

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

FRIDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1954

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

PRESENT :

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

Ex-Officio Members:—

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

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

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

Nominated Members of Executive Council:—

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

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

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

The Hon. G. H. Smellie.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj.

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

Deputy Speaker:—

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

Nominated Officials:—

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

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

Nominated Unofficials:—

Mr. W. A. Phang.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo.

Mr. C. A. Carter.

Mr. E. F. Correia.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb.

Mr. H. Rahaman.

Miss Gertie H. Collins.

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

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

Mr. R. B. Jailal.

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

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

Absent:—

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall.

Mr. T. Lee —on leave.

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

Mrs. Esther E. Dey —on leave.

Mr. Sugrim Singh.

The Speaker read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, the 18th of February, 1954, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Chief Secretary gave notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled—

“An Ordinance to make special provisions with respect to the declaration of certain areas as drainage and irrigation areas.”

The Financial Secretary: I beg to give notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance further to amend the Audit Department Ordinance for the purpose of increasing the salaries of the Director of Audit and the Senior Auditor.”

I also beg to give notice that I may, at this meeting, move the suspension of the relevant Standing Orders so as to enable me to proceed with the Bill through all its stages, if necessary. I desire to state that I have had the permission of His Excellency the Governor to do so.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

FEED FOR PIG REARING

Mr. Bobb gave notice of the following motion:

“Whereas it has been recognized that the pig-rearing industry holds great possibilities for the economic development of the people engaged in it as well as for that of the Colony as a whole;

“And whereas it is desirable to give the greatest possible encouragement to this industry:

“Be it resolved:—

“That this Government—

“(a) be urged to take steps to increase the production of local feed for pigs; and

“(b) be requested also to subsidize the price of feed in order to bring it more within the means of the pig-rearers.”

ORDER OF THE DAY

REVISION OF SALARIES OF PUBLIC SERVICE

The Financial Secretary: I should like to take this opportunity, with your permission, Sir, to make an announcement which I should have included in my reply on the Budget Statement, and that is that Government proposes to carry out a general revision of the salaries of the Public Service. Steps are now being taken to have a Commissioner appointed for the purpose, and it is hoped that the revision will be made as early as possible.

Mr. Speaker: That would meet the approval of the hon. Member, Mr. Ramphal.

Mr. Ramphal: Yes, Sir.

BUDGET DEBATE

APPROPRIATION BILL—1954

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the Council resolves itself into Committee to consider the following Bill clause by clause:—

A Bill intituled “An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current session of the Legislative Council.”

I also beg to move that this Council approves of the Appendix that was attached to the report of the Finance Committee which I laid on the table prior to the commencement of the debate on the Budget. I am asking that that Appendix, as revised, be substituted by the copy which was circulated to Members yesterday, and that it be incorporated in the Schedule as the Schedule to the Bill. I would also ask that when we come to the

Appropriation Bill, that the Schedule should be taken head by head. Each head will be called as we go along today, Sir, so as to give Members an opportunity to speak. I would also like to remind hon. Members of what I told them earlier, as to what would be the procedure in going through these Estimates. I think it would be just as well if I repeated what was said. I said that when we come to the Schedule, each head will be called and Members will have a right to speak on the head or on any item under the head.

Mr. Carter: To a point of explanation: Must they speak only as regards reduction, or as regards increases also?

The Financial Secretary: Members have a right to move a reduction, but can only recommend an increase. If a motion for the reduction of a sub-head is carried by the Council, then the Appropriation Bill as well as the head on the Estimates will be reduced accordingly. The volume of the Estimates would not be used in Committee, but would be referred to only if a Member moves the reduction of a particular item. I should like to point out that I have three items which I would like to move in, which are not in the report of the Finance Committee.

Sir Frank McDavid seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

Clause 2—*Schedule*.

GOVERNOR

The Financial Secretary: I move that head I — Governor — be carried out at \$17,859 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

GOVERNOR'S SECRETARIAT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be carried out at \$33,187 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

LEGISLATURE

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered IIA. and carried out at \$107,228 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

AGRICULTURE

The Financial Secretary: I move that this head be numbered III. and carried out at \$1,020,289.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak on this head in view of all that has been stated.

Mr. Carter: Yes, Sir. At item 13 on page 5 of the Estimates, I notice that there is a vote of \$3,000 for the training of apprentices in Agriculture, and I do not know if I can recommend an increase of this amount by \$7,000. This country is particularly agricultural, and quite a number of people indulge in agriculture for want of something better to do, particularly on the river banks. But, when a son looks at his father, he realizes that there is no incentive for him to take up agriculture also, owing to his father's mode of living as a farmer. He sees his father with a shovel and a hoe planting his first piece of land at the side of a river,

[Mr. Carter]

and he also sees that after the first or the second crop the cultivation becomes a failure. He takes in a further piece of land, and if he is given an opportunity he would continue to cultivate it until he reaches even beyond the river, because he knows nothing at all of the science of agriculture.

I believe that if more money is spent for the training of our boys for posts as Agricultural Instructors in the rural areas, we would be able to get satisfactory results from the cultivation of things like onions, cabbage, English potatoes and other commodities. Lack of knowledge is responsible for the majority of our farmers confining their efforts to the cultivation of plantains and ground provisions. When they continue to do that, they find that when they arrive at the market places they have to sell their produce for little or nothing, for want of other commodities.

If Agricultural Instructors are placed in the various areas, they would be able to see that farmers carry out instructions as regards the cultivation of produce, and if the farmers can command better prices they would be able to contribute more to the revenue of the Colony. If it is possible to provide more money for the training of these apprentices, I would take this opportunity to suggest that that should be done.

Mr. Farnum: I quite agree with what the hon. Member, Mr. Carter, has said about providing some more money for the training of apprentices in agriculture. I think, however, that the whole matter should be deferred, because I believe that the intention is to have a new Agricultural Station established in this Colony, with a proper system of apprenticeship and training. At present the agricultural apprentices

system at the Botanic Gardens is, more or less, a waste of money, because these lads are kept there for a certain period—two years, I think—and at the end of that period they are just sent away. They learn little or nothing and are just thrown out on the road, so it is a waste of the taxpayers' money. Were it not for the fact that a station would be established, I would have said that we should strike out the vote right away. I do not understand the item really because it says "Training of Apprentices in Agriculture"—\$3,000—yet the corresponding note (13) on the opposite page speaks of provision for (a) Grants in aid to Agricultural Associations, Exhibitions and Competitions; and several other matters.

Sir Frank McDavid: The note (13) relating to page 5 is incorrect. It should be numbered 12 instead, because it relates to item 12 under this head.

