

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Friday, 18th December, 1942.

The Council met on Friday, 18th December, 1942, at 12 noon, the Hon. G. D. Owen, C.M.G., Colonial Secretary, presiding in the absence of His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Letthem, K.C.M., at the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT.
The President, H. E. the Governor.
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. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E., (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

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

The Hon. G. O. Case, Consulting Engineer.

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E., (Georgetown South).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. C. V. Wight, (Western Essequibo).

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

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 17th of December, 1942, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL.

The Attorney-General gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill:—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to make special provision for the consideration by the Licensing Board for the County of Demerara of certain applications for the renewal of Spirit Shop Licences; and for matters connected therewith.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS BILL, 1942.

Prof. DASH (Director of Agriculture): I move that "A Bill intituled an Ordinance to provide for the Control of Sugar Experiment Stations for a further period of five years

from the first day of January, 1943," be read a second time. It is a domestic matter, purely concerning the Sugar Producers' Association. It has been the custom to re-enact the Ordinance for a period of five years. Normally, therefore, it would run until 1947. Owing to the sugar outlook, however, the Association has indicated that it would not wish to commit itself too far ahead, therefore it has requested that this legislation, as provided for in the Bill before the Council, should be operative on an annual basis for the time being. That means that certain amendments will be necessary in the Bill as printed and now before the Council, and those amendments will be dealt with in Committee. The proposal is that the present Bill should relate to 1943 only. With those few remarks I move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs) seconded.

Mr. AUSTIN: The Director of Agriculture has very clearly stated the situation which is worrying sugar producers in this Colony at the moment. Until the position is clarified somewhat we do not feel that we should enter into the same agreement or contract which would carry us over a period of five years, and which later on we may have to change. In the circumstances we think that if the Bill is limited to one year, as has been done in many other Bills connected with sugar and other matters in this Colony, it might be possible to extend it for a further period. At present we think it better from the Colony's point of view that we should realize the serious position that confronts the sugar industry which is in a way responsible for a very large portion of the revenue of the Colony.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time,

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As the hon. Member has mentioned, the Bill was drafted for five years but has since been amended to run for one year. That one amendment requires ten amendments in the Bill, and there are also two printer's errors. The first amendment is in clause 3 (1) that a full stop be inserted after the word "Ordinance", and that all the words after the word "Ordinance" be deleted.

Amendment agreed to.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that sub-clause (3) be deleted.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-clauses (4) and (5) were renumbered (3) and (4).

Sub-clause (4) as renumbered (3) was amended by the deletion of the words "between the date of election as aforesaid."

Clause 3 as amended put, and agreed to.

Clause 7 (1) was deleted and the following new sub-clause (1) substituted therefor:—

"7. (1) The "Sugar Experiment Station Fund" established under the Sugar Experiment Stations Ordinance, 1937, shall be deemed to be established under this Ordinance and out of it shall be paid all expenses incurred by the committee in the carrying out of the provisions of this Ordinance."

Sub-clause (2) was amended by the insertion of the word "this" between the words "under" and "Ordinance" in the first line thereof.

Clause 7 as amended put, and agreed to.

Clause 8,

Sub-clause (1) was deleted and the following sub-clauses (1) and (2) substituted therefor:—

"8. (1) The Committee may charge, levy and collect in respect of every sugar plantation a rate, to be fixed, of not more than thirty cents for each acre of land cultivated in sugar cane; Provided that—

- (a) no rate shall be chargeable where the area so cultivated does not exceed twenty-five acres and is cultivated by one person; and
- (b) the committee may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, waive payment of any rate due or a portion thereof in respect of any sugar plantation where, in its opinion, just cause exists for such waiver.

(2) Sixty per centum of the rates shall be charged, levied and collected on or before the thirty-first day of January, and the remaining forty per centum on or before the thirtieth day of June, nineteen hundred and forty-three."

Sub-clause (3) of clause 8 as renumbered (4) was amended (a) by the deletion of the words "in each year" and by the substitution therefor of the following words and commas, "nineteen hundred and forty-two," and (b) by the insertion of the following figures and comma, "1933," after the word "Ordinance" in the seventh line thereof.

Sub-clause (4) of clause 8 as renumbered (5) was amended by the deletion of the words "in each year" and by the substitution therefor of the words "nineteen hundred and forty-three."

Sub-clause (5) of clause 8 as renumbered (6) was amended (a) by the deletion of the words "thirty-first day of December in each year" in the third line thereof, and by the substitution therefor of the following words "seventh day of January, nineteen hundred and forty-three," and (b) by the deletion of the brackets and figure "(3)" and by the substitution of the following brackets and figure "(4)" therefor.

Mr. JACOB: I must confess that I did not pay much attention to this Bill, and I did not listen very carefully to all that the hon. Mr. Austin said. I would like to find out whether any of this money goes into the revenue of the Colony. In fact I think none does, but I would like to have that very clear,

and whether any statement can be made as to whether the area at present under cane cultivation will be reduced. I gather that there will be no extension of cane cultivation during this and next year, but there should be no reduction. That is a matter which is exercising the minds of many people, and I should like a clear statement whether that is the intention of those concerned. It has gone about that the production of sugar is going to be drastically reduced, areas reduced, and that there will be very much less work for the people. I did not understand the position to be like that. I understood that there would be no extension of cultivation, but that the existing cultivation would be maintained, and that next year the whole position would be reviewed to see whether there should be any reduction in 1944. If it is possible for Government to make a statement on the matter I shall be glad.

Mr. McDAVID: I think sub-clause (2) of clause 7 answers the hon. Member's point as to the disposal of the money; it goes into a special fund.

Mr. AUSTIN: The industry is in a state of chaos at the moment. We do not know exactly where we are, and whether it is permissible to extend cultivation I think it is a matter for the Secretary of State with the Imperial Government behind him. I do not know whether the hon. Member is thinking especially about cane-farmers. If he has in mind the cane-farming industry I cannot give a pledge, but I think it will be recognized that it will not be effected so long as it is carried on by peasant farmers. In cases where there are large cultivators who employ many people, that is a matter for the consideration of Government, and production might have to be reduced in their particular case, but in respect of two, three or four acres I do not think there will be any reduction at all.

I think the Treasurer pointed out that the revenue for this particular Department comes from the sugar in-

dust, and all they are worried about is that they would like to carry it on, but there are difficulties in the way and we have to look into the future. We have not got a blank cheque, and we cannot carry on these things without money. We have to pay wages, and we have to consider the estates with resident populations who have to be provided with work and wages. One of the first things that must suffer is perhaps what I may term the Experiment Station, which may not be necessary if the cane cultivation of the Colony is cut down to the extent suggested in the recent communication from London, not only to the Government but to the producers of sugar.

Mr. JACOB: I am afraid my point has not been quite understood, and has not been answered at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: The position is this, and I think the Governor mentioned it at a recent meeting, that the Sugar Producers' Association and the Director of Agriculture are now discussing the situation. I am not in a position to give an immediate and direct answer to the hon. Member's question, but the whole matter is being considered by the Association and the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. JACOB: You will remember that a communication was addressed to the Secretariat on this matter. I think the position is exaggerated. I understand it to be that all sugar manufactured up to the end of this year is either paid for or will be paid for, and that all sugar manufactured up to the end of next year will be in the same position. If that is the position I cannot understand the statement just made that the whole industry is in a state of chaos. Maybe the Imperial Government will pay for sugar that may not here. That is a matter for the Imperial Government. The industry is not in a state of chaos. The sugar producers are in a position to maintain labour here, and if we can get it clear

that they are not prepared to maintain wages at their present level that is a matter which would have to be taken up.

I cannot understand the reply given by Mr. Austin to my query. I would like to know whether Government believes that the industry is in a state of chaos as has been stated. As I understand it, that is not so. The position is difficult, but probably in another six months' time the whole situation may be changed. The sugar producers have until 1943 to carry on as they have been doing, so I do not think it should go out to the public that the whole industry is in a state of chaos. In fact the industry has done extremely well. The output of sugar has been doubled during the last 20 years. It is not fair to the community and the people who have made the industry. Maybe it is thought that only Capital made it, but a large number of people know that without Labour the industry would not have been there. I think the position is over exaggerated, and the sooner a clear statement is made to the public the better for all concerned.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I have not been paying much interest to this debate, but it appears that the hon. Member has raised the question of cane-farming.

Mr. JACOB: I did not.

Mr. De AGUIAR: You did at the very beginning.

Mr. JACOB: I did not use the word "cane-farming" at all. The hon. Member is drawing a red herring across the trail.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. Member did, but I think Mr. Austin did.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I am sorry that the hon. Member should have thought that I am going to drag a red herring across the trail.

Mr. JACOB: I saw a little conference just now, and I anticipate what is going to happen.

Mr. De AGUIAR: The conference the hon. Member refers to was not a conference at all; it was a little tittle-tattle, and the hon. Member might smile if he knew what it was about. If the hon. Member says he did not use the word "cane-farming" I was wrong. I understood him to mean that he was asking for some pronouncement in so far as the cane-farming situation was concerned, in view of the recent announcement in Council. If he has not done it I think it is my duty to do so. I think I have raised it before, and I know the matter is receiving consideration, but I was wondering whether it was too early to make an announcement. I am not pressing for an answer to that; I merely raise it again.

