

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

FRIDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 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. F. D. Jakeway, O.B.E. (acting).

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, Lands and Mines).

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

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E. (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development).

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. T. Lee.

Mr. W. A. Phang.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

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

Mr. C. A. Carter.

Mr. E. F. Correia.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb.

Mr. H. Rahaman.

Miss Gertrude H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dey.

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

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

Mr. R. B. Jailal.

Mr. Sugrim Singh.

Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. E. V. Viapree (acting).

Absent:—

The Hon. G. H. Smellie—on leave.

Prayers were read by the Most Reverend the Archbishop of the West Indies, Dr. Alan John Knight, C.M.G.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 2nd November, 1954, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

SPEAKER CONGRATULATES RECIPIENTS OF HONOURS

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members of Council, I propose to vacate the chair for a short interval in order to join with others in meeting His Excellency the Governor when he arrives. I take this opportunity on behalf of the Council and myself of congratulating those members of the audience who are here to be recipients of Her Majesty's awards, and of wishing them every continued success in their fields of activity which have brought these honours on them.

On the last occasion when His Grace the Archbishop was here, and when he very kindly read our prayers—which I propose to follow in future—we congratulated him on the honour which had been conferred on him. I now wish to add a few words to those I uttered on the previous occasion. It was in this room and at that table that those of us who were privileged to be present heard from time to time his calm, careful analysis of the important events that were taking place in the Colony—his good advice, careful and well-informed criticism, all of which were appreciated for their value by those who heard them, and will remain a rare and lasting benefit to us all.

I am gratified—as I am sure you may be—to be able to be present this day—and I hope I am not making any invidious distinction—to witness the investiture which will enable us to take some consolation and joy in his being honoured in our presence.

I shall now ask His Grace, the Chief Secretary and the Chief Justice to leave with me, and those members of the audience who remain will, I think, find it convenient to be in their places when His Excellency enters the Chamber.

GOVERNOR PRESENTS AWARDS

The sitting was suspended for a short interval.

At 2.12 p.m. His Excellency the Governor, Sir Alfred Savage, K.C.M.G., entered the Chamber, accompanied by the Speaker, to make the following presentations:

The Most Reverend the Archbishop of the West Indies, Alan John Knight, C.M.G., LL.B., D.D.—the Insignia and Grant of Dignity appertaining to his appointment as a Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George.

Miss Mildred Thomasina Mansfield, M.B.E.—the Insignia appertaining to her appointment as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Mr. David James Gardiner Rose, M.B.E., Superintendent of Police—the Insignia appertaining to his appointment as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Mr. Joseph Griffith, Superintendent of Police—the Colonial Police Medal.

Mr. Merwin Leon Barrow, Sub-Inspector of Police—the Colonial Police Medal.

Mr. Alfred Eric Crawford—the Imperial Service Medal.

Mr. Joseph Elias D'Ornellas—the Imperial Service Medal.

Mr. James Josiah Cumberbatch—
Imperial Service Medal.

The Clerk: The Most Reverend
the Archbishop of the West Indies.

The Archbishop, accompanied by his sponsors, the Hon. Sir Frank McDavid, C.M.G., C.B.E., and Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E., proceeded to the dais.

The Chief Secretary then read the Grant of Dignity.

His Excellency: By Command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I have the honour to present to Your Grace the Insignia of a Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George.

The award has been made by Her Majesty in recognition of your devoted and unselfish service in the Gold Coast, in British Guiana and in the West Indies generally and covering a period of twenty-five years.

His Excellency placed the Insignia on the Archbishop and congratulated him on the award.

The Clerk: Miss Mildred T. Mansfield.

Miss Mansfield, accompanied by her sponsors Mr. Vincent Roth, O.B.E., and Mr. R. A. Dummett, M.B.E., proceeded to the dais.

His Excellency: By Command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Insignia of a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

This award has been conferred on you by Her Majesty for your devoted and unselfish public service to all sections of the community over a period of many years and in particular for your work for over 20 years in respect of the Children's Dorcas Club.

His Excellency pinned the Insignia on Miss Mansfield and congratulated her on the award.

The Clerk: Superintendent D. J. G. Rose.

Superintendent Rose, accompanied by his sponsors the Hon. F. D. Jakeway, O.B.E., and Colonel C. H. A. Ward O.B.E., proceeded to the dais.

His Excellency: By Command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I have the honour to present to you the Insignia of a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

This award has been conferred upon you by Her Majesty for your unselfish devotion to duty during a most difficult period.