Mr. Farnum: I would suggest that the hon. Member, Mr. Carter, should not pursue this matter any further, because of the fact that a proper station will be established for the training of these lads. It is also probable that a proper system of training will be introduced. At present, I think that the majority of the lads undergoing training are City lads, and we all know that many of them are only trying to do something honest for the short time they are there. The training should be given to the sons of farmers, particularly, who would be able to use it on their parents' farms. I think the whole thing should be thrown into the melting pot, and some better system established. The best thing I think, would be to establish a Farm School along proper lines.

Sir Frank McDavid: I think I can be of some help in this matter. I took part in a very lengthy debate in the Legislative Council when the question of the training of agricultural ap-

prentices was being discussed. May I say that I agree with Mr. Carter. What is very necessary in British Guiana is improvement in the training of these lads, and an extension of it by what agricultural people call an Extension Service. What is required is a larger number of Agricultural Instructors for the entire Colony, and in order to do that, one must have better machinery for their training.

The question which came up for consideration was the participation by British Guiana in the Farm School which has been established already at Centeno in Trinidad. We recognised, not only in British Guiana but throughout the Caribbean area—and the Colonial Office and other territories have agreed—that the setting up of this Farm School is with the definite intention of providing a training ground for this type of agricultural man—not an agricultural officer with a mere academic mind, but a man who would be able to go out into the field and teach the farmers.

We thought it desirable that British Guiana should participate in that scheme but the majority view I expressed at the time was against participation based on a desire to have a Farm School in British Guiana. A Farm School is a most expensive undertaking, and it is no good having a Farm School unless it is a good one. It must be staffed by experts, properly sited and properly managed. We did not see our way at the time to establish a Farm School in British Guiana, and at that time Government was, as I have said, trying very hard to secure acceptance by the Legislative Council of the idea to participate in the School at Centeno. Nevertheless, we have got an item in the Development Budget for training with respect to agriculture and, to my knowledge, six young men are being selected right now to go to that Farm School in Trinidad for such train-

ing. I may say that we have been permitted to send our men there with the hope that we would, later on, agree to participate in the scheme itself.

I do agree that the service we have now and which is being given under this head—training of Agricultural Apprentices—is not satisfactory. That is to say, it is not meeting the full requirements of this Colony. It is true to say that the apprentices serving two years do not get a full training as Agricultural Instructors, and that they are not absorbed in the Department. They drift away and the training is lost. This question of training Agricultural Instructors must come up in the very near future, because we must get on with it and bring about agricultural improvement in British Guiana. As the hon. Member, Mr. Farnum, has said, there would be a Central Agricultural Station and, undoubtedly, with better training the apprentices would do better work. For the moment, however, I think that we should leave the item and hope that we would improve our services.

Mr. Carter: In this country we have to look very much to the land, and we know that there can be very little more expansion in sugar. We know also that the bauxite industry has reached its peak in production, in so far as the world market is concerned. We know that rice has given India its development; what are we going to do with all the thousands of square miles of land which we have available for rice cultivation? I would like to see boys with a high school education trained in agriculture and made to serve their country under contract, after they have had their training.

I want to see agricultural lands given to farmers. We have to import cabbage from the Netherlands when it can be grown here. We can get two or

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three other crops from the soil rather than wait nine months for a bunch of plantains. I should like to see these things done, and I think we should have a very big voice in these matters if we are going to assist farmers. When we are going to allocate lands to farmers we must know beforehand that the lands will yield one thousand bushels of corn, for instance, at such and such a time.

Mr. Lord: I would like to support the hon. the Member for Agriculture for the retention of this sum. Two or three years ago the British Association for the Advancement of Science and experts in Agriculture laid down that no one should be permitted to undertake farm work in England—which as you know, Sir, is a highly developed agricultural country—without having training at a recognised farm school. I think the training of these younger apprentices would be a nucleus for a larger scheme whereby the sons of farmers—as the hon. Member, Mr. Farnum said—could go forward. I regret to say that farming in the absence of agricultural amenities is of the most primitive order, and something should be done to improve it.

Mr. Farnum: In Finance Committee this question of the shortage of Vets was discussed, and the late Director of Agriculture, Mr. Croucher said he had a scheme whereby he would train what would be known as Veterinary dispensers. I would ask the hon. the Member for Agriculture to keep the matter before him and do something about it, as it would mean a lot to the cattle industry.

Mr. Smellie: I was very pleased indeed to hear from the hon. the Member for Agriculture that a scheme existed to send specially selected people from this country to Centeno to benefit by

the Farm Institute, or whatever it is called, there. It is very apparent to me—and I am not an agriculturist—that what the farmers want is instruction in agriculture—practical instruction. I remember so well the debate in the previous Legislative Council, which followed, I think, on the visit of a Mr. Hotchkiss who came to explain all about this farm school at Centeno, and I shall look back with pleasure on the fact that I voted for, and not against British Guiana participating in the scheme.

Mr. Ramphal: I would like the Financial Secretary to reply to this. In Finance Committee we had quite a long debate on the post of Director of Agriculture. That Committee was very anxious that a good man should be selected to fill it, and we heard that every effort was being made to get a suitably qualified person. I wonder if Government has been successful in getting that person.

The Financial Secretary: So far as this matter is concerned, all I can say at the moment is that a telegram was sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and mention was made of the Finance Committee's emphasis that a first-rate man was wanted who could take charge of the Agriculture Department and would be able to make an important contribution to the agricultural development of this country. So far as I know, no reply has been received, but I do know that every effort is being made to get a suitable officer.

Mr. Jailal: Touching the matter of meat control, I wish to draw attention to item 27 (e) on page 6 of the Estimates—"Controller of Livestock and Meat." I am not quite sure I can move the reduction of the figure as I would not be able to give my reduction figure now, but I do feel that upon my recommenda-

tion the quota system should be abolished. The amount of \$54,374 is quite a sum of money. I should like to be told how I should proceed.

Mr. Speaker: You will move that the item be reduced by a certain amount, and that will be in order.

Mr. Jailal: It is almost impossible for me to quote the amount in detail that I wish the item to be reduced by. If I am allowed to put it this way, "I beg to move that a sum of money equivalent to what it entails to run the quota system be abolished."

Mr. Speaker: That will be out of order. Are you proposing to get your information yourself or to ask the department concerned?

Mr. Jailal: I would prefer the Department to give it to me.

The Financial Secretary: I think what the hon. Member wants to do is to ask for the deletion of the entire vote for maintaining the quota system. But the quota system is an important part of livestock control, and, as I said in my reply to the debate on the budget this question of livestock control is being gone into. I have said I had already met representatives of the industry and we are looking for a formula for not only getting rid of livestock control but for putting the industry in a position of greater self-sufficiency. Merely de-controlling livestock is not really enough: the industry should be expanded to meet the recurrent shortages. If the hon. Member will be assured, it is a matter which I am going into — one of the things I have been thinking about for the past year.