I quite agree with the hon. Member that the sugar industry is not really in a state of chaos, but I do not think it can be contradicted that it is in a state of flux. There may be some distinction between the two words. Whether it is in a state of chaos or flux it seems to me that already we are beginning to see the lack of co-operation. That, of course, is a most regrettable feature. I think the stage we have now entered is one where not only Members of this Council but every individual member of the community should endeavour to work together so as to arrive at a solution of this important problem, but to begin at this stage to disrupt the harmonious working of the industry, as I believe it has been until quite recently, would be making it worse than it is. As far as I am concerned I am quite prepared to listen to reason from both sides, and I think that if the community as a whole would give that co-operation to the Government it might be possible to arrive at some satisfactory solution.

I do not know that I am satisfied in my own mind over the British taxpayer paying for something which, neither they nor ourselves might enjoy, and other means might be found to relieve the situation. As I see it, we may only have to cry what may be a temporary halt, and we should so prepare ourselves for the purpose that the least harm might be done to the industry as a whole. We should try to work a little bit more together so as to arrive at a satisfactory solution.

Mr. JACOB: The hon. Member was not present when this debate began. I want to say very clearly and plainly that I do not wish to see cane-farming or the sugar industry reduced to a state of chaos. I want everything to be maintained as it is at present, and I have every confidence that everything will be maintained until the end of 1943, but what disturbed me this morning was the statement by Mr. Austin that the whole industry was in a terrible state. I say it is not, and a statement like that should not have been made by the hon. Member. That is my point. I do not want it to be understood that I want to see the sugar industry ruined. That is going to be said, I am sure, by Members of the Council too. During 1943 the whole situation should be reviewed to see what could be done to save it.

Mr. AUSTIN: If you will permit me, sir, I would like to make a few remarks in reply to the hon. Member. If he has, and I think he has, the interest of the Colony at heart then he should get in touch with the Imperial Government and tell them what we should do in so far as the sugar industry is concerned. I am not giving away any secrets at all. We know that the Puerto Rico crop has been cut down by about 60 per cent., and ours about 40 per cent. If the estate authorities allow the juice to run away from the mills what is going to happen to the people in Georgetown; what is going to happen to the factory workers and the people who fertilize in the field if

they cannot get fertilizers? If the hon. Member thinks that we should not be unduly disturbed I would like to think so, but I cannot help thinking that we will have to face a very difficult position in the very near future. There can be no doubt about it that we may not yet be in a chaotic state, but we are coming to that. There is the future in front of us which we must try to foresee and overcome. It is no good getting up in Council and saying that there are no difficulties confronting the major industry of the Colony which we all know carries the Colony to a very large extent.

I would like to refer to another matter connected with this industry. What are we going to do to provide work for the people on sugar estates? For instance, at Pln. Albion there is a resident population of 7,000, and 2,000 persons are employed on the estate to whom a colossal sum of money is paid in wages every week. That is apart from the provision of hospital expenses and transportation of sugar from the Canje creek to the Georgetown wharves. Isn't it an alarming situation? I cannot help thinking it is, and I wish people in the Colony, especially the hon. Member, to realize the very difficult situation confronting the sugar industry of the Colony as a whole.

Mr. JACOB: We have another problem coming up now. We have been told quite recently that there is a shortage of labour. We understand now from the hon. Nominated Member that there is a surplus of labour at Albion.

Mr. AUSTIN: I did not say there was a surplus. I said there were about 7,000 people occupying houses on the estate and about 2,000 on the pay-roll at the end of each week.

Mr. JACOB: I may say at once that I cannot make a logical deduction myself, but, sir, you will recollect that there are several letters in the Secre-

tariat in which the people in the Canje district, Rosehall, Albion and Port Mourant area, clamoured for land year after year but could not get land for the cultivation of rice and ground provisions, and for the rearing of cattle. What does the hon. Member's statement amount to? I want the position clarified. If the sugar estates authorities have people living in their houses but do not want them they should tell Government so definitely. On the one hand people are crying out for work and land while on the other hand the estate authorities are saying that they have no work for them or they will not work. The position is most confusing. The whole point is that I have not got it admitted yet that the industry is safe until 1943. The hon. Member will not admit that, but the Imperial Government, through the President, has made the clear statement that the sugar crop will all be bought—whether transported or not is another matter—up to December, 1943, and my only hope is that the workers will get something out of it.

Prof. DASH: I am not here to speak for the sugar industry, but on the points raised by the hon. Member I will say this: His Excellency the Governor made in this Council a very clear and comprehensive statement in respect of the sugar industry and what was involved in regard to the immediate future, that is to say during the war. It is not for me to add anything at all to that. I think it was made very clear, and that the points made were reasonable and a sufficient answer to the hon. Member. While it is true that the position in 1943 may not appear to be so acute there is no question about it that in 1944 there will have to be some drastic readjustment of the position, and I think that was what my friend Mr. Austin referred to when he used the word "chaos."

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction. That is what I said too. I wish my friend will not twist my remarks.

Prof. DASH: I have not twisted anything; I was simply trying to clear up the position. I repeat that the Governor made a very clear statement. The position for 1944 is not so hopeful because there is bound to be some drastic readjustment, and it has to be borne in mind that plans have to be made ahead. I think that is what my friend was referring to when he said that the industry was very disturbed as to how those plans will affect the future, taking the long view. As you have pointed out, sir, these matters are receiving the careful consideration of Government, and they include the cane-farming industry which we all know is an important one to certain villages.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is nothing I can add to the clear pronouncement made by the Governor at a recent meeting, to which the Director of Agriculture and the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) have referred. I think His Excellency put the position very clearly at that time, and nothing has happened since then which would enable me to give the hon. Member any further information. The situation will definitely be difficult. There is no question about that. The problem will be to re-adjust the various industries when the sugar quota is cut down. No doubt as soon as the Sugar Producers' Association and the Director of Agriculture have reported to the Governor about their conference His Excellency will, I am sure, make a further pronouncement on the subject.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the new sub-clause (5) be amended by the deletion of the words "in each year" and by the substitution of the words "nineteen hundred and forty-three."

Amendment put, and agreed to.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the new sub-clause (6) be amended (a) by the deletion of the words "thirty-first day of December in each year" in the third line, and the substi-

tution therefor of the following words: "seventh day of January, nineteen hundred and forty-three," and (b) by the deletion of the brackets and figure "(3)" and the substitution of the following brackets and figure "(4)" therefor.

Mr. JACOB: Sir, this is a very important matter and I crave your indulgence to say something more. I gather that there is a conference going on now between the Sugar Producers' Association and the Director of Agriculture with regard to the future of the sugar industry. I think it is only fair that other interests should be brought in too, because the sugar industry is heavily subsidized by this Government and by the Imperial Government, and I have a distinct recollection that the preference was granted to the industry on the distinct understanding that the bulk of it should go to the workers. In every other industry the sugar producers have a big voice, for instance in the rice and coconut industries. When the sugar producers meddle in other people's business I think it is time that the workers, who are primarily concerned, should have a voice in this matter too. I think the time is overdue when workers should have some say in this industry.

It has been said here by Mr. Austin that the industry wants help. Whether that is meant or not I do not know, and whether I can help or not is another matter. The Sugar Producers' Association and the Director of Agriculture should not alone make recommendations in this matter involving the welfare of 80 per cent. of the people. The workers should have some voice in the matter too to see that their interests are safeguarded to some extent. It is not merely a capitalistic industry but an industry of the Colony, and the workers should be consulted. It is known that the workers have already stated that they have very little confidence in the Director of Agriculture. I do not want to endorse that statement myself; I merely make the state-

ment and say that the conference which is going on should include other interests apart from the sugar interests and the Director of Agriculture.

THE CHAIRMAN: I undertake to bring the hon. Member's remarks to the notice of His Excellency the Governor.

Clause 8 as amended put, and agreed to.

Clause 12 was amended by the deletion of the word "forty-seven" at the end thereof, and the substitution of the word "forty-three."

The long title of the Bill was amended by the deletion of the words "five years" in the third line thereof, and the substitution therefor of the words "one year."

The Council resumed.

Prof. DASH: I move that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

Mr. D'ANDRADE seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

DEMERARA LICENSING BOARD (SPECIAL MEETING) BILL, 1942.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the Standing Rules and Orders of the Council be suspended to enable the following Bill to be taken through all its stages:—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to make special provision for the consideration by the Licensing Board for the County of Demerara of certain applications for the renewal of spirit shop licences; and for matters connected therewith.

Prof. DASH seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that "A" Bill intituled an Ordinance to make special provision for the consideration by the Licensing Board

for the County of Demerara of certain applications for the renewal of spirit shop licences; and for matters connected therewith" be read the first time.

Prof. DASH seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This Bill is necessary because, unless a special session of the Licensing Board is held before the end of the year, certain persons cannot get licences because the current licences will expire. In their behalf I have moved the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders in order to put the Bill through quickly.

Paragraph (a) of section 13 (1) of the Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Ordinance states that any person wishing to renew a spirit shop licence shall, on or before the 15th day of October of each year, serve on the District Commissioner an application in duplicate signed by himself. The persons of the estate mentioned in the Schedule of the Bill failed to do so on the 15th October, and when the Licensing Board sat they held that they had no power to consider applications which were received later. I think they were perfectly correct in that decision.

