heard to-day from the General Manager is not sufficient and is not satisfactory. Personally I do not regard his explanation as satisfactory. I think, sir, and I am bold enough to repeat, the suggestion that the public is not satisfied with the services as a whole and with the continuous annually recurrent deficit, and it is time if it is not yet overdue that strong measures be taken to enquire into the entire working of this Department with the view of putting it on a more satisfactory footing for the benefit of the entire community. I am not prepared to say at this stage whether that will necessitate any rise in fares or freight nor am I prepared to say if that is necessary what those increases should be, but I do say this, that the whole matter seems to me to be one that requires examination and the fullest examination possible if we are to hope to run this Department to the satisfaction of the public and at not such great cost.

Mr. JACOB: I wish to endorse again what has been said by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat. I have a definite recollection that when a private enterprise was attempting to operate in the North-West District the Department assisted by the District Commissioner there called the people together and put up as a threat that if this transport service is not supported they may have no steamer going there at all. I maintain and endorse to the fullest what has been said by the hon. Member for Central Demerara that it was competition and nothing but competition that caused the rate of freight

on rice and the passenger fares in certain districts to be reduced. This is a commercial undertaking in the same sense at least. If the Transport Department did not reduce the fares and if the buses were not overtaxed there would have been bigger losses. I maintain that the buses were actually driven off the road by huge taxes definitely intended to assist the Transport Department. I think no useful purpose will be served by prolonging the debate, but the General Manager made a serious mistake when he referred to both crabwood and rice. If he had referred to any other item he would have been on sure ground. The rise in the freight rates was made in order to meet competition in the old firm in which, he said, he had served.

As regards crabwood, I think my constituency has benefited to some extent. Because the Transport Department was unable year after year to remove the crabwood and other logs from the North-West District on account of inefficiency long before the War, the people there got together and said "If the Department cannot remove the logs we will put up mills and convert the logs into boards and ship by smaller crafts". It took them quite a time to carry that out. I maintain that this Department must be run on more commercial lines. I am not going to say on wholly commercial lines. I admit that it is doing some service to the community, but I do not think that this Department is being efficiently managed. If it had been a loss of a few thousand dollars one would have said it was paying. Subsidization is a fine word nowadays to use on every occasion. I trust that this time next year if we are all privileged to be here I will not see this deficit of \$500,000 but \$300,000 and the estimates of revenue greatly exceeded.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is the purpose of prolonging the debate? It is now getting on to two hours and I,

therefore, propose to put the question "That Head XLI stand part of the Estimates."

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed.

TREASURY.

Mr. JACOB: I am not going to say this officer (the Colonial Treasurer) is not an efficient officer, as I think he has had even Royal recognition on one occasion when recognitions were being shared around, but it was given for a particular purpose. I have no doubt that from the Imperial standpoint this officer has given excellent service to the State, the Imperial Government and Colonial Office, but I do not think this Colony has benefited to that extent from this officer. I am not going to suggest that anything should be done to injure him in any way, but I am going to suggest that having given excellent service here he be sent to some other part of the Empire to give better service there. It will be better for him and for us. I am definitely of the opinion that for Colonials it is the best thing to let them be in an administrative position not in the place of their birth. Let them go somewhere else. This Colony is far too small to allow local men to be in high administrative positions. I want to say nothing that will reflect against this officer, but having done so well here he should be given an opportunity to do better elsewhere. I think the Secretary of State for the Colonies might be asked to give him promotion. I recommend that (laughter). I do not want to do anything that will go against this officer personally, quite apart from whether he has done anything against me. I wish to suggest in all seriousness that this Officer having done so well here should be sent to some other part of the Empire to do better there.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Not very often I speak on the subject of the Treasury or the Colonial Treasurer, but when we have remarks made such as those by the hon. Member for North-Western District I think it is incumbent on every Member of this Council, who appreciates the services rendered to this Colony by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and who has a knowledge of his work on the various committees on which he sits, to support him in every respect. I am not suggesting that the hon. Member for North-Western District has any personal grudge or feeling against the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, but I feel that it will be a very great loss to the Colony if the hon. Colonial Treasurer is removed to another sphere of usefulness. I hope we will be permitted to retain his services here for a great number of years, and I am going to ask the hon. Member for North-Western District why, as he says the officer is efficient, he is anxious that he should be removed to serve in another Colony when we want the best men we have here? I put that forward as a challenge.

I think this split that goes on between the hon. Member and the hon. the Colonial Treasurer whenever this Council assembles should be put a period to, and I submit the time has come for the hon. Member for North-Western District to say why he desires that the hon. the Colonial Treasurer should be removed to another Colony. Let him come out with it and say, instead of always suggesting that there is something he knows and does not like to say which makes it necessary for the Government to recommend that the officer be removed. We have every appreciation of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and hope that he will remain here for a very long time. If he is to be removed for further promotion, we all join in congratulating him. While we wish him promotion it will

be far better if he remains here. If the hon. Member can give the reason why the officer should be removed, I think he should do so.

Head agreed to.

TREASURY—INCOME TAX OFFICE.

Mr. JACOB: I shall accept the challenge. I suggest here that at least one of the Income Tax Commissioners should be changed, but I will not suggest which one. I think that these two officers have been acting there for quite a long time and I do not know whether they are not tired, but I think it would be well to bring in a third officer or replace one with a new officer. I make that suggestion in all seriousness. I think there is a general complaint that more Income Tax can be collected. After all that is a confidential matter and I do not pretend to know very much about it, but I myself do think that more Income Tax can be collected. I make that bold statement. It is all very well to think that one person should perpetually be in one place, but it is not the generally accepted rule. We have a Governor coming to this Colony for five years and is removed sometimes within two or three years. If that rule is observed with the highest administrative officer here, why should it not be with other officers? Why should not that be with the Commissioners, the Colonial Treasurer and the Colonial Secretary? I suggest for the very serious consideration of this Government that if it is necessary to have two Commissioners, they should not be there for all time.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I do not like to say anything under this Head, but it does seem that if the hon. Member for North-Western District is aware of the source from which a greater amount of Income Tax may be collected, or knows where Income Tax is not paid at all and should be paid, it is his duty to inform the Commissioners and they will certainly pursue en-

quines into the matter. I agree with him that it is a very delicate matter to go into and one has to be exceedingly careful, because the officers who are charged with the performance of this duty are officers under oath and they have to be very careful about the things they say and when they say them. But I question very much whether a change in the personnel would bring about the increased collection which the hon. Member has in mind, unless the person to be appointed would be in possession of the facts which the hon. Member has in his possession. I do not agree with the view that changes in this Department, frequently or otherwise, are desirable. I venture to suggest that it is most undesirable, having regard to all the circumstances.