His Excellency pinned the Insignia on Superintendent Rose and congratulated him on the award.

The Clerk: Superintendent J. Griffith.

Superintendent Griffith proceeded to the dais.

His Excellency: By Command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Colonial Police Medal for Meritorious Service.

[His Excellency]

This award has been conferred upon you in recognition of your outstanding service in the Police for over 34 years during which you have gained the confidence, respect and affection of all sections of the community.

His Excellency pinned the Medal on Superintendent Griffith and congratulated him on the award.

The Clerk: Sub-Inspector M. L. Barrow.

Sub-Inspector Barrow proceeded to the dais.

His Excellency: By Command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Colonial Police Medal for Meritorious Service.

Your service has been outstanding and your loyal and efficient support of your Senior Officers during a most difficult period was an example to all.

His Excellency pinned the Medal on Sub-Inspector Barrow and congratulated him on the award.

The Clerk: Mr. A. E. Crawford.

Mr. Crawford proceeded to the dais.

His Excellency: By Command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Imperial Service Medal.

This award has been conferred on you for devoted service in the Post Office, in which Department you rose to the highest post in the Unclassified Service through application to duty

zeal and loyalty. You have been an inspiration and example to your colleagues.

His Excellency pinned the Medal on Mr. Crawford and congratulated him on the award.

The Clerk: Mr. J. E. D'Ornellas.

Mr. D'Ornellas proceeded to the dais.

His Excellency: By Command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Imperial Service Medal.

This award has been conferred on you for most capable and efficient service over 45 years in the Post Office during which time you have set a noteworthy example of the duty of Government officers to develop good relations with the public, whose servants they are.

His Excellency pinned the Medal on Mr. D'Ornellas and congratulated him on the award.

The Clerk: Mr. J. J. Cumberbatch.

Mr. Cumberbatch proceeded to the dais.

His Excellency: By Command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Imperial Service Medal.

This award has been conferred on you in respect of your 34 years of meritorious service at the Essequibo Boys' School. You have been a model officer, equipped with patience and tact, and always highly respected by the boys as well as by the staff.

His Excellency pinned the Medal on Mr. Cumberbatch and congratulated him on the award.

His Excellency withdrew from the Chamber, accompanied by the Speaker.

At 2.30 p.m. Council resumed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, a Colonial Office photographer is in the Colony at the present moment and has expressed the wish to take photographs of Members of the Council in session and out of session. There is a tentative proposal that the Council should meet on the 26th of November if that date is convenient to Members. I presume that most Members know that our next meeting will be on the 26th inst.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Financial Secretary: It is proposed to have a meeting of Finance Committee on the 25th. I would suggest that the Council should meet on the 25th., and that Finance Committee should meet on the 26th. The reason is that unless the hon. Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development (Mr. Farnum) obtains approval by this Council of the two motions dealing with social security, Finance Committee will not be able to make the necessary financial provision.

Mr. Speaker: If it is convenient to hon. Members the next meeting of the Council will then be on Thursday, 25th inst. instead of on the 26th.

REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

The following documents were laid on the table:—

By the Chief Secretary:

Sessional Paper No. 9 of 1954—Address by His Excellency the Governor Sir Alfred William Lungley Savage, K.C.M.G., on the Report of the British Guiana Constitutional Commission, 1954, in the Council Chamber on Tuesday, 2nd November, 1954.

Sessional Paper No. 8 of 1954—Report of the Salaries Revision Commissioner, 1954.

By the Financial Secretary:

Schedules of Supplementary Estimates for the months of August and September, 1954.

Schedules of Supplementary Provision (Development) for the months of August and September, 1954.

Order in Council No. 55 of 1954 made under Section 8 of the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1952 (No. 69) on the 3rd of October, 1954, and published in the *Gazette* of the 6th of November, 1954.

Minutes of Meeting of Finance Committee held on 28th October, 1954.

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

Financial Statements for the year 1953 of the Vergenoegen Land Settlement Agricultural Assistance Scheme together with the Director of Audit's certificate and report thereon.

By Mr. Farnum (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development):

Report of Inquiry into Social Security in British Guiana by J. Henry Richardson, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Industrial Relations in the University of Leeds.

Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1954—Decisions of the Governor in Council on the recommendations in the Report of Inquiry

into Social Security in British Guiana by Professor J. Henry Richardson, M.A., Ph.D.

tember, 1954, which have been laid on the table.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Financial Secretary gave notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to allow and confirm certain additional expenditure incurred in the year ended the thirty-first day of December, 1953."

Mr. Cummings (Member for Labour, Health and Housing) gave notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance further to amend the Factories Ordinance, 1947."

Mr. Farnum (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development) gave notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to amend the New Amsterdam Town Council Ordinance, 1949."

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

CONFIRMATION OF ORDER IN COUNCIL

The Financial Secretary gave notice of the following motions:—

That this Council in terms of Section 9 of the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1952 (No. 69) confirms Order in Council No. 55 of 1954 which was made on the 3rd of October, 1954, and published in the *Gazette* of the 6th of November, 1954.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

That this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates for August and Sep-

SUPPLEMENTARY DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATES

That this Council approves of the Supplementary Development Estimates for August and September, 1954, which have been laid on the table.

REPORT ON SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. Farnum (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development) gave notice of the following motions:—

Be it resolved:

That this Honourable Council accepts in principle the recommendations contained in Professor Richardson's Report on Social Security in British Guiana and approves of the proposals of the Governor in Council on those recommendations as set out in paragraph 34 of Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1954.

INCREASED OLD AGE PENSIONS

Be it resolved:

That the amount of pension payable under and in accordance with the provisions of the Old Age Pensions Ordinance, 1944, as fixed in subsection (1) of section 8 of the said Ordinance shall, with effect from the 1st day of July, 1954, be varied—

- (a) in the case of a person ordinarily resident in the Georgetown area from four dollars and fifty cents per mensem to seven dollars and fifty cents per mensem; and
- (a) in the case of a person ordinarily resident elsewhere than in the Georgetown area from three dollars per mensem to five dollars and fifty cents per mensem;

And be it further resolved:

That Resolution No. XXVIII passed by the Legislative Council on the 19th day of March 1951, be annulled with effect from the 1st day of July, 1954.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE PLYWOOD
INDUSTRY

DR. MILLER SCHOLARSHIP

Mr. Carter gave notice of the following motion:

Whereas the locally grown wood known as Dalli is being exported to a foreign country and no export duty is being collected thereon;

And whereas only the highest quality grade of Dalli logs which must be free from knots, splits, waness, warps, flats and borer are acceptable in the export market, and as a consequence rejected logs involving thousands of cubic feet of this wood are allowed to rot and waste in the forest;

And whereas this Colony imports plywood on which import duty is collected, and such plywood is manufactured from Dalli logs of this Colony;

And whereas the Colony's forests abound with Dalli and in quantities estimated to operate a plywood industry for at least forty (40) years;

And Whereas the Colony's housing programme would absorb fully all of the plywood that could be manufactured locally from Dalli and other suitable Colony woods, and the establishment of such an industry would create employment for many of the present unemployed:

Be it Resolved:

That this Council recommends—

- (a) the appointment of a Select Committee comprising five members to investigate and report on the possibility of establishing a plywood industry in the Colony;
- (b) the immediate imposition of an export tax on the wood known as Dalli;
- (c) the imposition of an export tax on all forest products excluding firewood and charcoal;
- (d) that Rules be enacted under section 18 of the Export of Timber Ordinance, 1937 (No. 1) to provide for the collection of export tax and inspection fees, etc., on forest products.

Miss Collins gave notice of the following questions:

- (1) Was there any sum of money left under the Will of the late Dr. R. Miller, retired Government Medical Officer, for Government to establish a scholarship or scholarships?
- (2) If so:
 - (a) How much was it?
 - (b) When was the amount paid to Government?
 - (c) What were the conditions laid down for the scholarship?
- (3) Have any scholarships been granted?

If any, when?

If none, why?

MR. LEE'S PROPOSED MOTION

Mr. Speaker: I have received a copy of a proposed motion by the hon. Member, Mr. Lee, and I would be glad if he would see either myself or the Clerk about it. I cannot deal with a motion concerning a report which has not been submitted to this Council.

Mr. Lee: I intend to come to you about it, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: The Report is not before the Council. We have no knowledge of it.

Mr. Lee: I would like some direction as to whether a report which has been laid on the table and brought to the notice of Members of this Council cannot be discussed by way of motion?

Mr. Speaker: Certainly.

Mr. Lee: The Report (Salaries Revision) has been laid on the table today.

