

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 1st AUGUST, 1946

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT :

The President, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. D. J. Parkinson (acting).

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

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. W. O. Fraser (acting).

The Hon. E. G. Woolford, O.B.E., K.C. (New Amsterdam).

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

The Hon. J. I. de Aguiar (Central Demerara).

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated).

The Hon. J. B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. W. J. Raatgever (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 31st of July, 1946, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Council resumed the debate on the following motion :—

“WHEREAS certain provisions under Legislative Council (Elections) Ordinance No. 13 of 1945, as hereinafter detailed, are not in the best interests of the inhabitants of the Colony of British Guiana;

“AND WHEREAS certain Regulations made under the Legislative Council (Elections) Ordinance, 1945, as hereinafter detailed, are also not in the best interests of the inhabitants of the Colony of British Guiana;

“BE IT RESOLVED :

- (a) that the words “during the qualifying period” regarding qualification of voters be deleted in section 3, wherever they occur, and that sub-section 8 of section 3 be also deleted;
- (b) that provision be made in the Ordinance to enable a legally constituted Attorney of any eligible person to be empowered to register that person as a voter if he or she is temporarily absent from the Colony;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED :

- (a) that Regulation 6 regarding declarations in support of Claim be deleted;
- (b) that Regulation 3 (1) be amended by substituting the words “15th day of August” in place of 15th day of June;
- (c) that Regulation 9 (1) be amended by substituting the words “31st day of October 1946” for 31st day of August, 1946;
- (d) that all other dates for the publication, preparation by Revising Officer, and final publication of the list of voters under Part One of the Regulations be extended for a period of two months.

The PRESIDENT : When the debate was adjourned yesterday, the hon. Member for Essequibo River had just finished his speech and other Members who were

present had also spoken on the motion. I do not know whether the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, who was not present yesterday would like to speak on it.

Mr. JACKSON: Yes, Your Excellency.

The PRESIDENT: Then you may proceed.

Mr. JACKSON: I regret that through circumstances over which I had no control I was not privileged to be present yesterday to give my unqualified dissent from the motion before the Council. I am satisfied in my own mind that sufficient facilities have been given to all who had a desire to be registered as voters, and I do not see that any good purpose would be served or that the Council would be doing anything proper in acceding to this motion. I am reminded by this motion of people who, perhaps, are very old and in their dotage; they are never satisfied. It does not matter what you give them—very old people—they will tell you they had nothing to eat or drink when they had everything they could have wanted. It is due to a kind of kink in their mental faculty, and I am satisfied that the desire to get greater facilities than those already provided for the registration of voters is also due to a kink in the mentality of those who are supporting this motion.

There have been tremendous discussions on this question of the franchise, and there has also been a desire on the part of some Members to have universal adult suffrage. We have got to a stage where the franchise has been lowered, but fresh efforts are being made to stretch this matter of registration to—what I will call—inordinate lengths. Arrangements were made to extend the time for registration and when that was done everybody who wished to have their names registered had an opportunity to do so. To extend the time further, I think, would be very wrong indeed. I am satisfied, sir, that no amendment should be made in regard to this Ordinance.

I do not see the need for introducing anything about attorneys being given the power to register the names of their principals who may be out of the Colony. The hon. Member for North Western District

had a fright, I understand, while he was away in Canada. Perhaps, he did think that Government could not dispense with the old register until they had actually brought in the new one, but no one who gave the matter any thought could have believed that if there is to be a general election the old register would have to stand. I do not think we are responsible for the fright which the hon. Member experienced when he was away, and there should be no illusion about satisfying him in that respect. The motion, to my mind, is not necessary and I oppose it with all my heart.

Mr. ROTH: To a point of order, sir! The hon. Member who has just taken his seat, overcome with the sound of his own verbosity, dared to suggest that all those who supported this motion are old and suffering from some mental kink. I do not know that that was a proper remark to make, and I ask that the hon. Member be made to withdraw it.

The PRESIDENT: In my opinion it is perfectly parliamentary. No other Member appears to be desirous of speaking on the motion and I will, therefore, ask the Attorney-General to reply on behalf of Government.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This motion by the hon. Member for North Western District engaged the attention of this Council during the whole of yesterday afternoon and various views have been expressed in connection with it, but the consensus of opinion seems to be that there should be an extension of the time for registration. That is, may I be permitted to say, in keeping with all that is reasonable and with all that has been done to provide the necessary facilities for the claimants to register during the period that was allowed. Before I deal with that aspect of the motion, however, I desire to make a few general observations. I think it will be readily conceded that the Government has done everything possible in its power to enable all those who had the desire or an interest in the elections to come forward and register.

As Your Excellency remarked yesterday afternoon, you may take a horse to the water but you cannot make it drink, and one of the factors which has to be

reckoned with is the great indifference being displayed by a great many people who are entitled to be registered. They themselves have neglected the opportunity to do so, and one does not have to look far to realise that when one remembers the speech of the hon. Member for Georgetown South. Up to late yesterday afternoon he was, in his capacity as a Commissioner of Oaths, still receiving forms from a good many persons who waited until the last moment and, as a matter of fact, I was informed by the Elections Officer that just about the time when the period for registration was enlarged there was a complete lull. I think the people must realise that they must help themselves. The passing of legislation for an extension of the franchise—putting a lower limit on their income and giving them other rights for registration as voters—is very well in itself, but the people themselves must accept and appreciate those rights and do everything in their power to show that they appreciate them. I venture to state that the British Guiana Labour Party of which the hon. mover of this motion is a member, came into being after the time of registration was fixed and, indeed, after the first extension was made.

It will be clearly realised that Government itself, by its publicity campaign, has done more than any other organ or any other organisation, or any individual, to bring home to the people the desirability to register—and register as quickly as possible. Every newspaper and every B.P.I. *communiqué* within the last two months has been pointing the way to would-be voters, so that when the hon. Member levels criticism at Government—alleging that Government has been blundering and doing the right thing at the wrong time—I am sure he will be gracious enough to admit that Government has not been neglectful of the interest of the public and that Government has also a duty and a responsibility to be balanced and to be fair to all parties and all classes and all peoples in the Colony. It does not matter ultimately which particular Member may or may not be returned. That is the concern of the electorate, but the concern of the Government is to see—as the last hon. speaker has stated—that the

facilities are provided, and I venture to say without fear of contradiction that those facilities have been provided.

The first point which the hon. mover has raised is with regard to the question of qualification and the qualifying period, and in that respect I wish to point out to hon. Members that to remove the qualifying period from this legislation would be to remove the basic principle or one of the basic principles on which rests the whole structure of voting in this community, in England, or in any other community which follows this same line of procedure. We are not—if I may say so without impropriety—a nomadic people moving hither and thither and not capable of displaying any interest in ourselves. Income and residence must be tied together and they have been so tied for centuries. In England where there is adult suffrage a qualifying period exists as part and parcel of the procedure. I am sure the hon. mover of the motion appreciates this because I have pointed it out to him before.