When one tries to support that suggestion by making reference to the change of Governors in this Colony and throughout the Colonial Empire it is only begging the question, because as far as I know it is one of the most serious complaints --this constant change of Governors. The hon. Member himself has on more than one occasion deprecated in no uncertain terms the policy of the Colonial Office in changing Governors every five years. He seems to think that the same way you can change Governors, you can change Commissioners of Income Tax. I do say sincerely that that would be a retrograde step to take, because the new men will have to begin all over afresh and I doubt very much whether we will get the results we are getting to-day. I urge upon the hon. Member that if he can assist the Commissioners or the Government in obtaining a higher collection of Income Tax he should so inform the Commissioners. They are charged to secrecy under oath, and I am sure they will not in any circumstances divulge the information the hon. Member will give.

Mr. JACOB: I wish to correct the hon. Member so that there should be no misunderstanding in this matter. I

do not think there has been any change in the personnel of the Income Tax Commissioners within the last six years. They have been there permanently from the beginning and, therefore, the inference about Governors has no bearing on the point. I say that changes are necessary, but I have not suggested frequent changes. Regarding the fact as to whether there is any talk about sufficient Income Tax not being collected I want to remind my hon. friend that the matter was prominently before the Chamber of Commerce quite recently and certain suggestions were authorized to be made by the Council of the Chamber. Whether the Chamber accepted the suggestions at a general meeting to make the recommendations, I do not know, but I can see from the trend of this debate and probably I will see more by the time we pass this Head how the whole thing is going.

Mr. GONSALVES: I would like to be consistent. Those gentlemen make me pay more than I feel I ought to, but I will not suggest their transfer on that ground. As far as I see, this Department is a specialized department and, as I have advocated in this Council before, where there are specialized men in a Department it is a wrong policy to remove them and send them somewhere else. From that viewpoint, I think, the Commissioners may well remain. The other point as to letting them know where they can collect more Income Tax, the Government will be only too glad to get the information. Maybe as one usually gets a reward for information disclosed, someone may be rewarded for giving the information to the Commissioners and incidentally to the Government.

Head agreed to.

LOANS FROM PUBLIC FUNDS.

Mr. JACOB: I am going to plead with Government to extend this a little more. I know there is a great demand for money, and by giving more money with adequate security and safeguards

you will increase the production of every kind of article in this Colony. Fancy this Council being asked to vote as loans to Co-operative Credit Banks, \$15,000, and as loans to Local Authorities, \$5,000, totalling \$20,000. I know there is much demand for loans from Co-operative Credit Banks. What is the idea underlying this whole principle? Is it to collect a reasonable rate of interest? We have surplus funds now. We have not to borrow money, and I urge that if you don't do this you are not substantially helping to grow more food at all.

Mr. LEE: I desire it to be recorded that Government should take a more progressive view in respect of loans to farmers and especially rice farmers. Your Excellency knows that for the reaping of rice loans are given on the cultivation without security but a penal clause is attached to the loan or document that the borrower signs under the Finance Regulations. I feel that if that is extended to encourage more of the farmers to plant more rice, the honest ones who are now dependent on loans with large interest from proprietors and money-lenders, would certainly go to the Banks and borrow money. I urge that more facilities be given in order that more rice may be grown.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I myself entirely agree with the hon. Member and would like to see that particular item, "Loans to Co-operative Credit Banks," increased. Some years ago when our financial position was not as good as to-day, we had to suspend the lending of money to Co-operative Credit Banks. Since the position has improved I, in co-operation with the Director of Agriculture, have urged on Government to resume the lending of money to them. In 1941, \$28,800 was lent and in 1942 we probably lent \$30,000. Although the vote on the Estimates for next year is only \$15,000, I have no doubt that should the necessity arise for absorbing more loans, this Council would be asked as

it was this year, to provide further money on supplementary estimates. This figure does not wholly represent the amount that is given out in loans. As the hon. Member who has just spoken will recall, a much larger sum is lent through the Banks for reaping the rice crop, something like \$10,000 which is not included in the Budget. It passes through the Advances Account of the Treasury. So these figures by themselves do not represent what is lent.

The hon. Member for North-Western District referred to some change or extension. I think he was referring to my remarks in the Finance Committee. Mr. Denham, Economic Adviser to the Comptroller of Colonial Development and Welfare, who investigated these Banks and promised to report, intimated to me and to Your Excellency that one of the things needed is the enlargement of the scope of these Banks, and that larger loans than at present may be lent and, perhaps, the purpose for which the loans are lent, may also be expanded. That report is expected very soon and, I hope, action will be taken on it as soon as it arrives.

Mr. JACOB: This is what annoys me. I am told it is the intention when finance improves to do this thing. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer has given some figures. A loan is actually provided this year, now that we know definitely that our financial position has improved. Yet we are told we are helping the people. The loan from public funds to Co-operative Credit Banks is \$15,000, but it is known that applicants are being definitely discouraged. I may be told here that that has always been my grievance. It is not by mere words but by action, that is how I interpret the speech made by the hon. Member just now. Let us be realistic. Let us do something. Let us make the people understand that they can get money to borrow. I hope I will not be misunderstood. It is not to be given without security. If the

loan is worth anything there must be adequate security. It is all mere fooling around with a grow more food campaign if you are not giving the people more money and then facility to repay it easily over a few years.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member will remember this Council voted \$70,000 to farmers, such as he claims to represent, not by loan but by actual gift. I shall have something to say on this subject later before this Session is closed.

Agreed to.