Hon. Members will remember that two years ago the same thing occurred with respect to two other applicants and a special Bill was passed. I am following the same precedent on this occasion. It will be noticed from the Schedule that the first three persons have the same name, and all have the same reason for being late with their applications. The fact is that the owner of the spirit shops died and the estate was administered. Three of those persons, for the first time in their lives, had to make application for the renewal of the licences, but did not realize that they had to do so. It is their fault for

being ignorant of the law. The District Commissioner has to send a reminder before the 15th October, and actually did so, but it appears to be established that in the case of the first three persons mentioned in the Schedule they received their reminder on the 16th October, one day too late. They all applied the day after they got the reminder.

In the case of the fourth application the lady concerned was discharged from the Georgetown Hospital on October 7 after a very serious operation, by no means fit and well, and was ill for seven more weeks. Thus she did not make application, and she had very good ground. In the fifth case the person concerned died so near the 15th October that the administrators had not time to apply for letters of administration and make application for a transfer of the licence before the 15th October. They did everything they possibly could, but not having been appointed administrators their application was invalid. I move that the Bill be read a second time.

Prof. DASH seconded.

Mr. WOOLFORD: There is one general remark I would like to make. As you are aware, sir, there was a very important meeting of those interested in the liquor trade, presided over by Mr. Nihill when he was Attorney-General, and a very comprehensive report was presented dealing with liquor licences of all kinds. Government has promised over and over again to give effect to some of those recommendations. It is a matter for Government whether that promise should be redeemed. It affects domestic legislation of a very important character, and I would like to point out in this connection that apparently this is the only British Colony I know of where an applicant for a licence of this kind has to apply before a specific date in each year, and only allowed an opportunity once a year when he has to go through the formality of appearing before the Licensing

Board. Of course that is done in some cases even in the City of London, but he has to comply with all manner of regulations which do not exist elsewhere. We are always comparing ourselves with neighbouring Colonies, and it has always been made an excuse for legislation here that so and so exists in Trinidad or Barbados. I have risen to point out that these conditions do not exist in Trinidad or Barbados, and I think the time has come when anyone who wishes to take the risk of applying for a retail spirit shop licence or a tavern licence should be allowed to do so.

I want to place on record certain matters that are being overlooked. There was a time when the existing proprietors of rumshops held that they had acquired a goodwill, and it was so in fact. In other words, when the proprietors of those premises died the goodwill was calculated as part of the estate, but I think the Treasurer will bear me out that during recent years it has been accepted by Government that no goodwill attaches to those premises or the licences, except perhaps in one or two rare instances. In a recent case I know of no goodwill attached to the estate. It will be observed that every rumshop is situated at the corner of a street. What in fact happens is that the proprietors not only own the licences but the premises, and apart from the profits of the rumshop they got a very good tenant for that shop and charged a good rental. Those days have gone by, and I do not think it can be said now that any spirit shop, except the Demerara Ice House, has a goodwill.

I think the time has come for a very close review of the circumstances under which generally licences are restricted. It would not lead to any increased drunkenness. It does not affect that matter at all. I ask that consideration be given as early as possible to the report of the Licensing Committee. I know the Attorney-Gen-

eral is a busy man and may not have had the time, but he has assistants. I am pleading that some special care be given this particular kind of legislation. The whole system requires very great consideration.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I may remind the hon. Member of one thing which I think he has overlooked. He mentioned that a strong Committee was appointed and submitted important recommendations to the Government regarding this particular Ordinance. In fact the Committee recommended that the whole Ordinance should be scrapped and a new one brought in. The Chairman of that Committee was my predecessor, who very fortunately escaped before the drafting of the new Ordinance could be undertaken. The report of the Committee went before the Executive Council who accepted all the recommendations and forwarded them to the Law Officers to draft the required Bill.

The required Bill was actually started when it was found that the recommendations made were rather difficult and appeared to be in partial conflict. The recommendations were made a short time before the War, but the drafting of the Bill started during the early stages of the War. There are about half a dozen recommendations which depended on a state of peace continuing. For example, the hotels were to pay an increased licence fee in order to keep open during longer hours on the days the "Lady" boats are in the harbour, but when the time came to draft the Bill the "Lady" boats had ceased to come here. I referred it back to the Colonial Secretary with a reference to those recommendations of the Committee which, owing to the War conditions, are now inapplicable and asked what I was to do. The matter went back to the Executive Council and a Committee was appointed to deal with it. The Committee decided that all the recommendations should be accepted or none. This recommendation was

quite impracticable and the matter was again referred to the Committee. On this occasion the Committee recommended that the matter should be left in abeyance until the return of normal conditions because the original recommendations were inter-related.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I do not agree with the hon. Attorney-General. I think there is much in the Committee's report which can be ignored. My idea of that Committee meeting and reporting was to effect a change in the licensing system on the basis of conditions then existing. In a place like Georgetown is it the right thing where hotel accommodation is so scarce and limited to postpone the consideration of an application for one year? What is there easier than to grant a licence without undue restrictions? There are places far more populous than Georgetown—

THE PRESIDENT: I thought the hon. Member rose to a point of correction. I cannot allow him to make a second speech.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I was only pointing out that the reasons given are not correct.

Mr. De AGUIAR: What I have risen to say is that I would never be against any legislation being brought before the Council so as to make it easier for the granting of applications for old licences to be renewed, but when it comes to the question of granting applications for new licences the whole thing will have to be considered very carefully. It is not quite as easy as the hon. Member for New Amsterdam has pointed out.

He raised the question of goodwill, but there are several other points beside that which will have to be considered. Perhaps the hon. Member has forgotten that the Guggisberg Report restricted the number of spirit shops in the Colony. That may be a good or a bad

thing, but nevertheless in considering one report, I take it, Government will consider all the reports together. I am not going to make any speech on that to-day. I have only risen to say that I will support legislation to give effect to the issue or granting of old licences. The onus is on proprietors to have their applications in at a certain time. They have failed to do so. Provided there is nothing known against that particular licence the Board may grant it in the usual way, but we are not here to discuss that. This Bill is to remove a hardship that was created. We had a similar Bill last year, I thought the amendment then was to put an end to future legislation.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I rise to point out that the hon. Member is not right in saying the Guggisberg Report restricted the number of spirit shops in the Colony. What was done was the Licensing Board limited the number of spirit shop licences in each fiscal district. I was speaking more about the high licences.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member for Central Demerara said he understood that last year the suggestion was made that a Bill was to be prepared simply to prevent similar occurrences again. That is perfectly true. That was one of the recommendations in this report which the Committee said we must adhere to strictly.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause.

Clause 5— Licensing Board to give notice of special meeting.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the clause be amended by the insertion of a comma and the word "Sparendaam" after the word "Georgetown" in the last line.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill passed as amended.

The Council resumed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With the permission of the Council and in view of the urgency of the matter, I beg to move that this Bill be read a third time and passed.

Professor DASH seconded.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

SUBSIDIZATION OF IMPORTED COMMODITIES.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name:

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

In view of certain hon. Members wishing that this be postponed.—

Mr. De AGUIAR: I have come particularly to ask that this matter be postponed, not until next week because really I cannot possibly be here next week but to the next meeting of the Council which, I presume, will be some time in January. I know there is a lot to come up, and it is quite possible that we are going to meet again some time during next month, therefore I am respectfully asking that this matter be postponed until then. There is no particular urgency about it, I think. The existing legislation giving effect to this policy to the end of the year is still in being and, I think, we can safely adjourn consideration of it

until next month. We have a depleted Council again this morning which is certainly due to the fact that everyone is busy at this time, and I hope we will have a fuller attendance in January. No useful purpose will be served in suggesting that it be postponed to next week. I do ask that it be deferred to January.

THE PRESIDENT: I am authorized by the Governor to say that he has it in mind to adjourn the Council provisionally to week after next. He has in mind, possibly, Wednesday, the 30th, or Tuesday, the 29th, if that will suit Hon. Members. If the Council adjourns to Tuesday, the 29th, would hon. Members prefer to deal with this motion then?

Mr. DeAGUIAR: I have no objection to dealing with it then, but even the 29th is not too appropriate a day. The 29th is very near the 25th and 26th.

THE PRESIDENT: His Excellency is not anxious that the Council should adjourn beyond that week.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: Make it Wednesday, the 30th.

Mr. JACOB: Does Government wish this matter postponed? If it is passed now or on the 30th is it not the same thing? I am not in favour of postponing it as we have come to discuss this motion unless Government wishes it postponed.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I am in favour of the consideration of the matter today. I do not see why we should postpone it.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: Some of my colleagues seem very anxious to proceed with it. It does appear that up to the present I am on a lonely platform, but I do hope that before we go further I may get support for a postponement of this item. I personally am not ready to proceed today. I do not know

whether that is of any interest to my colleagues, but again I say the matter should be postponed to the 30th. I do not see any reason for rushing it. If, as one hon. Member says, the 30th is the same as today then why not have it on the 30th when it will be possible for all of us to deal with it. This is a very important matter and up to the present I have been giving it considerable thought and study. I want to be able to be of some assistance to Government if I may.

THE PRESIDENT: The Governor had hoped to be able to come down here between 1 and 2 o'clock. He still intends to come if he can. Since the hon. Member began to speak two other Unofficial Members have arrived, so the Council is not as depleted as it was.

Mr. LEE: We have an appointment with Sir Cosmo Parkinson at 2 o'clock.

Mr. JACOB: I think it can be disposed of before then. I do not think, judging from the attendances we have had during the last few weeks, we will have a better attendance on the 30th. If there is no other business to be done I do not see why we should return for this single item on the Order Paper.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I join most heartily in the application for a postponement of this matter to the 30th. I agree with the hon. Member for Central Demerara that it is a matter of the greatest importance, and I do not think for one moment it can be assumed that there will not be considerable debate on this question. I understand the hon. Member for Essequibo River has an appointment for 2 o'clock, and I know His Excellency is meeting the Grow More Food Committee at 2.30. I got a message to that effect. This debate will certainly take more than an hour, and I am going to ask that it be postponed to the 30th or some other convenient day.