May I with your permission, sir, refer hon. Members to Halsbury's Laws of England, Vol. 12, Page 181, on the question of Elections. As regards "Qualifying Period", it says:—

"The qualifying period to entitle any person, otherwise qualified, to registration as a resident in a constituency is residence for three months (or one month in the case of a naval or military voter whose service ceased during the three months) ending on and including June 1".

I pause there to say that the principle is there. That is to say you must have a qualifying period and you will realise that the qualifying period ends on June 1. We have here, according to our Ordinance, a qualifying period of six months. In England there was a longer period, but not so long ago it was reduced to three months. The point I am endeavouring to make, however, is that there is a qualifying period even though there is adult suffrage obtaining in England. I am sure hon. Members will agree that that disposes of the point raised, because it goes to the root of the whole set-up.

The next point to which the hon. mover of the motion referred was the question of statutory declaration, and I suggest that the hon. the Deputy President very fully explained the position in so far as the statutory declaration is concerned. We are requiring people to make a claim; on that claim they say they are entitled to be registered and they support that by way of a statutory declaration. It has to be borne in mind that it is not only this aspect of the qualification on which emphasis has been placed that requires consideration. The relevant section—section 3 of the local Ordinance—says :—

3. (1) Subject to the provisions of this section and of section four of this Ordinance, any person who—

(a) is a British subject who has attained the age of 21 years;

That is the first point to be borne in mind. Then the section continues :

“(b) is able to read some language; and

“(c) is not subject to any legal incapacity; . . .”

Those are essential legal qualifications and they are part and parcel of the whole claim. Suppose, for the sake of argument, a claim is put forward and it is subsequently discovered that the person is not a British subject, or is not 21 years of age, or is not able to read and write some language. That person might have deliberately put forward his claim with the full knowledge that those facts were wrong. It is not only a question as to whether that person works for \$10 per month, but it is on the whole claim that he has to be registered and I hope the hon. Member appreciates that aspect of it. What sanction would we have in a case where a person deliberately puts forward a claim knowing that the facts therein are wrong?

Mr. JACOB : Imprisonment !

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : Imprisonment is the sanction for giving a false declaration, I quite agree, and that is one of the provisions you have put here. So far as the declarations are concerned, hon.

Members will recollect that during the course of a debate a couple of months ago, it was pointed out that a declaration should be given by the employer as that would facilitate the voter himself and save him time perhaps in having to go before the Registering Officer and satisfy him as to the particulars on which his claim is based. It is not imperative—it is governed by the word “may” as I have already pointed out—that such a declaration should be submitted, but the provision is there for the purpose of facilitating the claimant. I have dealt with that point before, but I think it is just as well to refer to it again in view of the remarks made by the hon. Member.

With regard to the question of not providing for people who remove from one district to another, may I suggest to hon. Members that they are taking a very narrow view of registration? The law is put here for all purposes and registration is not merely for the elections which may be coming in April. If a person removes when he has the right to register and is registrable is he to be put on the register for that year? I think hon. Members are not realising the fact that the law is not only in connection with the forthcoming elections, but it is a general principle for the purposes of registration taken as a whole. If reference is made to the Regulations, it will be seen that throughout several of them—take Regulations No. 48 of 1945 for instance—this idea is borne out. Regulation 3 (2) of the latter Regulations states :—

“(2) Any person who claims to be entitled to be registered as a voter, and who is not entered or is entered in an incorrect place or manner or with incorrect particulars in a Register of Voters prepared under the Ordinance, may claim to be registered, or to be registered correctly, by sending or delivering to the registering officer, between the 1st and the 15th days of January in every year after the year 1946, a claim in Form No. 1 in the Schedule”.

That is there for general purposes—for purposes of registration at any time. The list is published every year; it is revised and provision is made in the Regulations for its revision. Consequently, a person who may not have the right to

register today because he has recently removed into another district, has not been deprived of the right for all time to be registered. As soon as his qualifying period is completed in the new district his name will go on the list and he will have the same right to vote as anybody else. I wish to point out to hon. Members and particularly to the hon. Member for North Western District that the matter is dealt with in Regulation 9 (2) which says:—

“(2) The registering officer shall, on or before the 15th day of March in each year after the year 1946, compile and sign, and publish copies of, the List of Voters for the electoral district, or registration area thereof, of which he is the registering officer;

Then, in Regulation 12 (1) it is stated that:—

- “(1) The registering officer shall,
- (a) on or before the 24th day of September, 1946, in the case of the first List of Voters published under this Ordinance, and
 - (b) on or before the 24th day of April in any year after the year 1946,—

make and sign a list of all persons objected to under regulation 10, and a list of all persons who have given notice of appeal under regulation 11”.

Then, Regulation 15 (1) says:—

- “(1) The revising officer shall,
- (a) between the 9th day of October, 1946, and the 24th day of October, 1946, in the case of the first List of Voters published under this Ordinance, and
 - (b) between the 15th day of May and the 31st day of May in any year after the year 1946,—

hold a revising court for the purpose of revising the List of Voters and of settling and preparing the Register of Voters.”

It is clear, therefore, that persons who have removed from one electoral district to another will not be forever and eternally deprived of their right to register and their right to vote. It is fundamental that residence in a district and not only income is a prerequisite to registration. In other words, if a man retains his residence but ceases to make the necessary income he

would not be qualified just the same as if he made the income but had no residence. The two things are tied together. Obviously that must be so, because you cannot be a voter unless you are on the Voters' List for a particular electoral district or constituency and, therefore, you cannot have a person, who may have been in Electoral District A but has removed before the end of the qualifying period from that district, voting for that district. The hon. Member and several hon. Members seem to entertain the view that this should apply to Georgetown particularly, but I want to suggest to hon. Members that we cannot in principle deal with a matter of this sort with one electoral district alone. The matter has to be taken from the larger point of view. That is, if you are dealing with the question of removal, it will have to be done from the point of view of the Colony as a whole. That is to say, if a person removes from New Amsterdam to the Berbice River District, then the same principle will have to apply. I hope the hon. Member appreciates the point I am making.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: To a point of correction! I was not asking that the City of Georgetown should have any special condition more than the outlying districts in the country. I used Georgetown as an instance for my argument.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I hope the hon. Member appreciates that I also used Georgetown for the purpose of argument. It must apply in principle throughout the Colony. That is the point I am making. In other words, let us take the North-West District. Am I to understand if a person resides in the North-West District during the first three months of the qualifying period and removes to Georgetown, so as to earn a living he should therefore be given the right to vote?

Mr. JACOB: In whichever district he chooses.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member's point therefore resolves itself into this: So long as you are resident in the Colony, when you remove from one part of the Colony or electoral district to another part or electoral district, it does not matter where you go, you carry with you the right to be registered as a voter. I would point out to the hon. Member that

that is an enunciation of a principle which it will be very difficult, I suggest, to follow up. I wish to point out that so far as residence is concerned, in England there is a provision with regard to moving into a contiguous constituency but not with regard to the point which the hon. Member is endeavouring to make—that wherever you go you should have the right to vote and that the Voters' List should be altered just by your making the necessary change. I am sure it is not to be expected, having regard to the fact that for months this Council sat and deliberated and considered every clause in the Bill which eventually became law in October of last year; and even before that there was a Commission sitting and, I believe, various representations were made, so that the Ordinance as it stands is a piece of legislation, which has received very full consideration and which was debated at every step before the final clause was reached and passed. Many of the suggestions which are now coming forward appear to me to be new. I do not remember that this point was raised in the course of the debate, after I had the privilege of coming into this Council. But that does not necessarily mean that this Council cannot consider it but, as the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) remarked, these are matters for future consideration.