COLONIAL EMERGENCY MEASURES.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I rise to speak under this Head reluctantly, as I do not want to say anything especially as I understand that a portion of this vote may be given back to us when the accounts are gone into after the War. I understood that some time ago. I see the hon. Colonial Treasurer is shaking his head. Perhaps then, I may go on in the strain I intended, now that I know that so far as this Colony is concerned this expenditure is one which we have to carry. I was under a wrong impression before. I think we should assist as far as we can. As a matter of fact, I would like to see more than this amount spent. This is merely a bucket of water thrown in the ocean. I am very grateful for the information furnished me. I shall not deal with the Head in detail except to make a few general observations. I think I have intimated that this expenditure is distributed over a number of Heads and incidentally over a number of Departments, some new and some old. Among the new ones is the Commodity Control Board to which I may have to make some reference. When I say Board, I mean the organization. Then there are the Censor's Office, the Bureau of Publicity and Information, etc.

Dealing with censorship, I think this Council should be informed of

the details of expenditure—the number of people employed. I do not know whether the number employed is necessary, at least how the money is expended, whether the figures given represent salaries paid or whether it includes any other expenditure. I think that information may be useful—I don't know whether it would be against the War effort—as to the number of people employed, and whether it is found from experience that the number of people employed at the present time is insufficient to carry out the work expected of them. But what I do know is this. There have been quite a number of complaints of one sort or another. I know that with the incoming mails there was some delay which meant the loss of more than a few hours and probably a week or more. Even now it has become necessary to close the outgoing mails much earlier than in the past. I do think this Council may be informed whether in the opinion of Government the number of people at present employed is sufficient to carry out this important work expeditiously. I know nothing about it and would like to be informed as to whether the people who are doing this work are of the Colony or whether someone with specialized knowledge of censorship had to be sent out here to do it.

I think that it would not be a good thing if the work is being done entirely by local people, and that some step should be made to have the staff trained by people from Trinidad or elsewhere, because correspondence is a very important thing. I am not accusing anybody as I have not heard any complaints. I am only making a few observations. It does seem wrong, however, that somebody next door to me is able to read my letters that I am sending away, as in my case, to my daughter. In a small community like this where there is so much tittle-tattle you can never tell how far these things may go. That is not a criticism. I am only expressing my own view. I think something ought to be done in that connection.

So far as the Commodity Control organization is concerned. I referred to it the other day and so I do not propose to deal with it at any length today. A fair sum of money is being spent on this organization and, I understand what is included in these figures represents the running expenses. I do not know whether it represents the entire expenditure. I have no knowledge of the inside working of it, but I know a certain number of public officers there whose salaries are paid under Departmental Heads. It may be that those salaries lapse and they are drawing salaries under this Head. If on the other hand they are still drawing salaries under Departmental Heads and nothing from the Control Board then the figure given to me as the expenses of running the organization should be much greater. That is a point I am making. It is large enough already, but when that is added it would be seen at once that the expenditure is much greater.

I have some other observations to make in regard to this organization, but I do not propose to discuss them under this particular Head. I do not think it is appropriate. I do think an opportunity will be given to me later on when another Message comes up. I hope that Message incidentally will only deal with subsidization. I believe hon. Members will be afforded an opportunity of making observations again on the system of bulk purchases. There is one other question I would like to ask. It does not appear under this Head. At some later stage of these proceedings I may be given some information in regard to the details of expenditure incurred so far in respect of the vote that was passed in Council some time ago for the Rice Expansion Committee. I am particularly anxious to see how that matter is going, how much money is being spent, and what progress is being made, and if it is at all possible during this year to give some information on that score I think that Members generally would appreciate it.

Mr. JACOB: I am sorry I do not share the view of the hon. Member that some of this money will be refunded.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I said just the opposite. I said I wished we could do more, and that I understood that some of it would be refunded; not that I agreed with it.

Mr. JACOB: I think we must do our share and do it ungrudgingly. I think we ought to do very much more, but I hope this expenditure is wholly necessary expenditure. We are asked to vote \$330,000 for Colonial Emergency Measures. I was given hurriedly in Finance Committee certain heads to show how the money is allocated, and I was particularly interested in the item "Food Production — \$36,500", I have a note here "Agricultural Allotment, New Amsterdam, \$1,000. Seed Padi, \$3,500." I do not know whether those are Colonial Emergency Measures. Maybe they are, but I do not know if they are going to help us to keep the enemy off, but maybe that is how the expenditure has to be charged. When the details are supplied we may be able to say something about that. I also have a note about a soiling system but I did not put down the figure. There are also Public Works and Publicity Bureau. When the full details are supplied we may be able to see whether the amounts put under this head have been rightly put there.

In all my life I have never attempted to mislead myself, and I say: do not let us attempt to mislead anybody. Let us put things as they are. If we have emergency measures let us have a regular way of charging the expenditure. I do not think the amount there is rightly charged to this head.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: Has Government fulfilled its promise to supply us with the expenditure on the Commodity Control Office, salaries and so on? It was promised but we have not had it.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I am a little anxious about this head because, if the war lasts for any length of time, we do not know what these figures are going to amount to. This Bureau of Publicity and Information is a tremendous jump, and I do not know that it is really justified. I must confess that I am very seriously alarmed about it. I do not think the details of this head should be discussed in open Council to any great extent, but I think they ought to be gone into more carefully by the Council and full discussion allowed in Finance Committee. I confess to a feeling of great uneasiness about this expenditure. I am afraid that by next year we will be voting \$400,000 at this rate.

Mr. LEE: I agree with the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys). Figures were supplied to us in Finance Committee but these matters cannot be discussed in public. I think an opportunity should be given us to discuss them in Council in private session. There are many items under this head which I would like to discuss if more details about them are supplied.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think if any hon. Member approached the Treasurer on any item he wanted details about he would gladly supply the information. I have made notes myself of one or two things. The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) raised the question of the censorship. The position is that it is under the control of the Imperial Censorship Department. That is to our advantage because we do get specialized guidance and advice, and it also means that our expenditure under this head will not rise. In actual fact we should spend a little less in 1943 than in 1942. The hon. Member also suggested that we should get special officers from outside. That point has also been raised with the Imperial Censorship authorities, and they have expressed themselves quite unable to supply officers from their staff. We can try to get officers from some of the British West Indies Colonies.

There is, of course, a substantial rise under Food Production, but expenditure under that head has always been put before Members by minute, and their agreement secured. That expenditure for 1942 stands at \$70,000.