Mr. Jailal: I am sorry I was not here yesterday, and I am happy to hear what the Financial Secretary has said.

I accept his assurance and I hope something would be done sooner or later.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Member, Mr. Carter does not desire formally to move his recommendation, I will put the question that the item be carried at the amended figure.

Mr. Rahaman: No provision has been made for cattle on the Corentyne. In years gone by we have had any amount of cattle for export to Trinidad and Surinam, but today we have not got enough even for the local market. Some help was expected from the Block III scheme on the Corentyne, but the scheme has been completed and nothing has been heard from Government. We have got the pump at Manarabisi supplying water for that area and that area will be for cattle. Some time back the Drainage and Irrigation Board wrote Government asking what it was going to do with that area — whether it will be used for cattle or not, and up to now nothing has been heard. We have got children on the Corentyne who have never seen a pint of milk, although milk is such an essential diet for growing children. Calcium is lacking both in mothers and in children, and that is due to the scarcity of milk in the area.

The Attorney-General: I think the Corentyne is one of the healthiest districts.

Mr. Rahaman: Hundreds of cattle get drowned at Plantation Port Mourant in time of floods. So far as assisting with shelter is concerned the sugar estate authorities have been very kind. Considerable damage has been done to the dam and the Local Authorities have complained bitterly because no provision had been made for cattle. Proprietors cannot meet their rates and summations, and it is on account of

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damage to trenches. I am suggesting that something should be done to remove cattle to suitable areas.

Mr. Luckhoo: I am afraid my hon. friend will find himself in a vortex because some people who were cattle owners have now gone in for rice cultivation for the simple reason that the latter gives quicker returns. They must decide whether they want certain areas for rice or cattle. Land is not something you pour out of a hat and say, "Here is land: you can have your cattle". Dr. Fraser is now working on an experiment which may be of great assistance to people on the Corentyne. He is endeavouring to grow grass in areas where "crab grass" formerly grew. I do not know how successful it is so far. [A member: "Bizzi-Bizzi" grass]. Yes, "bizzi-bizzi". That may be one solution if the grass can be grown on those lands. But the real solution lies in the hands of the people themselves, whether they will grow rice or raise cattle. I know that for the past two years at Rose Hall there has been continuous warfare over land which the estate has given to cattle owners.

Parties have come to one labour organisation with which I was connected asking for land for the purposes of cattle rearing, and others for the same land for rice cultivation. It is not a question for Government solution. I think the people should decide.

Mr. Rahaman: To a point of correction. The hon. Member, Dr. Fraser who is an expert can tell you that when you have thousands of head of cattle you have to grow grass to feed them. It is impossible to feed milch cows on the grass in certain areas. We need lands in the savannahs at the fourth and fifth depths. Then we can get better cattle-rearing.

Mr. Bobb: It might be well if the hon. Member would revise his facts concerning nutrition and payment of taxes in the Corentyne area. My information is that a survey was carried out by Dr. Subryan and it was found that both children and mothers had a very high rate of calcium. So far as road communication is concerned I think the whole Colony is looking up to the Corentyne.

Mr. Rahaman: On this point of the findings, I think is on account of the pure oxygen they inhale.

Dr. Fraser: The people must make up their minds whether they are going to plant rice or keep cattle, for they cannot have both at the same time.

Mr. Raatgever: I would like to support the hon. Member Mr. Rahaman in his request for more lands for cattle rearing. I do not agree with Dr. Fraser that the people must decide for themselves. For land provided for rice planting, heavy rates have to be paid for drainage and irrigation. For instance on the Corentyne drainage and irrigation rates four years ago were \$3.00 an acre. Last year they were increased to \$4.00. This year they are \$6.31. It is a fact that land is being used too extensively for rice planting.

I wish to sound a note of warning: in my opinion the price of rice in the next few years will drop and the demand will be curtailed because Jamaica and Trinidad are trying to make themselves self-sufficient in that respect; India and the Near East are trying to have more rice under cultivation by 1957, while the children born during 1940 to 1946 have been accustomed to using other grain which the Americans have been pouring into India. Although the population of the world is increasing the production of rice is increasing also. Land must be provided for all crops and for cattle-rearing.

The Financial Secretary : Speaking about the anxieties for more land for the purpose of cattle rearing, these are recognised and provision has been made in the Development Budget both in regard to the coastlands and the interior. There is also provision for improvement in cattle rearing in the Rupununi. It is true that returns are quicker in the rice industry, and I think the question of whether to engage in rice or cattle is one of economics and is to be decided by the people themselves.

Sir Frank McDavid: I must confess I cannot follow the remarks of the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever—some of his remarks. When we are going to develop new areas, we must do it in an orderly way: in a precise way. We should not allow the lands to be distributed to people without setting down the precise methods by which they ought to enjoy occupation. I entirely agree that you cannot have both—you cannot have vast expansion in your rice industry and, at the same time, continue the cattle industry on the lines we are accustomed to in British Guiana—in a sort of long range form. We will have to adopt more modern methods. The land settlement which we will have to introduce must follow some definite plan. I am very glad to say that I have read in Mr. Brown's report which has not yet been laid on the table, an illustration of the type of settlement which this country must follow. Mr. Brown's report—I think Members would be interested to read his recommendations—deals with the separation of the land for rice crops, segregation crops and so on. All of that must be nicely worked out. We cannot go about land in the way the hon. Member suggests.

Head passed at \$1,020,289.

ANALYST.

The Financial Secretary: I move that this head be carried out at \$25,673 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

AUDIT DEPARTMENT

The Financial Secretary: There is another Bill which must be passed in connection with this Department. We will therefore provide the amount in the Appropriation Bill which relates only to this Bill. I move that the head be numbered V. and carried out at \$75,043 as recommended by the Finance Committee. At the conclusion of the Appropriation Bill, I will move the Bill relating to the Audit Department.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Ramphal: I wish to move the reduction of this head by £200—\$960. I have heard that there will be a revision of salaries at an early date, and it is a matter of great regret to me that in my position with respect to the Civil Service itself, I should have to rise and move this reduction. I say it is a matter of considerable regret. I have made a pledge with those particularly concerned not to press this matter but, as a matter of principle, I am in duty bound to move this deletion. There are about five financial members who may be directly concerned with this question. We have all been told that this is being done in order that the relationship between the Director of Audit and the Senior Auditor should be properly maintained, but there are other members of the Civil Service who are equally concerned. They are the Commissioner of Income Tax and the Comptroller of Customs. I feel, Sir, that this matter of the revision of the Auditor's salary—

Sir Frank McDavid: May I rise to a point of enquiry? The hon. Member is moving a reduction of the head in order to effect some change in the printed Estimates, but he has not explained what that change is. He is going to speak about two items which are governed by law. I would just ask him what is the point in moving the reduction as he has done?