Now the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) yesterday stated that the Regulations had not been laid. I pointed out to the hon. Member that they had been laid at the time when the Wortmanville Housing Bill was laid. I would remind the Council that the principal Regulations, No. 48 of 1945, were published in the *Gazette* of the 20th December, 1945, and were laid in this Legislative Council on the 21st December, 1945, and the first amendments providing for an extension of the time within which claimants could register—Regulations No. 12 of 1946—were published in the *Gazette* of the 21st June, 1946, and were laid in the Legislative Council on the same day. The second amendments which were for the purpose of further extending the time—Regulations No. 15 of 1946—were published in the *Gazette* on the 11th July, 1946, and were laid in the Legislative Council on the 18th July. I mention these facts in order

to dispel any misunderstanding or misapprehension with regard to the suggested irregularities. I do not wish it to go unrecorded that these Regulations for the purpose of extending the time were all laid before the Legislative Council some time before the actual date fixed for expiration. In fact before the second set of Regulations was actually laid and when the Bill was before this Council, I mentioned that the Regulations were being prepared and would be ready as soon as the Bill was passed. That is to indicate to Members that Government itself did not at any time without previous communication to the public bring the Regulations here and actually extend the time. So the point which was being made by the hon. Member and which was answered by the hon. Member for Georgetown South about there being an interval between the final closing date and subsequent extension, I suggest, has been answered.

There is one other point to which, I had said, I would refer, and that is the question of practical difficulties which may arise with regard to the printing of the List. I wish to inform hon. Members that is a matter which Government is keeping a close watch upon. At this stage it will be appreciated that one can hardly tell exactly how matters will turn up. We appreciate the hon. Member's point with regard to the List. Assuming that the List is completed and the 31st July is the final date—the registration forms are handed in, the list checked and sent to the Registering Officer—it then has to be printed. That is a matter with regard to which we cannot make any pronouncement at the moment, but I may emphasise that these practical difficulties are appreciated and every possible step will be taken to see whether they can be overcome. If they cannot be overcome, that is to say, if everything that is required to be done by way of the Registering Officer completing the List, sending it to the Printers and getting it printed and published, it is quite clear that we would have to make the necessary adjustments so far as the time goes. These factors are realised, and it is in the light of these practical difficulties that I wish to inform hon. Members that there may be the necessity of making necessary adjustments so far as

the time required, but I also wish to remind this Council in no uncertain terms that when this Bill was before this Council Members themselves were responsible for the postponement of the date. It will be within the recollection of hon. Members that even in the final stages of the discussion of the Bill I suggested certain dates with regard to clause 9 (3) which reads :

“The Register of Voters shall come into force on the first day of August in each year and shall remain in force until the thirty-first day of July of the following year.”

There was a suggestion made and as a result the proviso to the clause was made to read :

“Provided that the first Register of Voters to be prepared under this Ordinance shall come into force on the first day of September, nineteen hundred and forty-six, or on such later date (not being later than the first day of December, nineteen hundred and forty-six) as the Governor may, by Order published in the *Gazette*, appoint and shall remain in force until the thirty-first day of July, nineteen hundred and forty-seven.”

There was a prolonged debate. I do not think you were here at the time, sir. It was suggested that it should be postponed because the people would not have had the income returns, etc., and eventually it was postponed, but the proviso, as ultimately passed, dealt with the first Register of Voters and limited the time within which we had to carry through the various requirements before the Register became final. I mention that, because having regard to any possible difficulties with regard to printing, this proviso will have to be amended, as the ultimate date given for the coming into force of the Register of Voters is the 1st day of December, 1946, so that hon. Members will be fully apprised of the position.

Your Excellency, I hope I have not followed the example of the hon. Member, but there were several points to be covered and I did not wish them to remain without replying and placing on record that the Government itself has done everything possible, even though the hon. Member does not think so. I have replied at some length

because I do not wish any misunderstanding on the several matters raised, particularly with regard to the qualifying period. I do not wish hon. Members to think that we can dispose of it like that and have any qualifying period. The declaration, as I have pointed out, is a very necessary part of the claim, particularly now that you are having a lower income franchise. I also wish to emphasise that registration does not necessarily stop with the 31st July. It is open to every member of this community, who is not registered and has the right to register, to go and register. The last set of voters will not be on this List, and the Government has beaten the drum and done everything possible on its part by way of giving the needed publicity to the necessity for registration as soon as possible. I hope hon. Members will persist in persuading those who have been lethargic and indifferent and who have not appreciated their responsibilities, to come forward and register. They will be in time for the next List.

Mr. EDUN : I would like to ask one question in order to clarify one misapprehension. Would it be correct to say that a BPI *communiqué* was issued declaring that the old List was obsolete, and it was afterwards adjusted and ten days were wasted in the adjustment ?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I think the hon. Member is correct in his statement, but I do not know about ten days being wasted. As a point of argument in answer to the hon. Member, it had no effect for the simple reason that it only meant that 10,000 persons who would have registered did not have to register.

Mr. JACOB : I would just like to clarify the point that has been raised by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) before I deal with the speeches that have been made for and against this motion. Early in June I received while in Canada a clipping from the *Daily Argosy* of the 24th May and a BPI *communiqué* stating that all persons are to register so as to become eligible to vote. It is no use disguising the fact that the statement was made by a certain portion of the Press and by the BPI. I think we have realised the falsity of the motion that was moved

in this Council, limiting speeches to half an hour and giving the mover of a motion the right to speak for three-quarters of an hour.

The PRESIDENT : On the other hand, if the hon. Member who is speaking is competent he can cover all the ground in any speech in ten minutes. Did the hon. Member himself not say that ?

Mr. JACOB : I can make any speech at any time to suit the occasion, but here we have an accomplished speaker, the hon. the Attorney-General, in replying to the debate, especially to my speech on this motion, taking exactly forty-five minutes. Yet this Council voted for that motion. It was a most retrogressive move. I trust Government will not insert that in the Standing Orders of this Council. I did not deal with this matter as comprehensively as I would have liked when introducing this motion in this Council yesterday. I had a good deal of notes here which I had to forego, but this morning after thinking the matter over I wondered whether this Council having regard to the passing of that motion is really interested in constructive criticism or in having a really constructive democratic government. I said that is how I would make my reply to this debate. I do not think that, constituted as this Council is, it is not interested in constructive democratic principles. I am not going to refer to those principles, as Your Excellency did that yesterday. I will just leave that as it is. I am going to deal with the last speech first.