Mr. McDAVID: I myself have to attend the meeting at 2.30. If hon. Members guarantee to finish by 2 o'clock we can have it done.

Mr. JACOB: I promise not to say anything on it.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: I promise to speak on it until tomorrow morning.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I accept that.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I think about five Members of this Council have to attend the 2.30 meeting.

THE PRESIDENT: I think we should deal with the motion until Members have to leave.

Mr. McDAVID: I shall endeavour to be very brief. During the course of discussion on the 20th August when the existing resolution, No. 26, was passed, the Governor gave an undertaking to bring this question of subsidization before the Council again in order that the general policy and course of action to be pursued in relation to 1943 should be considered and the views of Members presented again. The motion now before the Council is to afford that opportunity which the Governor intended to give. I hope hon. Members will take advantage of it. As regards the present policy hon. Members know that subsidization is applied in the case of three or four essential imported commodities, the most important being flour. The items which are being subsidized are flour, condensed milk, cornmeal, gas and diesel oil. The resolution authorized the Governor to spend up to \$300,000 during the last six months of 1942 and, although I am not quite sure what the total cost will be it is estimated that about \$180,000 will be expended.

I would like to take this opportunity of informing the Council that in addition to the four items mentioned the transactions in regard to edible oil have

now been completed. Hon. Members will remember that during the last eighteen months Government had to import considerable quantities of edible oil, and the oil was sold at a fixed price although in the case of some shipments there was a profit and in the case of others there was a loss. The net result is a loss of about \$12,000 on the total transactions. I think that result is extremely satisfactory because hon. Members will remember that a rather more expensive cotton seed oil was purchased. That \$12,000 will be included in the cost of subsidization during 1942.

As regards 1943, it is proposed to carry on with the same policy. The same standard commodities will be subsidized. At the same time, Government intends to go further and if possible to subsidize one or two other essential articles. For example, it may be possible to subsidize salt fish. But there is another aspect of the question which has not arisen, and that is the idea of levelling or equalizing prices. Commercial Members will know that in the case of certain commodities shipments arrive at prices which vary considerably and in order to fix the price it is desirable that the prices of all these various shipments should be levelled off at some margin; and that may cost a fair sum of money. It is proposed to apply some of the subsidization money to this process of levelling prices. The items I have in mind are coconut, butter, split peas and so on. I prefer not to refer to these as subsidized items because the reduction in the price to the consumer will not be considerable; nevertheless, they will be to some extent subsidized although the result will merely be a fixation of the prices at a marginal level.

This is an opportunity for hon. Members to express their own views, but Government is very strongly of the opinion that subsidization at the present time is the correct policy, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies has himself urged this policy on Government for

a long time not only in respect of this Colony but all the Colonies of the Colonial Empire as a War measure. This is the only means by which we can take some action to stabilize the cost of living in regard to essential commodities. I must stop to allow hon. Members some time to express their views. Subsidization is Government's policy already since 1942 and this is merely an opportunity to reopen the question here again. The motion is to authorize the Government to appropriate a sum not exceeding \$600,000 from surplus balances for this purpose.

Mr. AUSTIN seconded.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: When the policy of subsidizing certain articles of food-stuff was first introduced in this Council one of the promises or undertakings given by the Government was that the position would be reviewed at a later date. By that I understood that the whole question would not have come up again for review until after the close of this year, and I am perfectly correct in that assumption for in the Message itself, which is before the Council, those words are stated in the second paragraph, and with your permission I propose to read that paragraph. It states:—

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

When I asked for an adjournment on the previous occasion and when I asked for an adjournment again this morning I had those words ringing in my ears—those words that were uttered here in August—and in order to refresh my memory I turned to the Message and there I found the very bold and understandable statement that the matter will not be reviewed until after the close of the year.

THE PRESIDENT: Is the hon. Member suggesting that it is an undertaking that the matter will not be discussed until after the close of the year? I take it, that it refers to the action to be taken and not that the discussion will take place after the close of the year.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: I am dealing with the policy.

THE PRESIDENT: You are not suggesting that consideration of the policy should not take place until after the close of the year?

Mr. DeAGUIAR: Yes.

Mr. McDAVID: It is not proposed that subsidization should close down at the 31st December, and so we have come to the Council before the close of the year to discuss what should happen after the close of the year.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: I may mention for the benefit of the Council that as a commercial man, when I have any difficulty as to the interpretation that may be put to words I always refer the matter to my legal adviser. Unfortunately, he is not in the Council today and, therefore, I am somewhat handicapped in obtaining the benefit of his advice. But I do maintain my understanding of the position at that time and even now despite the explanation of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and the hon. the Colonial Secretary that the matter of the policy of subsidization and the action to be pursued will not be reviewed until after the close of 1942. It must be remembered that I have quite a number of reasons in support of that view. The primary reason I have is that subsidization, as it is now known, is something entirely new in this Colony. It is true that it was started in England and other more flourishing countries at an earlier date, but so far as we are concerned it is something entirely new, and as I understood at the time it was

very desirable that the general policy should not be laid down in what I may describe as a definite and hard and fast decision, but rather to be reviewed later in the light of the experience gained during the six months in which it had to work.

I have not heard anything from the Government side this morning in so far as the experience that Government has gained since this measure was introduced in this Council in August last, and I must take it for granted that, perhaps, the experience has not been too happy or on the other hand, if the experience was a happy one then at least we ought to be told in what way the benefits that were hoped for by Government have materialized. I have heard nothing at all about it and, in the absence of any information on that score and in the light of the criticisms that were offered at the time when the first Message was put before the Council, it seems to me that we should have been told something about it. However, if Government desires to pursue this policy without furnishing any information as to the experience that may have been gained during the past few months, then it is left for me to continue in the same way as I began in August of this year and, what is more, to add as far as I am able to the opposition to this measure.

I have not heard anything as to the ultimate cost in 1942, but that is not possible as the year is not completed. Here again I must pause to make the observation that until the year 1942 is passed we are unable to say what we are going to be saddled with in respect of this measure. I know the possible answer is likely to be that the Message of the 20th August specified a particular sum, but how am I to know that sum has not been exceeded? There is nothing before this Council—nothing the mover of the motion has said—to indicate what the cost of this policy of subsidization for the year 1942 will be,

Mr. McDAVID: I said I could not give the exact figure for the same reason as the hon. Member mentioned, but that \$180,000 is the estimated cost. That figure appears in the Budget and in the Annual Estimates as being the revised cost for this year.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: That may be so. I ought to say that nothing has been said as to how that figure quoted by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has been arrived at. I was leading up to that point. I want to know the relation that subsidization bears to bulk purchases, which seems to me to be a very important phase of this matter. I repeat the question: What relation does subsidization bear to bulk purchases? To make that question a little clearer let me put it in this form. Is the subsidization account credited with the profits derived from bulk purchases, and if so, to what extent? When I say to what extent, I mean to enquire whether in the case of bulk purchases a profit is made on certain articles which in the opinion of the officers in charge of this organization, (whether it be individual officers or an advisory board) can bear a profit and if so, to what extent. If that is so, whether the profit is being carried to the credit of subsidization. In other words, if this Government is going to embark on a policy of levelling—and I use the words of the hon. Mover of the motion—and equalizing of prices generally, this Council and, I suggest, the public should be taken into the confidence of Government and be informed as to how the whole system is going to work out.

I do not boast of being an economist, but I fail to appreciate the difference between relieving the cost of flour by one cent per pound and adding four cents per pound to the cost of something else—I am just quoting hypothetical figures—no more do I see the value or the relief that is being given to the general public under the policy of subsidization. If we can

afford it, it might be an entirely different matter. I will put it the other way around. If there was an urgent necessity to subsidize any article of food I would probably support it but, sir, we must not be guided by our increased votes to the Poor, by the distribution of coupons or by any other means of relief to the very poor as an index of the needs of the general community. I have not yet heard from the Government side either before or even today whether it is desirable in the opinion of Government, apart from the question of the desirability of equalizing prices. It seems to me that is where Government's claim is based today—the question of equalizing prices. I shall deal with that a little later on, but if I cannot do so today I will certainly do so another time.

Mr. JACOB (*soto voce*): And I would ask that the question be put.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: The hon. Member for North-Western District suggests that he will move that the question be put. The hon. Members is entirely able to do that. He can do that if he wants to, but I venture to suggest that on this occasion I am not so sure that the hon. Member will succeed with such a motion unless he is able to prove to the Council that I am either repeating myself or talking out of the subject. As long as I can claim the interest of Members on this subject—and I venture to suggest that I am better able to advise or express an opinion on this matter than some hon. Members of Council—the hon. Member cannot succeed. However, the hon. Member has tried to interrupt me—

Mr. JACOB: I do not think the hon. Member should take any notice of anything I said while I was in my seat.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: It is perfectly true that I very seldom take notice of anything the hon. Member says whether he is on the floor or in his seat. The weather is very cool to-day and somehow

or other one's hearing has improved, and maybe that accounts for my hearing the hon. Member so distinctly.