Mr. Ramphal: I do not want to provide anything of an embarrassing nature. It is because I am taking objection to the items as they appear on page 8 of the Estimates, that I have moved its reduction by the sum of £200—\$960. The Ordinance does not provide these sums, but I would not resent this question. If the hon. Member for Agriculture, Mines and Forests wants to strike the items out I would not disagree with him.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think I quite follow the hon. Member (Mr. Ramphal). On page 8 the first two items are: Director of Audit—\$6,720; and Senior Auditor—\$5,280. These are provided by law.

Mr. Ramphal: Not at these sums; a provision is going to be made.

Mr. Speaker: When the Bill is under consideration the hon. Member can move an amendment for the reduction of these items, but not now.

Mr. Ramphal: Very well, Sir. My only point was that the Ordinance does not provide these figures which are recorded in the Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: They are being carried out, I take it, until the Bill is passed. I think the hon. Member had better wait.

Mr. Ramphal: Very well, Sir; I was not going to raise it that way. I was going to raise the question of a reduction.

Items passed.

CENTRAL HOUSING AND PLANNING AUTHORITY

The Financial Secretary: I move that this head be numbered VI. and carried out at \$78,580 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT—CHIEF SECRETARY'S OFFICE

The Financial Secretary: I move that this head be numbered VII. and carried out at \$39,761 as amended.

Question put, and agreed to.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT—DEPARTMENTAL SECRETARIES

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be carried out at \$140,953 as amended.

Question put, and agreed to.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT— ESTABLISHMENT DEPARTMENT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered VIIB. and carried out at \$57,738.

Question put, and agreed to.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT—PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered VIIC. and carried out at \$22,730, as

recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT—PUBLIC INFORMATION BUREAU

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered VIID. and carried out at \$132,889, as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

CIVIL AVIATION

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered VIII. and carried out at \$84,572, as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered IX. and carried out at \$69,207 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Is this the title of the Department—Department of Co-operative Movement ?

The Financial Secretary: Yes, Sir, The Department's functions cover the entire country and that is probably why the word "Movement" has been used.

The Chief Secretary: The Commissioner is called the Commissioner for Co-operative Development.

Mr. Speaker: I think we should delete the word "Movement" and call it

the "Department for Co-operative Development". The head can be carried out at the same total.

Question put and agreed to.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered X and carried out at \$407,867 as recommended by the Finance Committee. I should also like to mention at this juncture that the Finance Committee had originally recommended a total of \$413,607 under this head, but since then recommendations have been made for the appointment of certain Committees to deal with this matter and efforts are being made to have these Committees appointed.

Mr. Ramphal: I did not get the terms of reference of the Committee appointed. May I ask the Financial Secretary what they are ?

The Financial Secretary: Two Committees have been recommended; one to go into the anomalies of the Customs tariffs which are in operation, and the other to go into the expenditure of the Department.

Mr. Ramphal: Thank you, very much. I had risen to move the reduction of the vote by \$1 in order to take the opportunity of saying that there is in this particular Department at the moment a great sense of frustration, since this Department is indeed a closed Department. That means that the Officers are not transferable once they have gone into it. I think that has been done to excess, and the position this year is very much worse than ever before. I wish to urge the speedy appointment of this Committee. I know that it is not the in-

[Mr. Ramphal]

tention of the Committee to find places for more Officers; rather, there was an undertone during the discussion we had in Finance Committee, that there should be a reduction. I know that my friend on my left is very anxious that Government should save some money there, but I am sure that when it comes to actual inquiry he would find that the Department is terribly understaffed, particularly after consideration has been given to the figures asked for by the Financial Secretary. Officers of this Department are suffering from very much frustration, but I would not go into that now. I would only ask the Financial Secretary to do his best to see that these Committees be appointed as quickly as possible.

Item passed.

EDUCATION—EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XI. and carried out at \$3,443,643 as amended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Bobb: I should like to ask the Financial Secretary one question with regard to the item Refresher Course for Teachers, as shown on page 22. I asked the Director of Education whether this item would be left and he was neutral. The opinion has been expressed that the item should be retained, but from what the Director of Education has said there is no certainty that the vote would be replaced for 1954.

The Financial Secretary: I understood the Director of Education to say that there was no need for the holding of refresher courses this year. Such

courses were held every year for the last 10 years, and he had made recommendation for a greater number of students to be sent into the Training Centre for short courses and he is awaiting results. If, however, the Director decides that the refresher courses should be resumed and he comes back and asks for the vote, I shall have no hesitation in recommending it.

Mr. Ramphal: I would like to hear something about the teaching of Hindi.

The Financial Secretary: That matter has been reported on by a Committee, but Government has not yet made a decision on it.

Mr. Tello: I should like to make a recommendation as regards the teaching of Hindi. I am just from the Corentyne Coast where I spoke on no fewer than three sugar estates, and there is the greatest disregard there for the academic nature of education which would be of more use to the people than Hindi. Personally, I do not know anything about Hindi—except for a few words here and there—but I know that the Financial Secretary was asked to report the recommendations in question to the Finance Committee, and I was wondering whether he could not submit that report to this Council and whether we could not consider changing or diverting the vote to provide for education of a more academic nature rather than for the mere teaching of Hindi. I make this suggestion more or less in the interest of the Pundits who desire this type of education but, on the other hand, it is not considered to be in the best interest of the community.

The Chief Secretary: The question of the teaching of Hindi is a matter of high policy which requires the greatest consideration. I do not think the hon. Member should expect Government

to arrive at a decision immediately, since the matter is one which has to be very carefully considered by the Director of Education and also by the Governor in Council, before any change in policy can be adopted.

Mr. Gajraj: I do agree with the hon. the Chief Secretary that we cannot make a snap decision this afternoon on this subject. It is a very important matter, and one for which the community concerned had to make every effort to get the small amount of assistance it is now getting. I cannot support the views of the hon. Member, Mr. Tello, because I think, personally, that the Pundits do a lot of this form of education. I feel also that those who made the representations to Mr. Tello were Pundits whose cases were not being considered at the moment as being worthy of obtaining a share of the grant in question. That brings me to the point that the amount allocated by Government is very inadequate to permit everyone to get a share in it. If careful consideration is given to the matter it would be realized that those who have the interest of the community concerned at heart were responsible for the vote being put on the estimates, and that their aims are not being fully met.

Mr. Rahaman: I take it that the question of teaching East Indian languages in school does not mean the teaching of Hindi only. I am urging that an amount be allocated for the teaching of Urdu also. I am not approaching this matter on the ground of sentiment only.