The hon. the Attorney-General made a few very important points. I want to deal with one or two of them. The first one is the question of a statutory declaration. I made the particular point to ask whether there are precedents in any part of the Colonial Empire. British Guiana has made a precedent in that respect and the hon. the Deputy President (Mr. Woolford) wants it to continue as a precedent in the British Empire. I think the hon. the Attorney-General has missed the point I made in regard to the qualifying period for a person removing from one place to another. While it is true the Regulations provide for people to be registered year after year, what is to happen after the registration period closes and an election is to be held

during that year ? I am going to scrutinize the List that is to be published as I may be able to find some loopholes to object successfully to some Members and so rob them of their seats if elected. If a person removing from one place to another and not having the qualification at the latter place is objected to at the revision time, he will be without a vote. One may find himself in the position of not having a vote if objection is taken to his name being on the List for the district from which he has removed.

So I say, if you are going to have a qualifying period of three months as in England, let us have it. Let us have also the other provision so that if a man's name has been omitted from the voters' list he will still be entitled to retain his seat as a Member of this Legislature. The hon. the Attorney-General has not answered that point. If it happens that my name does not appear on a voters' list I can be removed from this Council and will have no right to seek election until it is put back there. The hon. the Deputy President has not answered the point at all, and I would suggest that if he is too old to think now he should give youth a chance.

Mr. de AGUIAR : Order !

Mr. JACOB : The hon. the Attorney-General made the point that ample opportunity was given to people to register, and while I admit that some opportunity was given and that this Government did its very best, I say it did its best too late. Here we have a proclamation dated July 31 coming to me this morning—just now—and intended to be served in Electoral District No. 8. It will have absolutely no effect now; the list is already closed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : May I state that if it came late it was not my fault. I made arrangement that it should be communicated to the Botanic Gardens because I understood it was connected with four people there. I made arrangement with the BPI for it to be sent there yesterday, therefore it was possible for the persons concerned to be registered in time.

The PRESIDENT : I will add that the situation really produced a touch of humour. The persons concerned were

astonished at Government's offer and they thought that Government Officer was getting a bonus for getting the people registered.

Mr. JACOB : This happens to be near Georgetown, but what about the proclamation which was issued at the last minute appointing Registering Officers for the Mazaruni district and other places ?

The PRESIDENT : The people who were given appointments as Commissioners of Oaths had the letters of instruction sent to them—each one of them. As regards the Mazaruni district, I wish to say that I, personally, got a telegram sent to the Commissioner at Bartica after getting the formal consent of the Local Government Department, stating that the Commissioner of Oath had been duly appointed. So I think the hon. Member should be satisfied as regards the people in that district.

Mr. JACOB : If I could be satisfied that instructions were sent to the persons appointed in every district I would be perfectly satisfied. I am not attaching blame merely to those who had to deal with this particular matter; I am saying that the whole set-up is bad. A delay of two weeks will not make any difference. The hon. the Attorney-General was very guarded in referring to this matter, and I am not going to get wise after the event. The hon. Member for Western Essequibo, who is now out in the lobby smoking his pipe, said I wanted to have the elections delayed, but that is not so. I know the elections should have been held a few years ago, but it is not the fault of any of us that they are not. I say definitely that there was hardly anyone who was more insistent than I—and, I think, the hon. Member for Georgetown North also—that the elections should have been held years ago. The hon. the Deputy President who was Chairman of the Franchise Commission thought otherwise, however.

Mr. WOOLFORD : I should like to get that statement; I have not heard it. I am certain that within the last two or three years I have hardly listened to a statement from the hon. Member which was correct. I cannot understand why the hon. Member should be allowed to continue. He is always being corrected, but never withdraws them.

Mr. JACOB : The Deputy President has made a general statement which has no value whatever.

Mr. WOOLFORD : Except the value of saying that you made a false statement.

The PRESIDENT : I would suggest that the debate continue without any personalities.

Mr. JACOB : The Franchise Commission began its sittings in June, 1941, and the majority report is dated February 29, 1944, so that it took nearly three years to present this document.

The PRESIDENT : That is a fact, but you need not put that interpretation on it.

Mr. JACOB : I recollect that the Elected Members were asked to come here and say whether the elections should be postponed. I was the only Member who said there should be no delay and, possibly, the hon. Member for Georgetown North was another. The hon. Member for Western Essequibo stated that I wanted the elections postponed, but that is a deliberate misstatement of fact.

The hon. the Attorney-General said I made the point that a person living in Georgetown should, if qualified as a voter, have a right to vote in any of the three electoral districts, but I do not mean Georgetown only. There is only an imaginary line dividing these constituencies in the City. The point I made was that so long as a person is resident in the Colony he should always have the right to vote. If a qualifying period must be put in the law, then some provision should be made so that a person may not lose that vote at any time. I do not think that is asking too much. If we are to get a precedent in this respect, then let British Guiana do so. I am not a lawyer—Halsbury's laws have been invoked and perhaps they are right, but Halsbury's can be wrong too. I do not think I wish to say anything more on what the hon. the Attorney-General has had to say. I will only say that I wish to thank him for his efforts in this matter. I know, personally, that he has done his best. If Government does not wish to accede to the motion, then

I can only say that I have done my best. Nevertheless, I would ask that the motion be put to a division. Nine hon. Members have spoken on this question and the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo gave his reason why he did not second the motion. He referred to a meeting at the Town Hall and I wish, personally, to thank him for what he has done.

I think the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Critchlow, would agree that the Executive of the British Guiana Labour Party supported the suggestion for the extension of the time for registration from July 31. Some Members thought that it should be extended to August 31, but I suggested August 15 and I maintain that I was correct. Those 15 days are not required so that we could delay the elections, but in order that we should do the things I have asked for in this motion—so that all eligible persons could be registered. That is all I ask for, and 15 days will not delay the elections at all. I want to give the estimated number of voters from the figures given by the hon. the Attorney-General. I have taken some interest in this matter, but if I am to be limited in my speeches here to half an hour or three-quarters of an hour—or to any time at all—then I would not be able to offer constructive criticism.

In Eastern Berbice the List of Voters contained only 1,558 names and the addition up to the date given by the Attorney-General was 6,280, making a total of 7,838. In New Amsterdam the List contained 1,089 names and 1,643 new ones have been added, making a total of 2,732. In the Berbice River the List contained 1,510 names and 1,500 have been added, making a total of 3,010. In Western Berbice the List contained 777 names and 1,934 new ones have been added, making a total of 2,711. In Eastern Demerara there were 1,274 names on the List and 5,050 new ones have been added, making a total of 6,324. In Central Demerara—and I wonder if the hon. Member (Mr. de Aguiar) who represents the constituency knows this fact—there were only 884 names on the List and 5,000 new ones have been added, making a total of 5,884.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I thank the hon. Member for his interest.