As regards substitutes for public officers the position is that in the early part of the year there were officers doing emergency work in various capacities who were drawing their salaries under departmental heads. I stopped that, and I think there are only a few officers in the Customs Department who are still drawing their salaries from that Department while doing emergency work, but in actual fact it has caused a reduction in other classes because it has not meant that others have been put in their places, and it was all work directly in line with their ordinary employment.

There has been, of course, a very large increase in purely military expenditure, but there again we have come to a definite arrangement with the War Office whereby we are not going to be saddled with any further increase under that head. Any item which it is suggested that the local Government should pay should be included in the contribution which I am trying to make—not more than we have spent in 1942. I think it is fair that what we do run up in 1942 we should continue to carry in future years, but as the Militia is being extended rapidly there are a good deal of extra things which we cannot possibly pay for under the present arrangement.

The expenses of the Internment Camp are exactly the same figure, but there is an increase under Naval Control. The expenditure in respect of the Reserved Occupations Committee is quite small. The cost of Civil Defence is substantial, but, of course, we are not doing that on anything like the scale advised by the Government of the United Kingdom or the gentleman we have here whom I asked the Governor of Trinidad to send

over for a week to give us general advice and help. He may advise things which will substantially increase the expenditure under that head. That is, of course, an entirely new item in 1942 as against 1941, and only hit us in the early part of 1942. *

We have a very substantial increase in Commodity Control which is well over \$30,000. The expenditure on the Bureau of Publicity and Information is not very large. We have an allocated sum of \$30,000 to play about with without having to come to the Council again. If we do have anything substantial, of course, we will have to come back to the Council. The largest items are Military, Commodity Control, and local Food Production. There is an item "Police" here. I take it that refers to police on emergency defence measures. Mr. Treasurer, can you suggest what is the position at Mackenzie?

Mr. McDAVID: It is possible that part of that may be covered by the War Office funds.

THE CHAIRMAN: There has been a substantial increase of recruitment. That item is quite large and has been as high as \$50,000. We may keep the cost within the War Office contribution. The Naval Patrol service is also comparatively high. I would suggest that Members can approach the Treasurer and he will give them all the details they may require.

Mr. McDAVID: I have already seen some of the Members and I can assure them that if they need any further details, especially in connection with the Commodity Control, I shall be glad to supply them.

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE SCHEMES.

THE CHAIRMAN: As Members will observe, we have grouped all the Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes under one head, which I think is a convenient way although we may have it objected to by people who have particular ideas on the subject.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am loth to detain the Council, and I am also very reluctant to speak on this head, because these are grants from the Imperial Government for which we are all very grateful. It may seem as if we are looking a gift horse in the mouth, but to accept these grants as they are Government is expecting us to swallow a mouthful. The hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) said a little time ago that we are in a good financial position. I cannot agree with that. I do not think we have the remotest idea of what our financial position is likely to be in a short time. Our estimates of revenue must be purely guess work from beginning to end, and our estimates of expenditure, especially as regards commodity control and things of that sort, must only be rough estimates. We do not know what work can be done under Public Works Extraordinary. In accepting the items under this head I would like to know what our liability is going to be in a few years time. We have certain grants for 3 years and 5 years, and certain officers come to the Colony for a certain time. Is that a liability that this Colony will have to carry at the end of that time?

THE CHAIRMAN: No promise made.

Mr. SEAFORD: I appreciate that. It has been pointed out very often that we cannot compare Government business with the business of Water Street, but I feel that even from Government's point of view we want to know a little bit about the future of the Colony, as to what our liability is going to be. I do not pretend that we are not grateful. We are indeed grateful to the Mother Country, but I for one would like to know what the outcome will be. Are we mortgaging the future of the Colony in any way by accepting these grants at the present moment? We need development here more than anything else. We need improvement now in social services, and I know that it is with that object in view we are being given these

grants; therefore we should be grateful, but I would like to know where we are heading financially by accepting these various grants.

THE CHAIRMAN: I wish I was able to answer that. (laughter).

Mr. SEAFORD: I am merely sounding a note of warning here. In years to come (I may not be alive) it cannot be said that we accepted these grants without sounding a note of warning as to our future liability.

THE CHAIRMAN: It will be entirely open to the Council five years hence, or whatever the date is, to vote against the items.

Mr. LEE: I would like to know whether any of the Electives were taken into the confidence of the Commissioners before these grants were given. In a recent paper from England I read that these things are not discussed before the grants are made, and it was urged that the Elected Members of the Council should be consulted in some way before the grants are made. I hope Government will take that into consideration.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is precisely what is being done. In actual fact all these grants were made on the original recommendation of Sir Rupert Briercliffe and Mr. Wakefield in 1941, and have gone through. On those which have been put up by me touching drainage and irrigation we have had several discussions in Finance Committee. I think all those are of considerable standing, having been put up quite a long time ago. One exception, of course, is the question of the Livestock Station. That was discussed in Finance Committee but has not yet been approved. I have indicated that whenever I put up any schemes they will go through the Finance Committee, and there will be an opportunity for general discussion.

Mr. JACOB: I did not intend to say anything, but the remarks which have fallen from the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) have set me thinking a little bit. I do not quite like the term that we are mortgaging this Colony to the Imperial Government for these grants under the Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. The hon. Member said he was not certain as to our finances. The hon. Member is a Member of the Executive Council and an experienced Member of this Council. I am wondering what is the meaning of those remarks.

Mr. SEAFORD: To a point of explanation. I said that it was because our estimates of both revenue and expenditure were guess work.

Mr. McDAVID: I am quite sure that the hon. Member did not say that we were mortgaging the country to the Imperial Government. What he said was that we were mortgaging the future by accepting a programme of this nature.

Mr. SEAFORD: A programme which we may not be in a position to carry out later on. I am very glad the Treasurer has drawn attention to that. That never entered my head.

Mr. JACOB: I did not mean that. I meant exactly what the hon. Member for Georgetown North said. When I look at the Budget Statement I see that it is clearly stated on page 2:—

“If account is also taken of the balance of about \$600,000 held in the Development Trust Fund our realizable and liquid assets will total some \$3,000,000 at the close of the year.”