LEAVE TO MR. SMELLIE

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member, Mr. Smellie, for two months from the 30th of October to the 31st of December, 1954.

MR. RAMPHAL'S APPOINTMENT AS
COMMISSIONER OF LABOUR

Mr. Ramphal: Before you take the Order of the Day, Sir, I crave your indulgence to express my sincere thanks to you personally and to the hon. Mr. Raatgever for the very kind words of congratulations you expressed when I was not in my seat at our meeting on the 15th of October. I wish also to express my thanks to the Council for the very kind way in which these expressions of congratulation were received. I am very conscious, Sir, that I am the first Guianese to hold this important post, and I hope that my future conduct will be such that when I leave the office I shall leave it an easy place for other Guianese to fill. (Applause).

ORDER OF THE DAY

BILLS—FIRST READING

The following Bills were read a first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Income Tax Ordinance with respect to exemption from Income tax—(On a motion by the Financial Secretary seconded by Sir Frank McDavid).

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Public Health Ordinance, 1934".

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Rent Restriction (Continuance) Ordinance, 1954"—(On a motion by the Member for Labour, Health and Housing seconded by Sir Frank McDavid).

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to incorporate certain persons as Trustees of

the Body known as The British Guiana Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha; to vest in such persons certain property; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."—On a motion by Mr. Sugrim Singh seconded by Mr. Ramphal.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

DEMERARA ELECTRIC CO.'S FRANCHISE

Mrs. Dey asked and the Member for Communications and Works replied to the following questions:—

Q. 1: Is it not the case that the franchise granted by Government to the Demerara Electric Company, Limited, to generate and to sell electricity in the City of Georgetown, as well as 5 miles outside of the City of Georgetown is for a period of 50 years?

A. — The answer is in the affirmative. The duration of the Order is, however, subject to the conditions contained in section 4 of the Georgetown Electric Supply and Tramways Ordinance, Chapter 79.

Q. 2: Is it the case that the franchise is due for revision this year and such revision shall take place by or before August?

A. — The answer is in the negative. Attention is, however, drawn to section 4 of the Georgetown Electric Supply and Tramways Ordinance, Chapter 79, relating to the powers of the Governor in Council should the Company fail to comply with reasonable requirements to improve the undertaking and bring it up to date, etc.

Q. 3: Is it the case that the Demerara Electric Company, Limited is obligated under the franchise to supply electric current to any local authority within 5 miles of Georgetown on such local authority serving a requisition signed by 6 or more persons on the Demerara Electric Company, Limited?

A. — The answer is in the affirmative. See Clauses 14 to 23 of the Georgetown Electric Supply Order, 1927,

Q. 4: Has the Demerara Electric Company Limited the right to make the fuel charge they are now making in every consumer's bill?

A. — The answer is in the affirmative: Provided however, that the maximum price of electricity supplied does not exceed fifteen cents for each kilowatt unit, as set out in the Third Schedule to the Georgetown Electric Supply Order, 1927.

HOSPITAL FEES (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS

Mr. Cummings (Member for Labour, Health and Housing): I beg to move the following motion:—

“That this Council approves of the Hospital Fees (Amendment) Regulations, 1954, which have been laid on the table.”

The Hospital Fees Regulations of 1932 provide that “every Public Officer on the Fixed Establishment and every Government employee who is on the regular monthly salary staff of any Department who desires to be admitted for treatment to a Public Hospital as a paying patient or to guarantee payment of the Hospital expenses of any member of his family must either conform to the general regulations for paying patients above or alternately sign a special guarantee form authorizing deductions from his salary.”

That concession is limited to certain Public Officers. Following upon recommendations from the Whitley Council the Executive Council has decided to ask this Council to approve of these amendments in order that that facility can be applied to all Government Officers and employees—those who are not also on the Fixed Establishment—providing they are on the regular monthly staff, and that Schedule 7 to the Hospital Fees Regulations of 1932 as substituted by Regulation 3 of the Hospital Fees (Amendment) Regulations No. 17 of 1953 which provides for a reduced scale of fees for in-Patient treatment for Government Employees on the Permanent Establishment and employees of the Transport and Harbours Department and Non-Commissioned Officers and Constables of the Police Force, should be extended to all employees on the regular staff of all Departments of Government. These Regulations seek to adopt those proposals.

Sir Frank McDavid seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion adopted.

Mr. Speaker: This concludes the business for today and I adjourn the Council to next Thursday, 25th November, at 2 p.m.