Mr. JACOB: In Georgetown North there were 801 names on the List and 1,918 new ones were added, making a total of 2,719. In Georgetown Central there were 2,101 names and 2,950 new ones were added, making a total of 5,051. In Georgetown South there were 1,201 names and 3,457 were added, making a total of 4,658. In the Demerara River District there were 1,047 names on the List and 3,900 new ones were added, making a total of 4,947. In the Demerara-Essequibo District there were 701 names on the List and 1,575 new ones were added, making a total of 2,276. In the Essequibo River District there were 969 names on the List and 1,592 new ones were added, making a total of 2,561. In the Western Essequibo District there were 580 names on the List and 1,900 new ones were added, making a total of 2,480. In the North Western District there were 58 names on the List and 350 new ones have been added, making a total of 408. That makes a total of 14,550 names on the previous Lists, an addition of 39,049 new names and a grand total of 53,599 on the Lists at present. Let us say that we will have 55,000 voters on the new Roll; I do not think that will be satisfactory and that is why every effort should be made to see that all eligible persons are registered.

I made the complaint that the people throughout the Colony, and particularly in some places, were not given proper facilities. They were not given forms for instance. Only today I was speaking to certain persons from the Demerara River District and they said that they could not get forms. I wish the hon. Member concerned would contradict that. The hon. Member for Demerara River and the hon. Member for Essequibo River made every effort to get forms for those people when they visited the constituency, but they could not get. Perhaps we are going to be told that none were available at the time. Apart from the North-Western District, the List for Demerara-Essequibo District is the smallest at the present time. Is that the reason why the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo has not supported this motion? One hon. Member has suggested that all the Members of the Executive Council are afraid of large Lists. I confirm that statement and I just leave it there. We will see the results when the new Lists are out.

Mr. GONSALVES : What the hon. Member suggests about Members of the Executive Council would apply to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Critchlow, because he is a Member of the Executive Council also.

Mr. JACOB : I am referring to Elected Members.

Mr. GONSALVES : I think they can all take pretty good care of themselves.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I agree. In so far as my constituency is concerned, the increase in the number of voters is over fifteen times as great as that relating to the hon. Member's constituency.

Mr. JACOB : I wish to goodness the North West District had 5,000 people. It is not my fault that it has not, but I am not going to pursue that point any further today. I am going to leave it just there. As we say in creolese, "nough said." The hon. Member for Western Berbice made a very keen point as regards the question of declarations. In 1928 there were no statutory declarations relating to Members of this Council, but the ingenuity of certain hon. Members caused us to have them now. It is said that they give Members an opportunity of certifying their worth, yet we have some people saying that they are a howling farce. I am bound to admit that a large number of these declarations can be described as a howling farce. Even if Government does not want to investigate them, that is so.

With reference to my letter of July 10 to the Colonial Secretary, I stated in paragraph 2 that the Registering Officer claimed that a declarant should sign his name in full otherwise the form would be rejected. If the signature appears to be shaky the form is also rejected. Sometimes my signature is shaky—for instance, if I have to write on an uneven place it would not be the same as that given at the Bank. Claims have been rejected for these reasons, and if I am asked to name the persons responsible and bring the evidence I would do so. I am told that even if the Registering Officer in question suspects that a certain form should have an employer's declaration attached to it and

it is not there he rejects it. He saves himself the trouble of writing to the claimant stating that he wants the proper information. Perhaps Government likes that, because it also is not anxious to have a large electoral Roll.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I do not think the hon. Member is justified in making that allegation at all—that Government is putting any obstacle in the way of anybody who desires to be registered. Government, as a matter of fact, held a campaign among the people requesting them to take steps to be registered. I do not think the hon. Member is justified in making the remark.

Mr. JACOB : I think I am justified, but I will not press the point. Perhaps I am not fully justified, but if all these obstacles are removed it would cause Government to have more than these 55,000 persons registered. Possibly that is the reason. I am at pains to point out these things in detail, and if I do not I would be told make the point. I cannot, however, get Government and this Legislative Council constituted as it is to admit that these things are wrong. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Critchlow, agreed at one time that there should be adult suffrage, but another time he said the time is not ripe.

Mr. CRITCHLOW : To a point of correction! I always said that the franchise should be extended and then we should have adult suffrage later. I am sure that is to be found in the records of Government.

The PRESIDENT : I think hon. Members should try to get on without prolonging the debate.

Mr. JACOB : The hon. Member for Georgetown South made the point that because the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. Critchlow) said certain things I am bound by those things, but that is no reason why he should say he will not vote for the motion.

Mr. GONSALVES : I think the hon. Member said he did not want my support if he did that. I did not say I will not vote for the motion at all. I try to be careful with my language when I speak.

Mr. JACOB :— I am grateful for the explanation. I think the hon. Member knows that several of the points I have made here are not only worthy of support but of adoption. As regards the hon. Member for Western Essequibo, he generalizes so much in every speech he makes that I did not follow what he said yesterday. I did not realise that in referring to two hon. Members he was including me. This morning I saw in the *Daily Chronicle* that my name and that of the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) were linked together as endeavouring to delay the elections. Now that this has been said, I want to tell him that from the very outset I said: "If we could have the elections next week, let us have them." I think that is all I wish to say about the speeches made. I am grateful to all the hon. Members who spoke in favour of the motion and, whether it is lost by a small or a large majority, it does not matter; I shall have done my duty. I am only asking that all persons eligible to vote for the Central Government be given an opportunity to do so, and I throw a hint out also to those who are not looking after other Governments properly — Municipal and other Governments.

The PRESIDENT : Practically every Member has spoken and I do not propose to add to what I said yesterday. I regard the motion as being most important and I repeat that. I will also repeat that it was my duty as Officer Administering the Government to appoint as Commissioners of Oaths persons who are dispassionate and to avoid appointing anyone who might give the faintest impression of being partisan, because justice has not merely to be done but should also appear to have been done. I want to make that very clear. I will now put the question that the motion standing in the name of the hon. Member for North Western District be approved.

The Council divided and voted as follows :—

For :— Messrs. Roth, Edun, Lee and Jacob—4.

Against :— Messrs. Raatgever, Jackson, Peer Bacchus, Gonsalves, Dr. Singh, Critchlow, de Aguiar, C. V. Wight, Woolford, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General, and the Colonial Secretary—12.

Motion lost.

The PRESIDENT : The next item on the Order Paper is the first reading of the Motor Transport Bill.

MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC
(AMENDMENT) BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I beg to move that a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Ordinance, 1946, to provide for the grant of licences to use hire cars and goods vehicles on a road and otherwise to regulate the operation of such vehicles in any prescribed area."

be read a first time.

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : Your Excellency, I shall now ask that the Standing Rules and Orders of this Council be suspended so that I may move the second reading today. I think hon. Members will be agreeable to allowing the second reading to start at least, because we have to go into this matter very fully and it is desirable that we should deal with the matter as soon as possible. I ask the indulgence of the Council to enable me to proceed with the second reading.

Mr. JACOB : I have no objection to that, provided we take item 3 and dispose of it first. After that we can take the Bill.

Mr. LEE : I have an objection to that. I have here a resolution which has been sent to the Government, and I feel that Government should consider that resolution first before proceeding with this Bill. I do not know whether Government has considered it, but if Government has not, then I have no hesitation in asking that that be done first.