I think our finances are in a very healthy state if that statement is to be taken as correct. That disposes of the statement that we do not know what our finances are. I think we do know. I place great reliance on these papers. I do not like these grants myself. I do not like the grant of \$25,425 for a

Marketing Officer at all. As I stated in this Council or in Finance Committee, we want a purchasing officer. We do not want to market anything at the moment. We have an officer coming here who perhaps has a lot of experience, but it looks to me like providing jobs for certain people from the Imperial Government side. I do not like that at all.

Then there is an item of \$10,080 for the appointment of a Sister Tutor, which is also a free grant for five years. I think we can stand on our own resources in respect of those two items at least. I feel that the money can be better spent. My friend the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) asked whether the Elected Members were consulted. I think the Executive Council is always consulted in these matters. I have no doubt about that myself, and I do not know what is the use of opposing these items if they are free grants. For instance, when I questioned the expenditure of a very large sum of money I was told by the officer in charge: "You have no voice in this matter; it is a free grant from the Imperial Government." I agree that we should not mortgage the future of this Colony. I think we have reached the stage when we can be a little bit more independent.

THE CHAIRMAN: The remedy of the hon. Member is to vote against any of these items. The question was raised whether a Department can spend a free grant as it likes. That is not so at all, and that is why it is provided in the Colonial Development and Welfare Act that all these grants are to go through the budget of the Colony and be open to the Legislature to refuse, reject, or criticize them and ask for details. If the hon. Member does not like the grant for the Marketing Officer his proper course is to vote against it or any other item of that kind.

Mr. SEAFORD: Have all these matters been circulated?

THE CHAIRMAN: They are of long standing.

Mr. McDAVID: Nearly all of these items have been approved on supplementary estimate already.

THE CHAIRMAN: But they are open to voting now.

Mr. LEE: I would not like the public to think that we are not grateful for anything that is given to the Colony. In fact the Colony wants more grants from the Imperial Government. What I am concerned about is that since Your Excellency has come to this Colony Government has circularized the Elected Members about grants and other details, but apart from that we do not know anything about the discussions that take place prior to those grants. For instance, in my opinion we should have a grant for workers' houses which would be the best scheme Government could undertake in order to reduce the cost of living. I do not know whether Government has made such a recommendation to the Welfare Officer.

There are other pressing needs of the masses that can be met by grants from the Imperial Government, and I feel that if the Elected Members were taken into the confidence of Government certain things could be achieved. I have read it in the newspapers that Members of Parliament have been crying out that £1,000,000 was voted in 1940 to be spent annually in the Colonies, and two years have passed since June but only a quarter of a million pounds has been spent in grants. I feel that if it is strongly put to the Imperial Government grants would be given at once for the relief of the masses.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member is mistaken. I do not know that any grants for relief would come from the Welfare Fund. They may come from our own funds or from the Imperial Government as grants for relief. Anything under the Colonial

Development and Welfare Act has to be very carefully put up in the form of a scheme, setting out every kind of detail. Section 1B of the Act says that if any private person is to benefit by any scheme there should be a provision whereby it could be recovered from public revenue. Charitable grants do not come within the purview of the Colonial Development Act. Any scheme that I put up will be submitted to Members either at meetings of the Finance Committee or by circular. Does any Member wish to move the deletion of any of these items?

Mr. JACOB: No, sir. I have only made observations.

THE CHAIRMAN: As you know, we are going on with the Bonasika-Boerasirie scheme of \$460,000, but that will come up in a special Message. The Treasurer has informed me that he has some minor items of business which he would like to put before Members before we come out of Committee.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1942.

Mr. McDAVID: I have circulated to Members a list of Additional Provision required to meet Expenditure in excess of the provision made in the Estimate for the year 1942, which will require warrant authority. As we are in Committee now, and it is unlikely that we will have any Finance Committee meeting before the end of the year, hon. Members may be willing to go through the list of items now.

THE CHAIRMAN: If not I will defer it.

Mr. McDAVID: I think hon. Members have copies of the list. The total is \$7,885.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do Members feel that we should take this now? What we would like to do is to get these items approved, and any Head of Department who has not submitted his estimate by now will have it charged against his private funds.

Mr. McDAVID: Later on these items will appear in the form of a Schedule. This is only formal approval for the issue of special warrants.

THE CHAIRMAN: With the knowledge of Members I will sign the warrant accordingly.

Items approved.

The Council resumed.

ESTIMATES, 1943, APPROVED.

Mr. McDAVID: Sir, before you put the substantive motion for the approval of the Estimates I would like to report that the adoption of the recommendations of the Finance Committee has increased the total estimates of expenditure by \$57,583, and during consideration in Committee another \$3,500 was added, so that the total increase on the Draft Estimate as a result of our deliberations is \$61,083, making the total of the Draft Estimate of Expenditure \$8,761,091. Under Revenue the estimated total was \$8,747,456, but I have thought it desirable to increase one item under Excess Profits Tax by another \$100,000, so that the total of the revenue estimate will be \$8,847,456, leaving an estimated surplus of \$86,365.

There are one or two items that we have not provided for—the Bishop's High School which, if the Resolution is adopted, will add another \$54,000 to the estimates, and an item for increased wages, possibly another \$50,000. These items can be kept within the budget figure and still leave a surplus. The only other item is subsidization, and there is another item with respect to drainage works which might come out of the budget or out of the Development Trust Fund. The money for subsidization will, of course, be taken out of the surplus.

I should like to amplify the statement I made about insurance. At the time I announced that our investiga-

tions had shown that the amount of the loss of goods at sea by enemy action stood at something like \$18,000. I have just had some further accounts in connection with the *Amakura*, and another vessel, the *Arica*, which increase that figure considerably, and I think the total to date will be something like \$96,000. That is still within the estimated premium figure I mentioned. With those remarks I move that the motion be put for the approval of the Estimates.

THE PRESIDENT: I have listened to the debates with great care, and I have made a good many notes and observations of my own in the course of the discussions. I would like an opportunity at some time to make those observations and put them on record before the Council. I would like to go carefully over the notes I have made, and as we want to get on with other business to-day, I propose to go straight on and put the motion which has been amended to read:—

That, this Council approves of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1943, as amended in Committee.

Motion put, and agreed to.