THE PRESIDENT: It was a little bit too loud.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: I have to ask for an excuse if I repeat myself in the debate because of the hon. Member's interruption. I was dealing when interrupted with the question of levelling and equalizing prices and I was endeavouring to point out that as far as I know that was the only reason that was given to-day for the continuance of this policy. When the measure was first suggested it was more or less on trial to see how it would work, and from my point of view to see what relief could be given. I have not heard anything about that. All I have heard is that it is intended to go along the same lines and the reason given was the levelling and equalizing of prices. That brings about a very interesting proposition indeed, one on which this Council should be more informed. Until I know whether bulk purchasing and subsidization—

His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, entered the Chamber and took the Chair.

THE PRESIDENT: I must apologize to hon. Members for my absence.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: Perhaps I ought to mention that previous to my having risen to speak on this motion I had requested that the matter be adjourned until Wednesday, the 30th, which I understood was the date when it is hoped the Council will resume after today, but that suggestion did not find favour with certain Members of Council although I had a limited amount of support. For that reason the motion was moved, and I am the first speaker on the subject. I had made one or two very pointed remarks, and it is rather unfortunate that I may

have to refer to them again, but I do not propose to do so now, because I have reached a stage which I would like to complete before I pass on to something else.

While Your Excellency was coming in I was dealing with bulk purchasing and its relation to subsidization, and I was asking the question whether the one bears any relation to the other, and if so what was the nature and the extent of such relation. I think the Council should be informed, --in fact I would like very much to be informed—as to whether any profit that may accrue as the result of bulk purchasing is credited to the account of subsidization, and if there was such a profit, what was the extent of it, and the items on which such profit is earned. I tried to make some comparisons, pointing out what I considered to be some difficulty. Here we have on the one hand the subsidizing of certain articles of food, and on the other we are making profit on other articles. It is true that on balance there is an ultimate cost to the taxpayer of \$183,000, which is the estimated figure for 1942. I think we should consider whether the relief that was hoped would be given in stabilizing or equalizing prices was worth the effort and worth the risk that was involved. Perhaps it is too early, so I will not criticize it for the year is not yet ended, and here again I must pause to make an observation that I had made previous to Your Excellency's arrival.

It was my impression that this matter would be reviewed after the end of this year. Perhaps if that was done it might have been possible to lay before members the facts, and maybe a number of the arguments I would advance this morning would not arise. I was hoping that when those accounts come in the general policy of subsidization would have been abandoned because it would have been found that it was not worth the candle. I speak with a certain amount of emphasis. Whilst \$183,000 is a large sum of money to be found by

the general taxpayers to balance our Budget. I do not look at the importance of the figure in the manner that it is being distributed in the form of relief to the community. It would have been much better if we had spent that money in some other direction and I even go so far as to say on non-productive works rather than to distribute it in this form. This Government cannot say that this benefit is reaching the section of the community that it was designed to reach. Perhaps, I ought to qualify that by saying that this Government cannot say that a hundred per cent. of this policy of subsidization is reaching the class or type of people which it is designed to reach. Every member of this community for example, those who can afford and those who cannot afford, eats bread, and so we have all benefiting. From that angle it may be all right for Government's policy, but, sir, in the same breath it cannot be said that the desire to render assistance where it is most urgently needed has been fulfilled. That is one of the major objections to a general policy of subsidization.

I have said before, and I repeat, that it would be more advantageous to the people of this country in which conditions are entirely different from what they are in the Mother Country and elsewhere, if this money could be spent in another form rather than in a policy of subsidization. Not very far from here, there is a more prosperous Government and such a thing is not being done there. As far as I know—and I think I am well informed on the subject—there is no policy of subsidization in Trinidad. I do not know about Barbados. I do know there is no subsidization in Trinidad and yet we seem to want to continue the policy here. This is exactly what I had feared when the proposal was first suggested. I feared that even if in spite of the experience it might be considered bad policy to abandon it. That is why at that time I opposed the scheme in such strong terms, because I realized that it would be bad policy to

abandon the scheme after what might be considered a very short trial. Nevertheless, I think that further consideration should be given to it before it is too late. If the time is meet to try and equalize prices—what we call pegging prices, I do not know yet what sum we would be landed into.

Mr. McDAVID: I must rise to explain that the two things are entirely different. When I say equalizing prices I do not want hon. Members to infer that I mean pegging prices.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: I appreciate the point. At the present moment there is a fixed price for flour. Within the last few months the price of flour has suffered many ups and downs and the situation is so serious that some consideration may be given to it. Those of us who are in the trade know it. It is not an uncommon occurrence to find two shipments of flour arriving within a few days of each other from the same millers and one costing as much as \$1 a bag more than the other as the result of circumstances beyond the control of the shippers. That was what I had in mind when I used the term "pegging prices." I think I am right in saying it occurs with other items as well. So long as we establish a particular price here and retain that price either for all time or for some time, that is to my mind pegging. At the same time I agree with the hon. the Colonial Treasurer that it is also incidentally a system of equalizing, but the one argument does not dispose of the other. The fact remains that so long as that system continues it is nothing short of a gamble and as far as I know this \$600,000 may not be enough. These estimates were probably framed on present-day conditions which may get worse or may improve. As a matter of fact I am hoping that conditions will improve, and I have every reason to believe that they will improve. We are all guessing, but the fact remains that whichever way the guess goes there is definitely a very grave risk that this Government is taking, in continuing the policy of a subsidization during the year 1943.

I asked a question just now in regard to the relation of bulk purchasing to subsidization. I ought to have added that there is also another factor to be taken into consideration, and on that I would like to obtain some available information. Whilst on the one hand I have expressed the opinion that conditions will improve, incidentally I may mention that I do not mean shipping conditions in particular. On the other hand the difficulty in obtaining imported supplies may be much greater next year than it has been in the recent past. There again, the system of bulk purchasing might have to be increased; and there again the profits on bulk purchasing applied against the payment of subsidization will be greater, but the other factor I am thinking about is this: If we have to increase our bulk purchasing of imported articles we may have to do some of it—I do not know how much of it but I do think some of it at any rate—under the lend-lease system.

There again we have another difficulty, and one is tempted to say that we are going around a triangle, because we have had difficulty with subsidization, bulk purchasing stepped into the breach and, as I indicated just now, there is the possibility of lend-lease purchasing. Where are we going to be? I am tempted to think that our present system of control, despite a few minor difficulties here and there which can be overcome, has done much good to the community as a whole.

Although I am still fairly young I was actively engaged in commerce during the 1914-1918 war as I am to-day, and I know and I can see the difference between the conditions that existed then and now, and I am quite emphatic in the statement that despite what is said about black marketing here and there—we have black sheep in every family—the system of control has done a lot of

good to the community as a whole. It is my view that if instead of pursuing a policy of subsidization Government tightened and extended, with assistance of course, the system of control of prices generally it would be doing greater service to the community than by handing it out to them in the form proposed under the general policy of subsidization. After all we are not a flourishing community. No man likes to beg when he feels he ought to pay for what he gets, and I say that is the spirit of this community at the present time. The people of this community feel that so long as they are given the opportunity to earn money they would be willing to pay, within reason of course, for the things they have to buy. This community does not want subsidization, and if it is at all possible to obtain a referendum on that question Your Excellency will find that the community does not want it. We who have lived here all our lives and know the people in this country—we see them every day and dwell with them—know that so long as they can afford to buy they will always buy what they want and pay for what they get.

I quite appreciate the desire on the part of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to extend this policy of subsidization throughout the Colonies of the British Empire, but it is my view that while that has been laid down as a matter of general policy it should always be borne in mind that the difficulties characteristic of the financial position of each Colony should be taken into consideration before instituting that general policy. I venture to suggest that the Secretary of State would not insist on the people of this community or the Government accepting such a policy if it can be shown that it was not wanted and was not desirable, and what is more, that better could be done with the money used for that purpose.

I do ask in all sincerity that that phase of the matter be represented to His Majesty's Secretary of State

for the Colonies. I ask that because I have not been told, neither am I aware, that such representation has already been made. It would be interesting indeed to hear the answer, and as I said just now it would be surprising to me to find that the Secretary of State would insist that we should accept the general policy of subsidization in this Colony because it was found practicable, suitable or desirable either in England or in other British Colonies. My final appeal is that we should make haste somewhat slowly in this matter. It is something new and we have tried it out. My opinion to-day has not changed one iota since I spoke in Council on the 20th August last. If it has changed at all it has changed in this respect: that I am more convinced, now that it has been given a trial, that it is something that is wholly undesirable.

We have very difficult days ahead. It is true we have surplus balances from which we can draw to meet this expenditure and possibly many others, but this expenditure is nothing to which we can look forward with any degree of hope. It is worse than the dole, and I am sure that the people of this community would look with a very black eye on any suggestion that they should be given the dole. We have very difficult times ahead and should not draw upon our surplus balances for the purpose of spending money in this form. Rather, we should try to conserve our resources for the more difficult times we have ahead. If the war is not brought to a successful conclusion next year, as I honestly hope it will be early next year, I venture to suggest that the years that will follow will be very dark indeed.

The announcement which was made recently about the sugar situation has caused me considerable concern. I am still wondering what will be the solution of that problem. I know that the best brains in this community are working on it in the hope of arriving at

some intermediate means of meeting that situation. I know too that several suggestions have been put forward to try to fill the gap. One suggestion which may be of some value appeared in a leading article in the *Argosy* not many days ago, a suggestion which no doubt Your Excellency is giving some consideration. There may be some merit in it, and it should be considered in the light of the information given there. But those are all suggestions. We are all trying to work together, but until a solution is found we must take a serious view of the situation. Therefore it behoves us to conserve our resources the best way we can, so that when those dark days come we would have the means of giving assistance which would then be appreciated.