The PRESIDENT : It is not on the Order of the Day. It has not been tabled.

Mr. EDUN: May I be permitted just to mention this? That resolution having been placed in the hands of the hon. the

Attorney-General, I think, in fairness to the signatories you ought to call them in and discuss the matter thoroughly. I see they suggest we should make some amendments. Not considering the resolution now gives me the impression that Government is endeavouring to hasten through this Bill. I have seen a precedent for that here. In the case of the Town Planning Bill you called in the firms and discussed the matter with them, and then came to this Council with something tangible which everybody could approve. Let the matter be deferred. Let these people come and discuss it with you. That is most democratic. It seems to me, when a Member is personally opposed to a measure he always takes the line of action that it should be deferred. I remember the last speaker using such tactics on another occasion. I am saying that Government is rushing this Bill.

The PRESIDENT: Government is not rushing it. The Bill has been before Members for some time. As regards the resolution, this is the first time I have seen a copy of it. If the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member had wished notice to be taken by this Council of this resolution, I suppose he could have put it in himself under "Unofficial Notices" or "Notices of Question" or "Presentation of Petitions." I believe the Attorney-General was waiting for the Member to do so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is perfectly true that the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) handed me that copy. I assumed that one copy was being handed to the Clerk of Council also and one to you in the usual course as part of the procedure. I did not interpret the fact that the hon. Member handed a copy to me as an indication that I should take action on it. That is apart from something being done by way of the procedure which I suggested might have been followed. I think, sir, that copy may be kept for reference in the course of the second reading. That is outside of anything relating to the conduct of the business of the Council. If the hon. Member wishes to make reference to the resolution it could be done in the course of the second reading and then it would be before the Council in a proper way. It is the only course for

matters of this sort when representations are being made to the Government by hon. Members. The fact that he handed it to me I appreciate, but at the same time I thought that all Members had received copies so as to give them some indication of what is in the resolution. So far as Government itself is concerned and its being put before this Council in the course of the debate, I think that should be referred to by the hon. Member. I hope the hon. Member appreciates the point I make. There is no intention that it should not receive attention at all. That is far from me and the Officer Administering the Government. As a matter of fact I made enquiries as to whether it was part of our documents here.

The PRESIDENT: I always regard the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders as the fairest way, but it must be unanimous. I personally have no objection to taking it tomorrow, but if Members have no objection I would take it this afternoon. I am not taking a vote on it. If there are objections I accept them.

Mr. LEE: I do not question whether there are any objections or not. I want to find out if Government has considered this resolution.

The PRESIDENT: It has not.

Mr. LEE: Then I object and ask Government before taking the second reading of the Bill to call in the signatories or a few of them and have the matter discussed.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is asking a lot. Let them go and see the hon. the Attorney-General. We will take the second reading tomorrow.

Mr. EDUN: We ought to get into the spirit of the thing rather than to sit tight and have a straight jacket procedure. We want to assist the Government. In the case of the Town Planning Bill I saw something done there—the spirit of co-operation coming into this Council. What I ask is that you call them in.

The PRESIDENT: Let them come themselves, I say. They have got something to represent.

The second reading was deferred to the next day.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE,
JULY, 1946.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I beg to move that the Council resolve itself into Committee for the purpose of considering the Schedule of additional provision for July, 1946.

Mr. de AGUIAR seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

AGRICULTURE.

Item 14—*Plant Pests Preventive Measures*, \$210.

Mr. LEE : I ask that this Department give instructions to its officers in the districts that these pests be exterminated and that the officers themselves should go and do the killing of these pests. I understand that at the Hague Settlement, where the Government has spent some money and got results, the pests are killing out the cultivation of yams. I feel, sir, that if the extermination of these pests is placed in the capable hands of the Agricultural Superintendents to supervise it, it would be done in the proper manner rather than if left to the men who are inexperienced. I ask Government to note that.

Mr. de AGUIAR : As Chairman of the Agricultural Advisory Committee speaking to one of my colleagues on that Committee, may I remind the hon. Member again that had he raised the question at one of the meetings of the Committee which he had not attended, perhaps, he might have got quicker action taken. I am sorry I was not aware that the point was to be brought up by the hon. Member, but I can assure him that the officers of the Department are only too willing to render assistance in the matter to which the hon. Member has referred.

Mr. LEE : I sincerely hope that within a week this matter will be attended to.

Mr. JACOB : These pests have been doing a great deal of harm in the North-West District, and I do not think this

insecticide is ordered in sufficient quantity. I do not think the money is being well spent at all. Unless you do the thing in a somewhat thorough manner you are doing nothing at all. I suggest that a little bit more care and attention be paid to the destruction of pests, as they have done a lot of harm in the North-West District, the Essequibo District and at Bartica. I think these pests are responsible for the large sums of money this Council has to vote to subsidize farmers.

FIRE PROTECTION

Item 13 C—*Replacement of equipment destroyed by fire*, \$4,494.54.

Mr. ROTH : It would be interesting to know what equipment costing nearly \$5,000 was destroyed. As far as the public is aware only one hand-reel was destroyed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I can give the hon. Member the list of items. It chiefly concerns fire hose, firemen's helmets and other small items.

Mr. ROTH : Thank you.

LANDS AND MINES DEPARTMENT

Item 1 — *Personal Emoluments, Fixed Establishment*, (3) 2 Senior Clerks, \$900.

Mr. de AGUIAR : What is the policy of Government in regard to the position of Senior Clerks in the Service ? When the reclassification scheme was introduced the number of Senior Clerks was limited. It is proposed in view of the necessity of strengthening the Department to do so by the creation of an additional senior post. Does that mean an addition to the total Senior Clerks in the personnel of the Civil Service, or that this officer will be promptly withdrawn from another Department ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : The answer is, this post is a substitution for a Class I post. It is not adding to the number of Clerks in the Department.

Mr. de AGUIAR : If that is the answer, I regret to say I do not consider it very satisfactory. It seems to me a departure from that which was agreed upon in this Council when the number of senior

posts throughout the Service was agreed upon. To my mind, if Government finds it desirable or necessary to increase the number of senior posts in the various Government Departments, the proper thing to do is first of all to lay fresh proposals before this Council so that the principle may be accepted. It seems that we are treading on very dangerous ground. The creation of a senior post is something that Members are very careful about and want to be perfectly satisfied (a) that the necessity exists, and (b) not, as what the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has said, that it is merely to improve the status of a Clerk who has reached presumably the maximum of the Class I post and for one reason or another in order to keep him in a Department you establish a senior grade post in substitution for a Class I post. If that is so, it is not satisfactory.

The CHAIRMAN : I think the answer is, we are going to put before the Council when the Estimates come forward a completely new scheme which involves some changes. I think twelve. This one we regard as urgent and ask that it be put forward beforehand. I hope the Member will let it go through.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I cannot see the urgency of it.

The CHAIRMAN : It is urgent !

Mr. de AGUIAR : Do I understand it is a substitution of a post ?

The CHAIRMAN : I can explain that, but I will hold the question over and bring it back again.