THE PRESIDENT: As regards the rest of the business the next item on the Order Paper is the Sugar Experiment Stations Bill, but the Treasurer would like to take item IV which deals with subsidization. With the agreement of the Council we will proceed to that motion.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I do not wish to sound a discordant note, but the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) who left the Council a short while ago is, I know, very interested in that motion, and he left thinking that perhaps it would not be taken to-day. I am also interested in it, and I was also about to leave when I heard the Colonial Treasurer moving the motion for the approval of the esti-

mates, and I decided to remain over. If the Council is going to adjourn at 4 o'clock—

THE PRESIDENT: No, 5 or 8 o'clock.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: I do not think I can sit here much longer. There can be no doubt about it that the debate on the motion will be adjourned until to-morrow.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara should have remained in his place. However, I do not wish to rush the Council into this. There is another motion in the name of the Consulting Engineer.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I was referring to item III which refers to Message No. 3. If Your Excellency will take item V—

THE PRESIDENT: Is it agreeable that we take item V?

ANN'S GROVE-CLONBROOK DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION WORKS.

Mr. CASE (Consulting Engineer): I beg to move:—

THAT, with reference to Governor's Message No. 5 dated 6th December, 1942, 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 detailed in that Message.

It is mentioned in Message No. 5 that the Drainage Board has for some time been rather worried about the drainage in this district because, owing to the fact that an enormous amount of sling mud had accumulated on the foreshore, there was considerable difficulty in getting drainage. It is mentioned in the Message why it is proposed to put the outlet in the Mahaica river. It is proposed that this should be an additional item, and every effort should be made to keep those outlets open. It is not a substitution for drainage but an

addition to drainage. Some Members may be thinking about the question of a pump. The Drainage Board has very carefully considered that point, but the chief reason against it was that the amount of rates which the district would have to pay would be very heavy. For example, Ann's Grove is rated at 86½ cents. If a pump was put up the rate would jump to \$1.12 per acre, a figure which the Board felt the district could not afford.

Mr. AUSTIN seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: As I stated yesterday I anticipated a great deal of controversial opinion on this proposal. Speaking for Government I feel that I have to accept the recommendation of the Central Drainage Board and the Advisory Committee of the Colonial Development Trust Fund.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I am not in a position to offer any constructive criticism on this matter, but I think it requires a little more mature consideration. I would like to ask whether the Public Works Department is really going to carry on this work, or whether it will be given to outsiders?

Mr. CASE: This matter has been very carefully considered by the Drainage Board. We had numerous meetings and the matter was gone into very carefully and unanimously approved by the members of the Board. If the motion is approved the work will be started as soon as possible and carried out by the Public Works Department.

Mr. De AGUIAR: As far as I am concerned, having regard to the importance of this work, I am quite prepared to accept the advice given by the proper officers of the Government as well as the Central Drainage Board. I was very pleased to hear Mr. Case say just now that the question of a pump, which has raised so much controversy recently, had received very careful consideration, and it was decided against it because it was found that the running

costs would be too high. If that is so, and I have every reason to accept that statement, the matter is now entirely cleared up, and these works should be proceeded with as soon as possible. I was a little disturbed in mind about the question of the need for a pump, but having heard that the running cost would be so high, it seems to me that this is a more favourable undertaking, and I am quite prepared to give it my support.

Motion put, and agreed to.

BOERASIRIE-BONASIKA DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION SCHEME.

Mr. McDAVID: I move:—

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.

Your Excellency has kept the Council so fully informed, both by minute and by announcements in Finance Committee and in Council, of the progress of this matter, it is unnecessary for me to recount the history of the Boerasirie-Bonasika scheme. It has now reached the stage when work can be commenced, and we now know precisely the terms on which the money can and will be obtained from the Home Government. I think all Members of the Council regret that that money is not being given as an outright grant, but it is quite clear that the terms of the United Kingdom Welfare Act of 1940 preclude an outright grant for work of this nature. Section 2 (1) (b) of that Act provides that where money is expended on works which might ultimately benefit proprietors, steps must be taken by the Government of the Colony concerned to ensure that that benefit, or part of that benefit, does accrue to the revenue of the Colony.

The terms on which this money is being advanced has been set out in

paragraph 2 of the Message. The money will be given in the first instance as a loan free of interest to the Colony. Secondly, we are invited to agree that should it eventually prove that any portion of the capital cost can be recovered from the proprietors of land to benefit, steps would be taken to secure such recovery. In sub-paragraph (2) it is stated that recovery is to be effected by means of a tax on the increase in land values directly attributable to the scheme. Perhaps that may be more clearly worded by saying that there should be a tax on land which has been improved and increased in value as a result of the scheme. Thirdly, we are invited to say that land rents in those areas will be controlled by Government. That is for obvious reasons. If land benefits we must ensure that that benefit does not accrue only to the proprietor but also to the tenant. Lastly, we must agree that the maintenance costs of the scheme are to be borne by the proprietors in the area.

I have left for the very last paragraph (c) of the Message which says that we are to keep and record the progress of the monetary results of the scheme, and if at a later date it is found that the Colony is in a position to repay the loan it would then be decided whether or not the loan should be repaid in full or in part, or whether it should be treated as an outright grant.

Those are briefly the terms and conditions which we are expected to accept before the money is given. This motion is merely a formal resolution accepting those terms, and any legislation which may be necessary will be brought before the Council. The passing of this motion to-day will be in itself an undertaking by the Council to pass that legislation when the time comes.

As regards finance a vote of \$280,000 has already been included in a supplementary estimate but, naturally, it has not been used because the financing of

the scheme was still under consideration. A vote for a similar amount will be included in another supplementary estimate for the current year, and we hope that the work will be started early in 1943.

Mr. AUSTIN seconded.

Mr. SEAFORD: It is with great pleasure that I see this motion brought before the Council, and I should like to congratulate Government on having been able to secure this loan from the Imperial Government. It is the first comprehensive undertaking of irrigation on a large scale that this Government has attempted. We have preached for many years in this Council about the benefits of irrigation and drainage, but this is the first time Government has embarked on such a scheme. I hope it will not be the last, and that the results will be as advantageous as anticipated.

There is one thing I would like to suggest, if I may, and that is that there might be a reservation in this Message. I think we are all agreed in principle that where anyone derives benefit from land due to these works there should be some taxation to recover a portion of the expenditure, but it seems to me that there should be some reservation. The reservation I would like to suggest is that no proprietor's land should be taxed in order to recover more than the capital expenditure on his portion of the total loan.