I am perhaps a lonely voice in the wilderness to-day, but be that as it may I feel that I would be failing in my duty if I did not make my views known, not only in this Council but to the public at large, and I have every reason to believe that despite opinions to the contrary, the views I have expressed will receive a considerable amount of support from the people of this community. I therefore feel that even at this last moment I should suggest that before a final decision is taken on this question (I am not suggesting any further postponement of the debate; let the debate continue) or any decision is taken to implement the terms of this motion, the matter might be reviewed again, not only in the light of the remarks I have made today, but after an opportunity has been taken to study, and to study most carefully, the experience we have had of this system during the last few months, and until the end of the year. I do appeal that that consideration be given, because I feel sure that to continue this policy of subsidization would not be in the best interest of the community.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Before your arrival, sir, it was explained by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) that several Members had to

attend other meetings this afternoon, and the request was made that the debate be adjourned until the 30th inst., or until some other day. There is a meeting at half-past two at which Your Excellency will preside, and several of us have to be there. Other Members have gone off to another meeting at 2 o'clock. In the circumstances we asked that the debate be adjourned until another day, but the Colonial Secretary suggested that the debate should continue until 2.30 p.m. Before I speak on the motion I would be glad to hear what Your Excellency's views are—whether you will see your way to have the debate adjourned until another day. What I wish to say I can hardly say in 10 minutes, and if the debate is to continue after 2.30 then those Members who have to be present at the Committee meeting must elect whether they will stay here or attend the Committee meeting.

THE PRESIDENT: You can speak until a quarter to three.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I thought the meeting was fixed for 2.30.

THE PRESIDENT: We can defer our meeting until a quarter to three.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I think we ought to have a full Council for this debate, and now we have only five Elected Members present. I think that more notice should have been allowed Elected Members because, if what I have heard is correct, I think there is to be considerable opposition to this motion.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are five Elected Members present now, but when the debate began there were nine Elected Members and two Nominated Members present.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: But some of them have gone to another meeting. However, if you desire to continue the debate now my remarks will not occupy a very long time, but I hope the de-

bate will not be concluded to-day. I feel more strongly on this matter than perhaps I am able to express. I feel that in asking that this amount be voted Government is playing with fire. We started this subsidization last year but we have no information up to the moment as to how far it has been a success, and how the amount of \$183,000 has been spent. Now we are asked to blindly authorize Government to spend a sum not exceeding \$600,000 in subsidizing certain articles of food next year, and that the amount be taken from surplus balances. Is it right that we should spend this money on subsidizing a few articles of food without knowing—because we really do not know—whether it is going to benefit any particular class in this community, and more particularly the class which subsidization should benefit? Is it going to benefit the poor, I think it will not benefit those who most need it. What I feel, sir, is that it is going to benefit the people who are exporting flour to this country—the exporters from other countries. As they know that we are subsidizing flour the more their prices will go up, and the more their prices go up the more we will have to subsidize.

If this motion is passed Government will find it necessary by the end of June to ask for a very substantial increase of the vote, and if the war continues beyond this year it is very probable that this time next year we will have a motion which will involve a million dollars or more. To tell Government that we simply have not the money and cannot do it will be just words falling on deaf ears. If Government decides to have this expenditure it is going to have it no matter whether posterity has to pay for it in years to come. This is expenditure from which there can be no return; it is dead money. I think we might as well take this \$600,000 and dump it into the sea. We cannot equalize prices when they are going up all the time.

Although we may have a little surplus at the present time this Colony is in a very precarious position. I do not want to touch on the sugar question at the moment, but Your Excellency has seen what has happened in this Colony within the last week. You have seen the torrential rains we have had, and I have no doubt that Your Excellency appreciates what is going to be the result of those rains. We have a Grow More Food Campaign, but there will be no ground provisions at all on the East Coast of Demerara; they are finished. I understand that the same conditions obtain in the Canals Polder, and I have no doubt that the situation is even worse in Essequibo. Your Excellency's effort to grow more food is, so far as next year is concerned, and in respect of crops already planted, doomed to failure through no fault of yours or the people's, but by the act of Providence. For that we are not responsible, but there it is.

Before many months have passed this Government is going to be inundated with applications for relief from farmers who have planted and have lost all, not due on this occasion entirely, or even to a large extent, to defective drainage, but due to some extent to defective drainage and past mistakes of officers of the Public Works Department. When I say that I refer to the misdeeds of years gone by; not recent years at all. The fact remains that whatever it may be due to, hundreds of farmers have been ruined so far as crops which have been planted this year are concerned. They will reap nothing. Surely if we have surplus balances, is it not better to hold them and see what is to come? I am not suggesting for one moment that because applications for relief are made Government must shell out money to the farmers, but there will be many genuine applications, and unless those people are assisted Government might just as well forget about any propaganda as regards its Grow More Food Campaign next year.

The farmers will grow just enough for their own personal use and take a chance on the weather, but as regards extending their cultivations they will not have the money in the first place to do it, and in the second place they will not take the chance of suffering loss as they have done.

I appeal to Your Excellency to let this matter of subsidization lie dormant for the present, even if it is brought up later in the year. Let us first see during the first two or three months next year what commitments Government will have to make with respect to local producers. Let us see how far we may have to help the farmer in order to persuade him to continue his efforts to grow more food for the inhabitants of the Colony. This subsidization scheme is throwing money into the pockets of people abroad. The benefit, if any, will be so infinitesimal to the local consumer that it will not get the slightest recognition or appreciation because, in the first place, it will not be understood, and in the second place it will be so small that he will not be able to appreciate it. While I have no doubt that Government means well towards the people of the Colony this gesture of subsidization is one which we cannot afford to embark upon.

So far as the labouring classes are concerned they are earning good wages; at least those who wish to work, and those who are not getting good wages are the unemployables. Those who work and get money spend it. There is a lot of money among the labouring classes floating around this Colony at present, and those people do not mind paying one cent more on a pound of cornmeal or on some other article of food, because they spend three times that amount on a piece of cloth they wish to have whether they require it or not. I am saying this with the knowledge that I know what I am talking about.

The people who will be hit as a result of the prevailing weather are not the labouring classes but the peasant farmers—the man who plants his own farm in the hope of producing food for himself and his family and sufficient to sell in order to make a living. The man who is working as a labourer will continue to get his money. It is true he is not going to get as much from some sources, because the work on the American bases has been closed down. Those are the wages they spend in Water Street at present. The bulk of the distress caused by the floods is going to fall on the peasant classes, and I ask Your Excellency to reconsider this motion before you ask this Council to adopt it. I am asking you to wait until two or three months to see what further ravages the weather is going to make into the cultivations of the small farmers before we embark on subsidization to the extent of \$600,000 from our surplus balances which we only dreamt of but have never seen before.

Finally, I would like some information from Government as to what, if any, guarantee it can possibly have that subsidization will not result in increases of prices by the exporters. I am not a merchant, but it seems to me that it is impossible to ensure that that will not happen. The exporter must know that British Guiana is subsidizing, and if his flour is being sold at X per bag, what is to prevent him charging XY? And if he finds that we are paying it cheerfully, what is to prevent him charging XYZ? How can we regulate the exporter's price by the amount of our subsidization? The hon. Member referred to Trinidad. They have lots of money there, and I have heard it from people coming from that island that they considered subsidization absolute madness. They would not embark upon it on any account, but here, just because we have a little surplus, we must spend \$600,000 in order to make flour half a cent cheaper. I make an earnest appeal to Government not to embark any further upon sub-

sidization for several months, until we see what further we will be committed to as a result of the weather. However long this debate may continue to-day, I ask that it be adjourned until another day. I make no apology for saying that the idea of just throwing \$600,000 away—it is nothing short of throwing it away—is wrong. Whatever consideration may have been given the matter before, I am asking Government that in view of the expenditure it may have to incur so as to encourage the farmers to continue production, it should wait and see what the situation will be. Don't force this measure through today.

THE PRESIDENT: If I have to take my Committee meeting to-day, which I think is important, I will have to leave the Council at a quarter past two. I think on the whole I should rather take the Committee meeting which is called for half-past two. Therefore it will seem necessary to request a postponement of this debate until Wednesday next.

Before we adjourn I would just like to reply to certain points. The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) seemed completely vague to me, and put up the general argument that the ordinary course of things should continue. I did not hear him suggest anything as an alternative. I have heard something of an alternative from the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys), but has he really considered what would arise if we stopped on the 1st January the subsidization which is going on now? Has he seriously considered it? If we do not pass this motion the price of flour and four or five other things we are now subsidizing will immediately go up. Wouldn't that be a much worse result than what has been suggested? I have listened to what the hon. Member said about the result of the recent floods, but I do not think we should consider this matter necessarily in that connection. I would like to point out

that if we do not continue subsidization the prices of certain essential things will go up on the 1st January.

Certain other bogies have been raised, and perhaps I should make another point. This is the general policy of the Colonial Empire. It is urged upon us from outside; it is Imperial policy. As we have the money let us go on as far as we can. It is intended to keep down inflation, and it is the general experience elsewhere that subsidization has kept down inflation. It has been said that people would rather have the money so as to be able to pay for what they want. Yes, those that may have the money, but this policy means that the greater benefit is carried to all people and not only to that limited class who may succeed in getting an increase of wages. That is the reason why we have put this motion forward. I again ask Members: if we are not going to subsidize what are we going to do? Are we going to allow the prices of flour, cornmeal, condensed milk and gas oil to go up as from the 1st January?