Item 8—Surveys in Village and Country Areas, \$5,600.

Mr. JACOB : The original estimate is \$6,000 and the additional provision required is \$5,600, making the vote roughly \$12,000 for surveying these areas. What is the necessity for it, and why this large expenditure ?

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : I do not know if I can help the hon. Member in so far as Crabwood Creek is concerned. I am not aware of the condition of Sisters and Sheet Anchor, but Crabwood Creek has just been declared an area under the District Admin-

istration Scheme, and it is necessary that when an area is so declared each proprietor's holding should be defined for the purpose of assessment of rates, etc. It is really requisite that these areas should comply with the requirements of the Local Government Board, and it is for that reason this vote has been placed here. I think the hon. Member is aware that in the Crabwood Creek area Government has spent a large sum of money not only to improve its condition but in the carrying out of a drainage scheme which has brought into cultivation hundreds of acres and, therefore, the proprietors have to be assessed for the maintenance of that scheme. It is for that purpose the survey is necessary.

Mr. JACKSON : Partitioning of land is necessary in order that the people may have individual title deed for the lands they possess and, as the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) has stated, these areas have now come under the Local Government Board and in order that they should be assessed for rates the lands must be surveyed and partitioned. Partitioning takes a good deal of money. Apart from the fact that it is necessary to have the lands partitioned, it is also necessary that those people should bear their fair share of the maintenance of the district.

Dr. SINGH : As regards Sheet Anchor and Sisters, the same thing applies there. The whole thing is so muddled up there that partitioning is necessary. There are also other things to be done there. The people there do not know where they are with their lands.

Mr. JACOB : That is so ! I realise that the boundaries have to be defined and in that process there is a lot of dissatisfaction. The people's lands have to be defined, the fences removed and trees and cultivation are in dispute. I think that the Local Government Board or the Lands and Mines Department should exercise better care, so as not to have those things done at the wrong time. Here we are spending \$12,000 roughly in doing something which, had it been done before, would not have caused a lot of dissatisfaction. I think a petition was laid here by me for some of the villagers on the Courentyne Coast, and Sheet Anchor was involved.

There was quite a lot of dissatisfaction and the people refused to pay the rates. I think these things should be done at the right time. If it is necessary to do some of the other places, I think, the matter should be taken in hand very early.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I find myself in a very difficult position speaking under this particular Head. I do not think the note in the "Remarks" column has any bearing on the subject. The item reads "Surveys in Village and Country Areas." I remember how that item got on the Estimates. It was in order to carry out particular surveying work in the Villages and Country Districts, and more or less some plan was made. I see now that partitioning has crept into it. I suggest that the matter be allowed to stand down as further explanation is required. If this \$6,000 is required to partition the areas referred to in the "Remarks" column, it should be put under the proper Head. I suggest that this is not the proper Head for it. I speak very feelingly on it. I might be told later on that quite a large sum of money has been spent to carry out these surveys in the Village and Country areas which were urgently required. The work has been begun but not work of this nature; it was of an entirely different character. If we have to spend all this money for partitioning work, it should come under the Head of the Commissioner of Local Government. But this is a vote under the Lands and Mines Department. I do not think it is in its proper place. That is my criticism.

The CHAIRMAN : I am not in a position to say whether it is under the right Head. That does not seem to matter much to Government or Members of this Council. The point is whether the money should be spent and if the work is required. Members are satisfied that the work is required and I would ask the speaker to withdraw his objection. What I want hon. Members to realize is if we should spend this money. Does the hon. Member for North-Western District wish to object to the expenditure ?

Mr. JACOB : No, sir; I remember that the people of Sheet Anchor complained bitterly against the partitioning which was going on there, and it resulted in the people not paying the rates.

The CHAIRMAN : We are trying to put it right now.

Mr. JACOB : I am suggesting that greater care be taken in doing these things at an early date. I think the partitioning should be done before the lands are laid out.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : Further I may say it is being done for the same purpose that the hon. Member on my left is complaining about — the dissatisfaction among the people themselves. It was on their application to have their particular strip of land surveyed so that fences can be erected within their boundaries. They neglected what they should do and here Government is coming in and doing it for them. I do not see the hon. Member's objection.

Mr. JACOB : I can quite see the remarks of the hon. Member as a member of the Local Government Board but not as a Member of this Council.

MEDICAL

Item 9—Miscellaneous, \$1,800.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I see here we are going to pay out some professional fees for Ophthalmological examinations at the Public Hospital, Georgetown. I ask if Government is in a position to inform this Council how soon it will be possible to obtain the services of a proper man for the treatment of the eye, ear and nose. I do not know what steps Government is taking, but I know the people of the Colony are very anxious about it.

The CHAIRMAN : The answer is, we are taking every possible step to get an Eye Specialist. We have been told that we cannot get a combined Eye, Ear and Nose Specialist. I am prepared to ask Dr. Browne to come back if we do not get one. As regards Dr. Ho, we had an offer but it is not satisfactory. I think really the first priority is an Eye Specialist. I think we can get operations done on the ear, nose and throat without a Specialist but we must get an Eye Specialist. If we cannot get one I will ask Dr. Browne to come back. I can assure hon. Members that we are making every effort to get an Eye Specialist.

Mr. EDUN : That statement has placed a statement of claim in my hand. I am thinking of a Specialist from England. I do not think Government should consider the re-appointment of Dr. Browne at all.

The CHAIRMAN : It will be only temporary.

Mr. EDUN : I have several persons coming to me on this question, that they cannot get anything done at the Hospital. There is one particular case I have for compensation, where the injury was done in the Hospital. A man was injured in the eye at Pln. Uitvlugt factory and went to the Public Hospital where his eye was damaged by someone. It is imperative that we get an Eye Specialist early and at any cost.

The CHAIRMAN : I promise you that we are getting one. In the meanwhile I am thinking to ask Dr. Browne to come back until we do get one.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : In the meantime can any arrangement be made with Dr. Ho?

The CHAIRMAN : I do not think so. His proposals to Government are not acceptable. I can assure you that you will not accept them nor will anybody.

Mr. JACOB : The health of the community is at stake. I do not know that the breach between Government and this gentleman has grown so wide that it cannot be healed.

The CHAIRMAN : Yes, it is; and I am afraid it is a breach of his own making.

Mr. JACOB : I am accused at times of being malicious, bitter and so on, and yet we find this sort of attitude on the part of Government.

The CHAIRMAN : I have already pointed out that what we are trying to do is to get a new Specialist as soon as we possibly can. As regards Dr. Ho, we pay him now when we consult him and that is why you have this item down here, but the terms under which he has offered to come back and work with Government are not acceptable and will not be accepted by anybody. He is holding a pistol at the

head of Government and saying :—"There is no Eye Specialist in the country and therefore you have to take my terms."