THE PRESIDENT: You can move that as a proviso to the motion.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am quite prepared to do so. I think it would be rather unfortunate if a proprietor's land was taxed so that he would carry the whole of the expenditure in his area. With that reservation I think this is a most welcome proposal, and I am sure it will receive approbation throughout the Colony.

THE PRESIDENT: Would you like it expressed in the motion?

Mr. SEAFORD: I would be quite satisfied to accept Government's word on that.

Mr. McDAVID: In paragraph (b) (1) of the Message it is stated:—

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 general revenue of the Colony in accordance with the intention of Section 1 (2) (b) of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1940.

That is in itself a limitation of the tax.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: This is a case of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread. Your Excellency knows my views. I am entirely against it. This will benefit only the better class person; the poor man is not going to get anything out of it. I know the area. I want to know particularly whether you have the machinery or the labour to carry out this work. We are going in for different schemes all about, have you the men and the materials? I have always heard about the scarcity of labour. I have heard about "vested interest." I do not know what that means; I asked my friends and they could not tell me. I do feel we are rushing too fast. This money, from my way of thinking, is being taken from a generous British Government but it can be more beneficially used by the British taxpayer. It can be far more useful to them than to us in this Colony. I am not going to put my "goat mouth" on it, as the creole saying goes, but this scheme is going to be a thorough failure.

As regards sub-section 2 (b) of the Act—"Recovery to be effected by means of a tax on the increase in land values directly attributable to the scheme"—that beats me altogether. I cannot for the life of me arrive at any decision as to what is an "increase in land values directly attributable to the scheme." If the land is worth \$1,000 who is going to say what is the increased value by

this scheme? Certainly it wants better working out. I say that with all due respect. Is it the increase on the present value or on what is the market value after the scheme? That wants far more elucidation than I am able to produce. Is the land rent charged by proprietors in this area to be controlled? If a small man has a piece of land that is not increased in value by this scheme, is he going to contribute? I do not think this is a proposition we should handle at this stage. I think it ought to be deferred until such time as we are satisfied that the labour is available. I am sanguine you will not get the labour that will be required for this scheme.

I favour the circulation of the money and I would like our people to get it. I would have no objection if I know the money is going to the under-dog, but I am satisfied that is not the case. I have asked for information about the Abary-Mahaicony scheme, and have been promised it, but I have not received it as yet. I know that the money spent there, apart from on the breach, is being wasted. I say that with all due respect to the people who are going to be in charge of it. I think the carrying out of this scheme is going to be under some Committee or Board. That Committee or Board should be appointed and a report sent to you on the position. I am sorry to stop the circulation of the money, but that is my candid and honest opinion on the scheme.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think the hon. Member has forgotten his experience. If those old estates had been connected up with a water scheme, the hon. Member's misfortune would not have taken place. They had not the benefit of irrigation and drainage and, therefore, the hon. Member lost on them. I suggest that with the surplus wealth he has he should acquire them again. I think they are still on the market. As I understand the position, if land is lying fallow to-day and in the course of years something in the form of per-

manent cultivation is established on it, when the expenditure on the scheme is to be recovered it would not be a *pro-rata* contribution by each beneficiary. It is quite clear we will never be able to estimate the value of land property in Georgetown with any certainty, but there is a system by which the land value may be fixed. Land per acre can be valued much easier. However, I have no doubt that it is quite easy. The hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) is anxious that the entire burden should not fall on the large proprietors. He is quite right, and I think you approve of that principle. It would be entirely unfair for those properties which are to-day under cultivation to be taxed exclusively. Even if the land now available to the farmers in that district is not owned by them and they have not the means to cultivate it, I hope they would still be benefited by being employed on these extensive works as labourers so that in course of time they might be able to cultivate their lands. I do hope the hon. Member—I know he is prejudiced — would not encourage the ventilation of anything in the public press to discourage those farmers. I know that those who live in that area will be benefited by profitable employment under this scheme.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: Once bitten twice shy. I may state for the benefit of the hon. Member that I still own one estate there.

Mr. CASE (Consulting Engineer): In the drought around 1939-40 the sugar and rice crops to a very considerable extent were lost and also the farmers in the Canals Polder suffered loss. If these works proposed had been completed there would have been adequate water and there would have been no loss. The works are to be carried out by the Public Works Department, it is proposed, and from enquiries made there is sufficient labour to be obtained to start these works immediately. Government has a certain plan to enable the works to be started immediately.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I would like to say in answer that the sugar estates at Vergenoegen and Philadelphia were well drained and they went out of existence. You cannot beat the sugar planter when it comes to drainage.

Mr. JACOB: I was waiting to hear something more about this matter. I had not been privileged to hear the hon. Member who represents the Division say what the people feel about it. I entirely agree with this principle and this motion has my whole-hearted support. I trust that the works will be properly carried out, that there will be no wastage and it will be the means of making a start in other places. I would have much preferred, Your Excellency, if details were given as in Message No. 5 which gave details of the particulars to be done. Maybe in Your Excellency's anxiety to have this thing through you have not been able to get the details put on this Paper.

THE PRESIDENT: Message No. 3?

Mr. JACOB: Message No. 5.

THE PRESIDENT: We are discussing Message No. 3.

Mr. JACOB: In Message No. 5 details are given for the sum of money to be voted. That Message was just passed for \$40,900 and the details were given as to what is to be done. Message No. 3 is for a total expenditure estimated at \$460,000 and no details are given on this Paper. My experience has been that when details are not given, you are not able to follow the expenditure or progress of the work at all, and I urge that this Council be supplied with better details than those given in this Message, so that those interested will be able to take more interest in it. I have heard the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight) condemn the whole scheme while the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) supports the scheme. I am a little surprised

that the hon. Member for Georgetown Central is opposed to it. I cannot follow it. Maybe he has had bitter experience of the past. I do not pretend to know very much about these things and how they are done, but I know that the results in the past have not been satisfactory. I know too that unless those people in the district who are to be benefited by this expenditure are taken into the confidence of those who are going to execute the scheme, the whole thing may be a failure. I am going to urge that before you actually begin you get the principal parties, particularly those interested in the land that is going to be taxed later on, to agree on the design and the way in which the work is going to be done.