Another question has been raised as to what control we have over prices outside. It seems just a little absurd to suggest that the exporters of flour in North America are going to raise the price to the rest of the world simply because British Guiana is subsidizing flour by a few thousand dollars per month. It is absurd. We are going to buy flour at whatever the price may be to the rest of the world, but wish to keep the local price stabilized at as low a figure as possible. I thought those points required answering now if we have to adjourn the debate. Is it the wish of Members that we adjourn the debate on the motion until Wednesday next?

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I say "No". Your Excellency has put the matter as lucidly as anyone could ever expect. I have sat here and listened to a lot of balderdash.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you move that the question be put?

Dr. SINGH: I would like to say a few words. I feel quite satisfied that subsidization has assisted the people of the Colony. It was introduced as a war measure to prevent profiteering and to protect the people of the Colony. It is something new and needs time in order to make it uniform and work smoothly. If Government is satisfied that it is being properly supervised then I will say that Government should have the right through its officers to initiate any measure which would assist the people.

THE PRESIDENT: I take it that the hon. Member has moved that the question be put.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: Yes, sir.

Dr. SINGH: I second that.

THE PRESIDENT: It is desirable that we take a vote in this comparatively limited House? I know of some Members who would vote for the motion. I can put the question, unless Members feel strongly that we should have a fuller House.

Mr. De AGUIAR: With due deference to the mover of the motion that the question be put, I think it would be a retrograde step to take on such an important question. At present there are only the mover and three representatives of the people out of a total complement of 14 Elected Members. My own view is that whatever—

THE PRESIDENT: I certainly do not wish to pass such an important motion like this in such a small House, and I should like to give the Controller of Supplies an opportunity to answer certain questions about flour and what would happen if we took off the subsidy. I am informed that there would be a very substantial rise in the price of flour and bread on the 1st of Janu-

ary. For that reason I would prefer to have the motion passed in a fuller House.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Assuming that the vote is passed by a large number of Members there are other details which I feel might influence the hon. Member who has spoken so strongly on the matter to change his opinion. I think an opportunity should be given the Controller of Supplies to give us the benefit of his experience and to indicate the sources from which commodities which would be cheaper to the community could be obtained, and what has been our financial experience, which I and other Members of the Executive Council know. Speaking generally, the subject is a large one, and it is the question of distribution which is affecting everybody. I am inclined to the view that it is the better class of the community which has benefited to a certain extent, and I agree with Your Excellency that the Controller of Supplies and those associated with him should be given an opportunity to explain their position.

THE PRESIDENT: We can continue the debate now and call upon the Controller of Supplies. The only objection to that is that I have this Committee meeting this afternoon, and if I withdraw from the Council we would not have a quorum, but I can put off the Committee meeting. Can we take it to-morrow afternoon?

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I will not be able to attend to-morrow afternoon, nor will my friend on my left (Mr. Peer Bacchus).

THE PRESIDENT: Government is always blamed for being slow, but what slows us up in this Council is that Members are not prepared to put through the business, and are not prepared to attend the meetings of the Council like the Government Members.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: Your Excellency is quite correct. The hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) is in perfect agreement that we should proceed with the debate to-day, and the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) has announced that he will not say a word against the motion. We are not going to have a larger attendance on Tuesday or Wednesday next week. I have heard it said that the Grow More Food Campaign is a wash-out, which certainly supports Your Excellency's argument that if we do not subsidize these articles the prices will fly right up. I therefore do not see any reason for adjourning the debate.

Dr. SINGH Yesterday the motion was postponed until to-day.

THE PRESIDENT: I would like the Controller to have his say now. In view of that I call off my Committee meeting and we will continue this debate. I think it might be useful if the Controller of Supplies gave us certain facts now.

Mr. W. A. MACNIE (Controller of Supplies): Sir, I do not think I can add more to what you have said as to what would be the effect of the removal of subsidization now on the system of control, not only of prices but also of distribution. If subsidization is to cease as from the 31st December this year—not many days off—the maximum control price of flour would immediately have to be increased by at least one cent per pound. There would have to be a corresponding reduction in the minimum weight bread. The present minimum is 16 ounces for 8 cents. If the subsidization of flour is removed it means that less than 8 ounces would be sold for 16 cents. The existing method of distribution of flour would also be seriously affected, and I do not think it would be possible to continue controlled distribution in the absence

of subsidization, because the system of controlled distribution is based upon distribution at a steady price and at one price throughout the Colony. With subsidization you may have a maximum price for flour, but every consignment of flour is coming in to-day at a different cost, principally due to different routes of shipping. It is not so much a difference in cost at the source of supply as the large difference in shipping routes. It is therefore difficult to envisage how we can continue to control the distribution of flour in the absence of subsidization as a means of levelling or equalizing prices.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) advocated an extension of the system of control. I find it difficult to follow how we could extend the system of control, or even keep what we have going in anything like an efficient manner, or attempt to do so, if in a few days subsidization is to be removed by a stroke of the pen. He referred to the fact that all classes of the community eat flour either as flour or bread. It is the largest item in the subsidization vote, and the fact that flour is eaten by all classes is, I submit, an argument in favour of subsidization of flour.

Other items subsidized which would immediately show price increases, include condensed milk, which is important, particularly in the interior. The price would immediately rise by two cents per tin. The price of cornmeal would also rise slightly, and the price of gas and Diesel oil, which affect all industries in this Colony, the rice industry, the coconut oil industry and other forms of local production, would show an immediate rise of 8 cents per gallon, equivalent to about 33½ per cent. on the basis of present prices. I do not think there are any other points I would like to answer.

THE PRESIDENT: What about the question of the exporter's price of flour?

Mr. MACNIE : It has been suggested that because British Guiana subsidizes flour the exporter or the supplier in Canada would charge more for our flour. I do not think the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) would support that view. I have only been associated with him and other merchants in Water Street for three years, but I know he would not agree with the suggestion that the Canadian exporter would raise his price to British Guiana and not to the rest of the West Indian market or the world, simply because British Guiana is subsidizing flour. I do not think that suggestion really calls for a reply, except that I may say that it has been possible recently to sell flour destined to this Colony to another Colony on the basis of the invoice cost, and if our prices were unfavourable I do not think that would have been possible, because I think the other Colonies are very wide awake as to the price of flour.

I have been asked if possible to say something about the equalizing of prices. The hon. Member for Central Demerara referred to "pegging" and in the same breath he spoke of "equalizing." I respectfully submit that they are two different things. "Pegging" may be described briefly as a decision to maintain the price of a commodity to the consumer at a figure which ruled at some previous date, and to hold on to that price irrespective of what the cost might come up to. Then your subsidy may be dangerous, because you are then hanging on to your price and have to meet the difference between that "pegged" price and the current market price of the imported article. On the other hand equalizing is something entirely different. At present goods are arriving in this Colony from a variety of ports. The sources of supply are not very varied, but we have goods arriving from Canadian origin shipped from a Northern port, and also shipped from the Gulf or a Southern port. A very large proportion of the goods comes from Southern ports. That

necessitates railing from Canada, and railway freight is naturally very much higher than sea freight. The result is that we get identical goods arriving in the Colony within a few days of one another, one shipped from New York and the other from Mobile, with a wide difference in the final landed cost of the identical article. The idea of equalizing is that the subsidization vote should be used for the purpose of equalizing the cost of such goods with a view to arriving at a stable price at which those goods may be sold to the consumer.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : May I ask the Controller whether the export prices from Canada to this Colony and the West Indies are in any way stabilized, or are they just going up and down all the time? He said it is unreasonable to expect that because we are subsidizing flour the Canadian exporter would raise his price to this Colony. He may or may not; I do not know. I would not give him credit for it. Is it not a fact that the price might continue to go up so far as this Colony and the West Indies are concerned, and that we will have to increase our subsidization from time to time?

Mr. MACNIE: The Canadian system is that there is an internal ceiling price, and prices in Canada are controlled very rigidly. They have no price ceiling on all commodities for export, but they have taken steps to stabilize the export prices of certain commodities which we import. They have, however, not yet taken steps to control the maximum price of export flour. The price of flour is therefore still fluid.

Mr. De AGUIAR : I appreciate that it is somewhat difficult for me to rise again in view of the fact that I have already spoken on the motion, but I would like to be given the opportunity to make a few observations arising out of the Controller's reply. To put myself in order I crave Your Excellency's indulgence to suggest an amendment which would not destroy the principle

of the motion, but would merely give the Council an opportunity to consider the matter again. The motion before the Council is in respect of subsidization for the entire year of 1943, and it has occurred to me that instead of \$600,000 the figure mentioned in the motion might be amended to \$300,000 for half of the year. Such an amendment would not only enable me to put myself in order to speak again, but I may be able to advance some further opinion for the benefit of the Council. With your permission, sir, I move that the motion be amended to read "such sum not exceeding \$300,000 as may be necessary to meet the cost of subsidization of imported commodities during the first half of 1943."

THE PRESIDENT: I made some such suggestion to the Treasurer some time ago. I do not know if he has any strong objection to what is proposed.

Mr. McDAVID: Not at all, sir. It was to give an opportunity for some such provision that in the Budget statement I said I was not sure what line would be adopted in respect of subsidization.

THE PRESIDENT: Would you mind accepting such an amendment?