Mr. JACOB : I think that if Government could make a temporary arrangement with him they should do so, he being the man on the spot. I suggest that that be done. Personally, I think a salary of £1,000 a year for a Specialist like him is highly unsatisfactory. I do not know the gentleman, but if I were a Specialist I would regard it as an insult to be offered £1,000 a year. I know that at present there are many people—young, old and middle-age people—who cannot get any proper attention for their eyes, and I do not think that is a satisfactory state of affairs in this Colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I should just like to point out that the last speaker himself was a member of the Committee which went into the question of the salaries of the officers in the Medical Department and, as far as I recollect, he himself approved of the salary of £1,000 per annum for the Specialist.

Mr. JACOB : But if you want the man to do two jobs you should pay him a little bit more.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member knows the old saying : "You may take a horse to the water but you cannot make it drink." What I would tell the Council again is that I am doing my best to get a new Specialist.

Item passed.

Purchase of Equipment, Tuberculosis Hospital, \$1,695

Mr. de AGUIAR : I am going to take opportunity to make another comment for the consideration of Government under the head of Extraordinary Expenditure. I desire to refer to the Laboratory at the Public Hospital, Georgetown. After having visited there some time ago I took the trouble to refer in this Council to the number of Assistants working there. Perhaps wrongly, I am one of those persons who regard Laboratory work as being very important. At present, however, I find that the equipment at the Laboratory is

question beggars description. I cannot even attempt to describe it. I was shocked to find a shortage of what I regard as most essential equipment, if one is going to have a laboratory of any kind, and I feel there must be something that can be done. The officer in charge of the Laboratory at present was specially sent abroad from this Colony to receive training in this branch of work, but he cannot be held responsible for any lack of equipment or any defect in the existing equipment.

The CHAIRMAN: Surely he can make representations.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I do not know whether he has done so already, but when he does I am going to ask that Government give them very serious consideration because the situation there is very bad. As far as I know the expenditure will not be very much and I do not think we should allow the situation to continue.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: To a point of order! The hon. Member is referring to the Public Hospital, Georgetown, but this item deals with Best Hospital.

The CHAIRMAN: I know that, but Members are entitled to speak on the Head generally.

Mr. de AGUIAR: My hon. friend is somewhat new to this Council. I would like him to see the Head under which I am speaking.

Mr. Lee: I would like to know when Government intends to build a new hostel for the nurses at the Best Hospital.

The CHAIRMAN: We are putting up new quarters now. We are doing something.

Mr. LEE: I understand that under the present conditions the nurses are suffering.

The CHAIRMAN: We have just had a new building put up and, I hope, it will ease the situation.

Item passed.

POST OFFICE

Item—Radio Telephone Service, \$4,500.

Mr. ROTH: I am in a position to state that the Rupununi Development Company are putting up certain equipment at Ebini, in the Berbice River District. They have found it necessary to put up this equipment—radio-telephone equipment—which is very useful and will cost something like \$1,000. As the equipment will be used particularly in connection with the Agriculture Department, it has been suggested that it would be well if the item could be put on the estimates of the Department here.

The CHAIRMAN: You have embarrassed me somewhat. I knew nothing about the matter before today, and I would like to discuss it with the Engineer-in-charge before making a statement.

Mr. de AGUIAR: The hon. Member has mentioned the matter to me and I have assured him that the matter will be gone into by the Department of Agriculture. I do not think it can be put in the Estimates at this stage, but I assure him that it will be gone into and, if possible, the item will be put in later.

Item passed.

PUBLIC WORKS (ANNUALLY RECURRENT)

Item—Operating Expenses, Mackenzie
Airport, \$7,670

Mr. JACOB: I think Your Excellency is aware of the fact that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction as regards travelling facilities from Mackenzie to Georgetown. When passengers arrive there by plane they have to remain overnight. I think a promise was made in this Council some time ago that we will have better means of transportation not only between Mackenzie and Georgetown, but all over the Colony. I think Your Excellency will remember that we had a visit from Mr. Cross (Adviser to the Secretary of State on Air Transport Problems) at the time.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes; I was Acting Governor at the time.

Mr. JACOB: I think better arrangements should be made for passengers travelling between Mackenzie and George-

town. I would also ask whether any further arrangements have been made as regards the use of Atkinson Field for civil aviation. I do not know whether Government is prepared to make any statement on the point and also to give an undertaking that passengers arriving at Mackenzie will not have to remain there overnight.

The CHAIRMAN : I cannot possibly give you an undertaking that people will not remain overnight at Mackenzie. As regards Atkinson Field, I am expecting a communication any day now that it is open for commercial use, but I have not got those instructions yet.

Mr. EDUN : Does that mean that the matter has been settled ?

The CHAIRMAN : It means that you would not have to stay overnight at Mackenzie if you went there, but you might have to stay overnight at Atkinson Field.

Mr. LEE : Isn't Government opening the road to Atkinson Field, sir ?

The CHAIRMAN : Not at present.

Mr. LEE : If we are going to be represented at the Tourist Conference to be held in the United States in order to get tourists to come to this country, we must have better roads.

The CHAIRMAN : I think that is a matter for the Development Committee.

Item passed.

PUBLIC WORKS EXTRAORDINARY

Item—*Purchase of No. 1, New Amsterdam, Berbice, cum annexis, \$26,500.*

Mr. LEE : I would like to know whether Government intends to incur any further expenditure for the equipment of this house.

The CHAIRMAN : I do not think so. I am going to have a look at the house myself on Sunday and shall then be able to say.

Mr. JACOB : Has any furniture been bought for the house ?

The CHAIRMAN : No; but we may have to get some.

Mr. JACOB : So Government has not yet started to spend money on this house ? I am going to look carefully at this matter.

The CHAIRMAN : I suggest that you come up the same time. I'll be going on Sunday.

Mr. JACOB : Thank you, sir.

Item passed.

PUBLIC WORKS (DRAINAGE, IRRIGATION AND SEA DEFENCES—EXTRAORDINARY)

Item—*Reconditioning of Drainage Works throughout the Colony—\$34,802.*

Mr. de AGUIAR : Some time ago I made reference to the condition of certain sluices relating to these works. I would like to know whether anything has been done to improve them since.

The CHAIRMAN : I will make a note and find out.

Item passed.

Council resumed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I now beg to move :—

“That this Council approves of the Schedule of Additional Provision for July, 1946, which has been laid on the table.”

Mr. de AGUIAR seconded.

The PRESIDENT : It has been moved and seconded that this Council approves of the Schedule of Additional Provision for July, 1946, subject to the deferment of one item.

Mr. de AGUIAR : May I suggest that the whole Schedule be passed ?

The PRESIDENT : Very well.

Motion put, and agreed to.

The PRESIDENT : I think hon. Members have got through the business very expeditiously. I suggest that we adjourn until 2 o'clock tomorrow.

Mr. EDUN : This week-end will be one of festivities and everybody is pre-

paring to go home. I do not think the Council should meet tomorrow, but should meet next Tuesday.

The PRESIDENT : I am sorry it will not suit me to meet next Tuesday at all.

Mr. EDUN : What about Wednesday next then, sir.

The PRESIDENT : I would like to meet tomorrow, but if hon. Members do not come we can't. We will adjourn, however, until 2 p.m., tomorrow.