The Attorney-General: One might say that consideration should be given to the teaching of Chinese also.

Mr. Gajraj: I would have no objection.

Mr. Carter: What I would like to say is that our Primary School curri-

culum should be extended to include the teaching of the languages of our neighbouring countries. I feel that our people should learn to speak Dutch, French and Spanish, as they are not subjects of the private schools either.

Mr. Speaker: That would be secondary education.

Mr. Ramphal: I am very glad that you have mentioned secondary education, Sir. It touches me very closely because of my past connection with it. I do not intend to move any reduction, but, with your permission, I would like to use this opportunity to say that very valuable work is being done by unaided secondary schools, not only in Georgetown, but also in the country districts. Some are large schools while others are independent schools, and they are taking on a very heavy burden which would have fallen on the shoulders of Government if these schools were not in operation. And yet Government has not done anything for these people. As a matter of fact, I understand that an attempt was going to be made to put a check on them, but that is with respect to the past, and you have made a ruling, Sir, to avoid any reference at all.

Mr. Speaker: I was only referring to the recent unhappy events.

Mr. Ramphal: That is one of the unhappy events of the past. I want to draw to the attention of Government the labour of love which the Secondary School people are carrying out. True enough, we are told that we are providing too much academic education. But there is no other education to provide.

We should begin to think about, for example, the Corentyne High School which is being run by the Church authorities with money from the United States of America, down on the Coren-

[Mr. Ramphal]

tyne where there is a heavy concentration of population. The people built the school with their own money, and they have not come to Government to ask for anything. They have repeatedly asked Government to make up the road leading from the public road to the school, and yet, for the past two years, it has not been done. Even in that little way Government is not showing appreciation of what they are doing. I feel these people are doing a good job and they need every kind of assistance.

Mr. Speaker: My recollection is that negotiations broke down.

The Attorney-General: I think about three years ago a Bill was introduced in the Council, and on the morning of the day when the second reading was to be taken a certain number of headmasters of secondary schools came to me and asked that it be postponed because they wished to make representations in regard to certain clauses in the Bill. This matter is not as easy as the last honourable speaker would have us believe. It is perfectly true that certain denominations have money to erect schools here, as a result of their withdrawal from other parts of the world. It is not possible for this Council now to go into a matter that is very controversial and requires a considerable amount of thought before a conclusion is reached. While it is stated that they make provision for a certain number of children who would otherwise be unprovided for educationally, yet at the same time consideration has to be given to the amount of service many of them give, because some of them are not really proper schools.

Mr. Ramphal: I think the Bill referred to was one providing for restrictions and not provision for assist-

ance to the schools at all, so it was necessary for them to do that.

The Attorney-General: Well, Sir, this matter has been going on for some considerable time as you yourself, Mr. Speaker, will recollect.

Mr. Speaker: One form of assistance would be provision of spaces for scholarships. I agree with you that the schools are fulfilling a want, but if you ask the Education Department, they will tell you that it is only a limited want. They are looked upon as cramming schools, with the possible idea of gaining certificates.

Mr. Rahaman: I would like to support Mr. Ramphal in regard to the road leading to the Corentyne High School.

Mr. Ramphal: I do not know if the Public Works is the proper Head to raise the matter under.

Item passed at \$3,443,643.

Miss Collins: I take this opportunity to ask for an increase of the grant to the Fredericks School of Home Economics.

The Chief Secretary: Perhaps I can assure the hon. Member that this question of increasing the grant to this particular school is under consideration at the moment. The Director of Education is making enquires into the financial position of the school and the merits of the case, and as soon as we have received a report the matter will be considered by the Governor in Council and possibly, a recommendation will be made in Finance Committee. I do not think at this particular moment this Council can recommend an increase; but, as I said, the matter is being looked into. I saw the papers concerning it the other day.

EDUCATION—THE BISHOPS'
HIGH SCHOOL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XIX and passed at \$79,211 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$79,211 as recommended by Finance Committee.

ESSEQUEBO BOYS' SCHOOL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XX and passed at \$81,222 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$81,222 as recommended by Finance Committee.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT—FINANCE
SECRETARIAT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XXI and passed at \$25,837 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$25,837 as recommended by Finance Committee.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT—CURRENCY
OFFICE

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XXII and passed at \$15,721 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$15,721 as recommended by Finance Committee.

FIRE PROTECTION

Mr. Speaker: The question raised by the Hon. Member about fire protection for Bartica is a very difficult one. I do not know if you can get information from the Fire Brigade Department.

Mr. Correia: New Amsterdam is like Bartica. Bartica is not like other villages where there are no commercial centres. As a matter of fact I consider Bartica a City (*laughter*) on account of its proximity, its commercial centre and government buildings.

Mr. Speaker: I consider you should ask Government to have a re-appraisal made, and the way to do so is way of a petition. That is the way to do it.

The item was passed at \$332,065 as recommended by Finance Committee.

FOREST DEPARTMENT

Mr. Speaker: (*addressing Mr. Correia*): Do you have re-afforestation going on at the Penal Settlement? It was started some years ago.

Mr. Correia: I think the time has come when the re-afforestation programme should be extended very much more because trees are being felled by small and large timber producers. I think the Forest Department staff should be strengthened to do the work.

The Financial Secretary: It is a question of salaries. The salaries are not as attractive as they might be.

Sir Frank McDavid: I think it is a question of maintaining a staff.

Mr. Correia: The hon. Members are thinking of Forest Rangers.

Sir Frank McDavid: Even the junior technical staff. I heard yesterday we are in great danger of losing some of the men we have.

Mr. Lord: The full responsibility for the forest is going to be handed over to the Forest Department, and there is very great extension of the department envisaged in the development programme if only we can get men at the salaries we are prepared to offer.

As the hon. the Member for Agriculture hinted men in the lower grades are resigning for lack of satisfactory pay. The Forest Department is considering setting up a training school for these men as well as for members of the higher grade on the staff.

Mr. Speaker: Forest Rangers are not now under the jurisdiction of the Department of Lands and Mines are they?

Mr. Lord: Not now, Sir.

Mr. Carter: I am very sorry to hear this, because I was trying to obtain an increase in that department. I would like to see this Government set up a timber pool or Forest Products Department, somewhat similar to the department of Government which receives ground provisions and other products from farmers. The timber men on the Demerara River are on the point of turning to some other form of livelihood because they cannot get decent prices for their produce. There are racketeers in Georgetown who, as soon as a raft of timber arrives seek to sell it to the millers, and this reduces further the

amount the timber men would get. I would suggest that Government find a spot as near as possible to Georgetown to take in the products from the forests for marketing. I would like to see Government encouraging people to run timber grants and saw mills, though it would be a difficult proposition.