Mr. McDAVID: Not at all, sir.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I may mention that when I spoke on the motion I had no desire whatever to suggest an amendment, but as a result of what Your Excellency has said it seems to me that Government has committed itself to a certain extent and some hardship may be created if subsidization is withdrawn within just a few days of the expiring date. I have no doubt about that. I would like to say that when I spoke as I did not so long ago I spoke definitely against my own personal interest. In moving this amendment I want to make that position per-

fectly clear. I beg to move that the figures "\$600,000" be amended to read "\$300,000," and the last few words "during the year 1943" be amended to read "to the 30th June, 1943". Having done that I would like to say that the substance of what we were told here by the Controller of Supplies is undoubtedly correct. He has given us his experience of working the organization and, therefore, his idea must be limited to that end. What he has said I entirely agree with, but that to my mind is not dealing with the subject in the way I look at it. I want to say that so much has been made of the fact that by removing subsidization there will be considerable hardship, and one of the instances cited by the Controller of Supplies was the price of flour and of bread. I think he said this increase will take effect as from 1st January. I must challenge him on that score in view of the present situation. I guarantee this Council that if subsidization is removed there would be no increase in the price of flour and of bread but, to the contrary, the present state of the market—

Mr. MACNIE: To a point of correction! I did not say "the price." I said "the prescribed maximum price."

Mr. De AGUIAR: I will not join issue with the speaker. I mean the prescribed maximum price. I say the prescribed maximum price of flour will not increase on the 1st January having regard to the present situation. The Controller of Supplies knows, and perhaps it is well that people should know, there is a fair amount of flour in the Colony at the present time, and my experience as a commercial man is this: We would have to sell below the prescribed maximum price in these circumstances. We don't do it now because it is not our doing. When we are faced with a situation as we are faced now we certainly will have to do it. As a matter of fact I know from personal experience that we have been faced in this Colony with a lesser quantity than

we have at the moment with disastrous effect to the importer, and I say that with actual knowledge of the facts. I have only referred to that just to show that there will not be that effect which is expected on the 1st January, and also to show that when I was speaking against the question of subsidization generally, I had that in mind and I knew the likely repercussion that would have taken place in my own establishment and the loss we were likely to face as a result of having to compete in the open market.

Reference has been made to the price of milk in the interior. I am always very sympathetic where the price not only of milk but of all articles of food in the interior is concerned. I happen to know trading conditions in the interior and I say that an increase in the price of milk by a dollar (\$1) a case or even \$2 a case will hardly effect the price in the interior, and I say that because I know that the price in Georgetown not only of milk but of other commodities bear no relation whatever to the price in the interior as a whole. You have milk being sold in the interior—I think the last price I saw in the Press was something like two shillings a tin. It would be two shillings a tin before subsidization goes out and, I suppose, it would be that if the price went up another \$2 a case. Flour is in the same position. I think it is one shilling a pound. This price in the interior bears no relation to the Georgetown price. The price in Georgetown of flour is five cents per pound, and that of milk is something like 16 cents a tin. When one brings up the question of prices in the interior one is faced with an entirely different situation altogether. The interior of this Colony seems to me to be a world in itself. I am more concerned about supplies to the interior than I am concerned with prices in the interior. So long as we can keep our industries there running with supplies I think this Government will have done its duty. It will be ad-

mitted that if it came to extend Prices Control to the interior it would be found to be impossible. I know there has been a hullabaloo about prices there but I am unable to offer any suggestion.

I do urge that the amendment I have moved should find favour because, as I said at the very beginning, before Your Excellency came into the Council, this is something new and, speaking for myself, I am not satisfied from the trials made within recent months that it is one that should be pursued. On the other hand sufficient time has not been given for a fair trial. I would be the first to come into this Council and admit afterwards if I find that my opinion or views are wrong, but I do say with the greatest emphasis that the experience we have had within the last few months does not warrant the continuance of this policy. I am prepared however, to let it go on for a further period so as to gain further experience and then come back and discuss it.

Mr. McDAVID I have no objection to that.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I would be rather disposed to think the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has not given the matter sufficient thought should he accept that suggestion. I am a suspicious sort of person. What I feel about it is that there is a lot of flour on hand in the Street, and if they had to sell it the bakers would naturally reduce their price of bread and the people would get the benefit of it. The only thing is we must trust Government. It is a new venture and we should give Government full latitude. I am satisfied that the Control Authority is doing the best thing. The only danger is that you must control the importer. I do not want a repetition of what occurred the other day. This Colony was on the verge of a riot over the flour question. Risk that for the benefit of a few persons and "Black Market" will come in again. I think we should give the Board full opportunity. What is

\$300,000, when Members come here and vote away a much larger sum without questioning. We strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. As usual that is the position. I am not in favour. I think the hon. the Colonial Treasurer should adhere to his first love and leave the amendment alone.

THE PRESIDENT : I shall be perfectly prepared to come back to the Council at the end of June and give an account of how the policy is proceeding.

Mr. De AGUIAR : To a point of explanation! Subsidization does not control Black Market. It is at the distribution end that Black Market is controlled.

THE PRESIDENT : We will stick to the original intention and I guarantee to come back to the Council.

Mr. McDAVID : It will also give the Control Authority better scope to arrange matters. I had hoped to go back to the Finance Committee and have it argued there before coming to the Council.

Mr. De AGUIAR : I do ask that the amendment be accepted as being reasonable. You will not have a debate of this kind again if I find out I am wrong.

THE PRESIDENT : As I have said, I do not object to it, but I leave it to the Council.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : I would support the amendment for the 30th June with all sincerity as the report that may come to the Council will only be a review, and hon. Members will not have an opportunity, if by that report they think such a system should not continue, to achieve that if the substantive motion is passed by to-day. I think Government should accept the amendment and the hon. Colonial Treasurer could come back after the 30th June

with a full review and give the Council an opportunity of expressing an opinion either for the continuance or discontinuance of it.

THE PRESIDENT : Government Members will not vote. I will put the amendment that \$600,000 proposed to be deleted stand part of the motion. Those who prefer the motion as it stands will say "Yes," and those who desire the amendment will say "No."

Question put, and motion lost.

THE PRESIDENT : It is a matter of procedure only.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT : I would like a division, sir.

The Council divided and the voting was as follows :—

For : Dr. Singh, Mr. Percy C. Wight and Mr. Austin—3.

Against : Messrs. Jackson, Humphrys, Peer Bacchus and De Aguiar—4.

Did not vote : Messrs. Wood, Crease, Case, Laing, D'Andrade, and Professor Dash, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—9.

THE PRESIDENT :—Therefore the figures "\$600,000" are deleted. I now put the question for the insertion of \$300,000.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE PRESIDENT : I will now put the question that the words and figures "during the year 1943" be deleted and the words and figures "for the first six months of the year 1943" be substituted therefor.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE PRESIDENT : The motion now stands;

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 4 of 12th December, 1942, this Council approves of the appropriation from surplus balances of such sum not exceeding \$300,000 as may be necessary to meet the cost of subsidization of imported commodities for the first six months of the year 1943.

Mr. McDAVID : I would like to say that it will not be necessary to introduce a formal motion either in Finance Committee or on the introduction of an excess provision. A review will be presented and an opportunity will then be given for further debate.

THE PRESIDENT : Before putting the amendment I desire to repeat again that we should not entertain any fears of a food shortage. It seems to me the crux of the question is precisely as I had put it earlier. I am not going to attempt any opinion as to what the loss of local foodstuffs would be. I think we are a little too quick to form opinions on these things. I was in New Amsterdam on Monday and paid two visits to the Local Produce Depot and saw any amount of stuff being taken there and prices being realised were fair and not unduly high. Along the Corentyne Coast there is not the damage as on the East Coast Demerara. I think we should withhold any firm opinion as to what may happen. Admitting that there may be damage and shortage and, therefore, a tendency to a rise in prices, it seems to me the trend of the hour is such that we have got to continue our existing prices of imported essentials for the first six months of the coming year.

In the face of a possible shortage and a possible rising in prices of local produce how dare we fail to maintain such an essential commodity as flour at its reasonable price as from the 1st January? The new position locally seems to me to make the argument even stronger than before. We have been asked in effect to defer this whole thing. We cannot be certain at this time how these things are going to

work. We are living under emergency and war conditions and we have to try and meet them. This is not the first time in this Council I have heard about deferring matters of importance for another three months or six months. We have got to act first and if we go wrong it is quite possible to come back and have what is done changed, but we must act. I therefore put the motion in the amended form. I regard that as largely a matter of procedure. I do not think it will hamper Government or the Control.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed as amended.

THE PRESIDENT : We have now come to the end of the Order of the Day. We have avoided that meeting of 12 noon next Wednesday, but I would like to have an opportunity to conclude all the business before the end of the year and I propose therefore to adjourn to Wednesday, 30th December. I would like to put through the Finance Act. In all the Colonies I have administered I have put that through promptly rather than waiting indefinitely for months. It is a wrong procedure. There is also the important matter of Bishop's High School for Girls we have to settle by the 1st January.

Mr. WOOLFORD : I think we shall be ready with our report by Wednesday, the 30th.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT : Before we separate, on behalf of the Elected and Nominated Unofficial Members I wish you and yours the Compliments of the Season. We shall see you before the end of the year and so I leave the New Year wish for then.

THE PRESIDENT bowed in acknowledgment.

The Council was adjourned until Wednesday, 30th December, 1942, at 12 noon.