I may mention one or two other schemes, particularly the Craig Drainage Works. The people were not consulted in the first instance in respect of the details of the work to be done. The work was completed and the people disapproved of it and made representations. After a lapse of nearly two years Government has discovered now that there is something wrong and that nearly all the money spent in the past has been practically wasted. I hope this money, nearly half a million dollars, will be profitably spent. If properly spent it is a step in the right direction and will bring lasting benefits to that community. I cannot stress it too strongly. Greater details should be supplied and the progress watched very carefully by the people actually interested in the area. I think the hon. Member for the Division should take more interest in the matter. I think Elected Members who are interested in the welfare of the people and are particularly informed in these matters should be asked to give advice in this matter. I am not prepared to leave it to the Public Works Department alone. I think it has been suggested that some Committee should be set up to overlook and

watch the progress of this work. If those safeguards are taken the scheme ought to be a success.

THE PRESIDENT: I quite agree that the details should be circulated among hon. Members and particularly the Member of the District should be invited to give close attention to the details.

Dr. SINGH: I have already given my impression of these schemes. I know it will benefit the community there. I do not understand saying "Yes" several times. On the Finance Committee I gave my impression, and I will not say anything further. I know the scheme will benefit the people and will be useful to the community at large.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): The only remark I would like to make is about details of estimates. This particular motion was intended as being merely formal. Actually the Council has accepted the scheme in principle. I do think the details were attached to an explanatory memorandum furnished with the estimates. I have a copy of the estimates which were sent to the Advisory Committee and, I think, they should be printed and circulated to Members.

THE PRESIDENT: I desire to say how much I welcome the hon. Member for Georgetown North and the hon. Member for the District in their support of the scheme. I have listened with great interest to the remarks of the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, and I am very well aware of his personal opposition to the scheme which he has expressed fully and frankly. I notice he said this scheme is not going to do any good to the smaller man. If this was entirely for the benefit of the large estates I would certainly not support it and bring it before this Council. In any scheme we do want to benefit the small man as well while doing it for the benefit of the larger estates. In this case the Consulting Engineer

and District Commissioner have been over some of the ground with the Member for the District, and it does seem to me there will be a number of small holders concerned. Government estates come within the area and the whole of the Canals Polder will be able to get irrigation water. The scheme is going to make a tremendous difference to the district. There are other schemes for the bonification of the Canals Polder with that in view. Although not part of the scheme, there are potentialities for the giving of water to the small holders west of the area.

Objections have been taken to the rather vaguely worded Message. We are only accepting it in principle,—the passing of a pious resolution in favour of certain principles. The principle of taxation of enhanced value is perfectly well known and, no doubt, we will be able to apply it in this country. The hon. Member for Georgetown Central said we should defer the scheme for consideration later. It seems to me this particular scheme has been under discussion for a period of about three to four years. It was a great disappointment to me when I arrived here last November to find that it had taken four years to get near to a start. He also said that labour is not available, just at a time when we are expecting some degree of unemployment. This scheme will not give great employment immediately as we shall begin little by little and go on for four years, and so constant employment will be given. On the policy of this matter I would like to take this opportunity to record here a note I have made recording what has happened within these last twelve months touching irrigation and drainage:—

“I would like to take this opportunity to record the course of what has happened in this last twelve months since I assumed duty. A year ago, I found a number of large and comprehensive schemes approaching completion of the planning and estimate stage. These have since been published. One of them which had some particularly favourable

aspects was being pressed on the Secretary of State for immediate beginning and finance in part at least from Imperial funds. The crux of discussion was whether or not capital costs should be met in full by Government, or whether the whole or part should be recovered from private proprietors. My predecessor had already pressed the former view that capital costs could not be recovered and immediately on arrival here I urged the same. But that had not met with acceptance and throughout the early months of the year we had to give a lot of attention to the attempt to get established some principle practically, and not throwing us back into a sea of indebtedness. Members will remember that in April and May I sought their support in taking that position vis-a-vis the Secretary of State, to wit, that capital costs could not be recovered. Instead, I proposed with your support the alternative of legislation which should bring in some return to revenue, but only if and when private property was substantially benefited and could pay something. I had thought it important to try and get a decision on principle which could be applied to all the big schemes for the coastlands of the Colony.

“As that proposal appeared completely to hang fire and no decision was forthcoming I put up, with your consent, and the support of the Comptroller for Development and Welfare a third alternative, to take half the costs from our own local Colonial Development Trust Fund with some recovery to that fund in the future: the other half to be by free grant from the United Kingdom.

“In the upshot, the Imperial Government has approved of financing which will, I think, prove in result to be that put forward by us in April and May, but for reasons which are no doubt good the funds advanced will be termed “loan” but without any specific arrangement for payment of interest or repayment, which will entirely depend on what may materialise in a distant future which we cannot see. If it had meant a big mill-stone of indebtedness again round the Colony's neck, I should have felt quite unable to proceed with it. I think that the terms now are in effect advantageous to the Colony and they will no doubt apply if and when we can take up any of the other major comprehensive schemes. That is the point made by the hon. Member for Georgetown North.

"As regards the other schemes, however, after getting a closer acquaintance with the Colony it seemed to me very clear that, whatever their great advantages might be, it would be quite impossible to expect any early prosecution or any early benefit to the country generally. We propose now, therefore, rather to prosecute as quickly as possible and as large a number as possible of smaller, less ambitious schemes, which could be expected to give more immediate benefit to protection of crops and increased production. With the financing of the large scheme in immediate view met from Imperial funds it is the more possible to go forward with the smaller from funds we can handle locally and probably without much or any call against local revenue by using the local Colonial Development Trust Fund. These schemes are now before you in the two schedules I issued last week.

"Reports reaching the City last evening stated that the Crown dam of Pln. Hope, East Coast, Demerara, between Ann's Grove and Hope, was seriously threatened. Due to the heavy rainfall, several breaches have been caused. It is feared that if the dam does not receive immediate attention extensive damage will be caused to the front lands of the surrounding estates, and also to 40 acres of farm lands which have not yet been badly affected."

I therefore propose to put this motion "That Message No. 3 be approved by this Council."

Motion put, and agreed to.

The Council was adjourned until the following day at 12 noon.