The Financial Secretary: So far as I know such a scheme is visualised in the development programme. When I held the portfolio of Agriculture the matter was mentioned.

Item passed at \$189,511.

LAW OFFICERS.

The Financial Secretary: This is one of the heads I would ask to be re-committed to insert a new item, "Assistant to the Attorney-General", and that the amount be carried at \$5,280 on the fixed establishment and provision of \$240.00 made under cost of living allowance. If this is included in the Appropriations Bill, the total of the head will be increased to \$43,523. The item was discussed in Finance Committee and it was decided to await the decision of the Attorney-General as to whether he wanted a Crown Counsel for the post or not. I beg to move that the head be re-committed and passed as recommended.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$43,523 as recommended in the Financial Secretary's motion.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Farnum: I wonder if the Financial Secretary could see the way to advance money to villages pending collection of rates. Estimates of the villages are hardly ever passed before the

third or fourth month of the year and it is to their advantage to carry out certain work in the early part of the year. If they have not got the money the Board on the other hand had not got a vote by which they can advance such sums of money. It was done in the olden days and I do not know why the vote was taken away.

The Financial Secretary: It would be necessary for me to put it in the Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: It will have to come from the Local Government Board.

The Financial Secretary: The Commissioner of Local Government can see me and the matter will be considered. It would not be necessary to do so in order to have the item on the Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: It would be only a short-term loan.

Mr. Farnum: That is if these Committees have been told, on their own allocations, to advance them any money.

Mr. Jailal: Under this head I wish to recommend that the Vergenoegen mill should provide housing accommodation for the mill manager. Very difficult circumstances are existing in this respect, and the mill manager has been forced for some time now to take whatever housing accommodation he can get. Certain representations were made last year, I believe, and the manager was told that he could get a sum of money to borrow in order to build a house, but I am submitting that he might soon be removed from one mill to another, if Government's policy holds good to move these officers from one place to another. I think it would be very unsatisfactory if this officer has to build himself a house for about \$5,000 and then find himself be-

ing removed from the place shortly afterwards. I suggest, therefore, that Government should see that the key personnel in such a scheme, such as the factory managers, be provided with housing. There is no available house for the manager at Vergenoegen and I, personally, know that he is being threatened at the moment with being thrown out of his home. This would be all the more undesirable, when the reaping season is on and the mill is in operation. I understand that sometimes the mill operates until far into the evening. I am, therefore, recommending very strongly that housing be provided for this officer.

The Chief Secretary: I know about this particular case—housing for the manager of the mill at Vergenoegen. The position is that funds are being provided for the development projects and there is an item for providing housing for Government officers throughout the country. I have suggested to the Commissioner of Local Government who has written to me on the subject, that he should make a special plea for priority so that funds could be made available for the purpose.

Mr. Carter: Under "Other Charges" on page 48, I notice that item 2 provides for (a) Travelling Allowances (\$29,550); (b) Subsistence Allowances (\$3,650); and (c) Transport of Goods (\$1,200). I think this is due to the Ministerial system, and I would like to ask, now that the Ministry of Local Government is being held by the Chief Secretary, whether the same amount of travelling is necessary as when the Ministry was being held by an Elected Member.

The Financial Secretary: I can answer that. Of course, the Estimates were really prepared when the Minis-

[The Financial Secretary]

ters were in office. As regards the additional provision referred to, I did not reduce it because District Commissioners might have to do a considerable amount of travelling in connection with the Development Programme. If the hon. Member accepts my explanation the item will be left as it is. I will, however, delete the words "under the Ministerial system" from the explanation.

Mr. Jaisal: I wish to draw the Council's attention to my representations in Finance Committee with respect to the rents which tenants are charged under the Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere land settlement. Government has followed the policy laid down, but I have asked the Commissioner of Local Government to stay his hands and not to increase the rents as early as was planned because, at the moment, the majority of the farmers have not yet got their full allocation of land and their economy is not what it should be. I feel that the collection of these land rents should be held up until such time as each tenant gets his full holding. Further, the Commissioner of Local Government has pointed out that the yields from Cane Grove are among the poorest in the Colony. In some cases the farmer gets only 15 bags of padi per acre, and in other cases the yield is even less. I have been connected with rice for a long time, and I know that that information is correct.

I feel that these people should not be — I would not use the word "penalized" I want to use the word "forced"— to pay increased rents, as agreed upon in the terms of the land settlement scheme. Apart from the fact that each settler has not yet got his full allotment of land, provision is to be made

for the rearing of cattle, and other things also have to be done in order to make the tenants more or less self-sufficient. I think the land rents should be allowed to remain as they were in the previous year, and that when the full scheme is in operation Government could follow the policy decided on originally.

Mr. Speaker: Are those the only observations Members would like to make?

Mr. Tello: I do not know if it would serve any useful purpose if I associate myself with the remarks of those Members who have spoken on this question of increased rents at the Cane Grove land settlement. I visited the place quite recently and the Land Officer there admitted to me that there were yields as low as one bag of padi per acre. There were also complaints by settlers about hardships entailed through an increase of agistment fees, following the introduction of an improved fodder scheme for the animals. I know that much of what the last speaker has said is true.

I had a discussion with the Commissioner of Local Government recently, and he assured me that the increased rents now being charged were for the economic benefit of the scheme as a whole. It is a normal experience in land settlement schemes the world over, that the energetic settler makes a better success than the others. In spite of that, I want to think that there is a little undue haste in this matter of increased rents, especially when the authorities cannot defend themselves as regards the full allocation of land to the settlers. If it is true that the allocations are not complete, then it would be somewhat unfair to make the settlers pay increased rents calculated on the economy of their entire holdings.

The Attorney-General: If it is true that there are yields as low as one bag of padi per acre at Cane Grove, then it would be better to give over the area in question for conversion as a cattle area. The hon. Member, Mr. Carter, has pointed out that the production of bauxite has reached saturation point and, therefore,—

Mr. Speaker: He said that there was peak production.

The Attorney-General: There is peak production in bauxite, peak production in sugar and peak production in rice. It seems to me that the only thing which is really increasing is the population of the colony. I think that when we put these facts together, we will realise that avenues must be found for the increasing population. I am somewhat fortified in that view as a result of the comments made.

Mr. Raatgever: But what of expansion here? I have never said that we have reached the peak in rice production. I said that we should reduce our cost of production, and that I will support any effort that we make for the improvement of the industry.

Mr. Speaker: I wish the hon. member, Mr. Tello, would tell us what is the reason for this low yield of one bag per acre.

Mr. Tello: I did not say that is a general rule. I was given the assurance at a meeting I attended, that there are yields as low as one bag per acre.

Mr. Jailal: What Mr. Tello has said is quite true, but such a low yield is very unusual. The conditions at Cane Grove, however, are likely to produce such yields from time to time. My personal opinion is that the people at Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere would have done much better if those

two estates had been devoted to the production of cattle instead of rice.

Mr. Speaker: I think someone who lived there suggested that if the estates were bought by Government they should be used for the rearing of cattle alone. I think he is still there.

Item passed as printed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT—SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATION

The Financial Secretary : I beg to move that this head be numbered XXIII A and carried out at \$108,763 as amended.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Rahaman: I am not satisfied with the work of this Department, particularly in the Corentyne district. In Finance Committee I asked whether there were any Officers of the Department on the Corentyne Coast and I was told "no." I can only wonder why that is so when there is such a large vote under this head and there are not enough rice lands for the people of the Corentyne. These Officers should go out and meet the people, and not only visit schools and places like that. We want them to go to the people and show them how to raise their standard of living, and so on. They should get in touch with parents particularly, since much useful work could be done that way. I am asking that attention be given to the question of providing an Officer for the Corentyne district.

Mr. Speaker: What has Mr. Bayley (Social Welfare Officer) said about the matter; what was his explanation?

The Financial Secretary : I think Mr. Bayley explained that the Social

[The Financial Secretary]

Welfare work had not yet been extended as far as the Corentyne district. It has gone as far as New Amsterdam.

Mr. Gajraj : I think the view was expressed in Finance Committee that the work should be extended as much as possible.

The Chief Secretary : I understand that the Social Welfare Officer is working out proposals for extending the work of the Department. As soon as these proposals have been worked out they would come before Government, and if they are adopted, we would have to go to the Finance Committee for funds for the purpose.

Item passed as amended.

MAGISTRATES

The Financial Secretary : I beg to move that this item be carried out at \$258,400 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Mr. Speaker : I am glad that this head has been mentioned, because as there is no member of the legal profession present to do so, I would like to say something, Mr. Attorney-General, as regards the position of some Magistrates in relation to licensing matters. I think it must be within your knowledge that whenever there is a licensing meeting it requires the attendance of three Magistrates, even in Georgetown, to deal with and give effect to applications for grants of retail liquor licences,—renewals, transfers and so on. Very often the Magistrate on the East Coast, the Magistrate on the West Coast and a Georgetown Magistrate are summoned to attend such meetings and can only do so with some difficulty in the discharge of his duties in his own district. In order to attend sit-

tings in Georgetown, for example, he has to postpone the hearing of cases at or before mid-day. When the system was initiated some years ago, only one Magistrate was in attendance at these meetings and he dealt with all applications, sometimes with the aid of some Justice of the Peace in the area. Now, the original procedure has been abolished and superseded by the present one. This is causing a lot of inconvenience to the public in at least two of the districts, and I should like to know what can be done to improve the situation.

The Attorney-General : I think that should be dealt with by way of legislation, Mr. Speaker. It comes within the Ordinance dealing with liquor licences, the terms of which are somewhat specific. I believe the matter was listed for consideration by a Committee which was to be appointed. So far as the work of the Magistrates is concerned, that question comes properly within the purview of the Chief Justice.

Mr. Speaker : We all know that the Magistrates lose about two hours work in order to attend one of these meetings. It is not a difficult matter to solve.

The Financial Secretary : I think I know something about this matter, since I have spent nights and nights reading these reports. We have asked that a Committee be appointed to go into the matter and I know that something is being done about it. If anything emerges from the Committee's report, Sir, I will come and discuss the matter with you.

Mr. Speaker : It only requires about 10 minutes consideration to adjust the matter, and if I were given

full authority I think I should be able to arrive at a satisfactory solution.

Mr. Rahaman: I asked in Finance Committee for an additional Magistrate for the Corentyne district and I hope the request will be granted. There is a great increase in both civil and criminal work in that district, with the result that one Magistrate cannot deal with it. I know of cases pending for as long as six months there, and that state of affairs is still existing.

The Financial Secretary: The request for an additional Magistrate for the Corentyne district was passed on to the appropriate Department, but it takes some time to deal with these matters.

Mr. Correia: I am supporting the remarks made by my hon. Friend, Mr. Rahaman, about the work of the Magistrates. There is an increase in Magisterial work not only in the Corentyne district, but also in Georgetown, on the Essequibo Coast and in other places. It is a Colony-wide situation, and it is holding up litigation for many months in some cases. I think the time has come when there should be an increase in the number of Magistrates.

Mr. Speaker: The law wants changing, and I can tell you in one respect what should be done. Under the present law the Criminal Assizes are held at certain fixed periods under the Supreme Court of Judicature Ordinance and it is incumbent on a Magistrate who conducts an indictable enquiry before him to refer the accused to the next ensuing session. He cannot refer the accused for trial at any other session, and the result is an accumulation of cases at the same session. The Magistrate has not got the power to adjudicate in the cases

to which I am referring and has to refer those persons charged with such offences to the Supreme Criminal Court. These Courts have now been sitting for the last three years almost without interruption, continuously, and something has got to be done in order to avoid accumulation and delay in other matters, i.e. civil matters that must also be tried in the Supreme Court sitting in its civil jurisdiction. You have either got to extend the jurisdiction of the Magistrates as regards criminal cases, or do something else to get over the difficulty. We have all spoken about it and I do not know what is holding the matter up. Criminal courts are being held almost every day, and we should not have civil cases held up by reason of the glut in Criminal matters. The Attorney-General will tell you that the question of judicial appointments might appear, *ex face*, to be a simple matter, but it is most difficult. A professional lawyer appointed to a Magistracy should be entrusted with the power to adjudicate in a greater number of offences than is at the moment possible.

MEDICAL

Mr. Correia: I would like to recommend and am asking the support of this Council for an additional dispenser in the mining area of the Mazaruni District. A dispenser has to travel around for 200 miles in that area and therefore has no time to look after all of the miners. The medical station is now at Kamakusa. A more central spot is Enachu and I would like to see the station transferred to Enachu. Even the police station at Kamakusa has been removed.

The Financial Secretary: I believe there is a recommendation to remove

[The Financial Secretary]
the medical headquarters to Enachu. I think I saw something about it in "D.P.W." Extraordinary. Perhaps when I come to that—

Mr. Cummings: I have seen some correspondence on the subject, and I think the hon. Member's recommendation is already receiving consideration, but I could look into it and let him know what is happening.

Mr. Ramphal: I think if the hon. the Member for Health and Housing should ask for an additional dispenser, this Council would be only too willing to support it. When a dispenser has to travel 211 miles it is absolutely impossible for him to pay much attention to patients.

The Financial Secretary: I hope this will not be like other matters where attention is given and the next year the same difficulties are complained of. The hon. Member did not raise the question in Finance Committee. If that had been done, I would have looked into it.

Mr. Farnum: I think there is some dissatisfaction with the Board of Examiners of Chemists and Druggists in that there are four members of the Board and two of them are officers of a certain firm. The public is very critical about it. They feel that the Government Pharmacist should be on that Board too.

Sir Frank McDavid: The most expeditious way to get action in these matters is to approach the proper department, and in these days, the Minister or Member concerned to press the case. Sometimes a suggestion is thrown out when we are going through the large volume of estimates. Take for example the suggestion of moving the medical station from Kamakusa to Enachu: however desirable it may be, referring to it here is not the quickest way to get

action. One should use the opportunity of speaking to the department or Member. I do not think we should be proceeding as fast as we may if we pursue minor suggestions in this way.

Mr. Raatgever: I do not agree that this is a minor matter. It may be for the people of Georgetown, but certainly not for those in the interior where you have no doctor or medical man for hundreds of miles. I do not like statements of that kind. Everything is aimed at the improvement of this Colony.

Sir Frank McDavid: I must interrupt. I do not think any item is not sufficiently important, but we are wasting time in Council by throwing out suggestions which require action. They require action, not publicity, and I do not think we are out for publicity in matters of this sort.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member, Mr. Correia did emphasise the necessity of it.

Item passed at \$860,098 as recommended by Finance Committee.

MEDICAL—HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XXVIII and passed at \$2,905,256 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$2,905,256 as recommended by Finance Committee.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Financial Secretary: I ask the indulgence of the committee to allow me to increase the provision, item 26, "Leave Passages, Public Officers," under the head "Miscellaneous," on

page 61 of the Estimates. Provision is made for \$85,000 and I am asking the committee to increase the item by \$40,000 thus amending it to \$125,000.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item amended to \$125,000.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the head be numbered XXXI and passed at \$1,031,548 instead of \$991,548.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed as amended.

MISCELLANEOUS (b) SUBVENTIONS ETC. OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XXXI and passed at \$730,894 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$730,894 as recommended by Finance Committee.

POLICE

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XXXIV and passed at \$2,546,303 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$2,546,303 as recommended by Finance Committee.

POST OFFICE

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XXXV and passed at \$1,053,620 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$1,053,620 as recommended by Finance Committee.

POST OFFICE — TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS' BRANCH

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XXXVI and passed at \$563,785 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$563,785 as recommended by Finance Committee.

PRISONS

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XXXVIII and passed at \$278,442 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed at \$278,442 as recommended by Finance Committee.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this head be numbered XL and passed at \$609,582.

Mr. Rahaman: I wish to raise the question of an additional Police Station for Port Mourant and No. 63 Village on the Corentyne. I was told to discuss the matter with the Director of Public Works.

Mr. Speaker: No. 63 is so near to Springlands where there is such a station.

Mr. Rahaman: People complain that they have seen their cattle over at

[Mr. Rahaman]

Nickerie. At the low tide a boat can go to the beach and cattle can be raided. I think with the growing population it is necessary to have a police station there. There is a big gap between Springlands and No. 61.

I want to refer also to the road running from the Corentyne public road to the Corentyne High School. That road is in such a state that children going to school have to take off their shoes and socks on account of the fact that it is on the waterside and they have to protect themselves. This road should be maintained by the Public Works Department. The secondary school which I have referred to is the only one there.

The Chief Secretary: Perhaps if the hon. Member puts his request in writing —

Mr Speaker: Yes, and they will see what can be done. You can write to the Chief Secretary's department, or you had better get the people in charge of the school to do it.

Mr. Rahaman: Very well, Sir.

Question put, and agreed to

Item passed at \$609,582.

**PUBLIC WORKS—DRAINAGE, IRRIGATION
AND SEA DEFENCES ANNUALLY
RECURRENT**

The Financial Secretary : I beg to move that this head be numbered XLIA and passed at \$413,330.

Mr. Jailal : I have made recommendations that certain public works should be given out to contractors, and my reason for doing so is because I believe that we would get the work done

much more economically, especially with respect to transporting materials. I have travelled regularly for the past 59 weeks in the East Demerara area, and I have noticed that on Sundays Public Works lorries were fetching timber and lumber around. The lorries are not supposed to work overtime, but the men work overtime and I suggest that this is one case where money is being wrongly spent. If the job is given to private contractors there would be no question of overtime whether the job is done on Sundays, Mondays or Wednesdays. More than that, the Public Works Department would not have to be repairing trucks. It was suggested that there should be two stations for trucks—one at Triumph and one at Hopetown.

In former days, when I was a youth, I remember roads were built by private contract at Wakenaam. I want to know whether the same conditions do not exist for bringing in private contractors, and if anyone tells me there is graft in this type of work, I would tell him that the Government has nothing to lose in case the work is given out on contract. If competitors came into the field and the P.W.D. estimates to build a bridge for \$1,000, a contractor would build it for \$900, and we would get a better bridge in quicker time.

The same thing is true of a number of other things, and I want to recommend strongly that wherever it is possible for jobs to be done by private contractors that should be done. I think that would ease the burden on the Department head concerned and would also give us an ample opportunity to supervise work done under these private contractors. I would like to mention also the position of the people with respect to drainage and irrigation on the Essequibo Coast. I have been told that there are several private estates

today that are in dire hardship because they have to pay drainage rates for lands which are not under cultivation. I think there is a reasonable amount of argument against the paying of the rates in those circumstances. The first depth of these estates is the *bona fide* property of the owners, and in order to get water from the Drainage Board they take in the second depth which is not planted at all, but they have to do so in order to use the Canals which bring in the water.

In many cases the proprietors cannot even plant the first depth, but they are forced to pay drainage rates for the second depth which is not productive at all. I do not think that is fair. It would have been fair if Government assisted the proprietors to bring the second depth into cultivation, thus enabling them to earn the drainage rates. Only recently one read in the newspapers of several of these estates being up for sale because of failure to pay these drainage rates. I think there should be a review of this whole matter so that these proprietors would not be harassed and compelled to sell their estates. If they get more revenue from the land they should be

compelled to pay the drainage rates, but they should not be compelled to do so merely because their names have been recorded as owners of the second depth. In other words, they should not be made to pay for lands which they are not occupying at all.

Mr. Rahaman : Before this item is passed, I would like to point out the the Finance Committee agreed to go into the question of the sea wall between Springlands and No. 79 on the Corentyne Coast. I want it to be quite clear that something should be voted in the estimates for this wall, because a good deal of erosion is taking place in the area and, sooner or later there would be no public road at all there.

Item passed as printed.

Mr. Raatgever: As we are going to meet on Monday next, I suggest that we adjourn now. We would not be able to conclude this afternoon.

Council resumed.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the Council to be adjourned until 2 p.m. on Monday next, February 22.