

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

(*Thursday, 1st March, 1945*)

The Council met at 2 p.m. His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President in the Chair.

PRESENT

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M.C., K.C.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.

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

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, C.B.E. (Georgetown North).

The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K.C. (Nominated).

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

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

The Hon. F. Dias, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E. (Nominated).

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

The Hon. A. G. King (Demerara River).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River)

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated)

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated)

The Hon. C. P. Ferreira (Berbice River).

The Hon. A. A. Thorne (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT: The first business this morning is to administer the Oath of Allegiance to Mr. Alfred Athiel Thorne.

The President administered the Oath of Allegiance to Mr. Thorne who then took his seat.

The PRESIDENT: I would like to welcome Mr. Thorne on his return to this Council.

Mr. THORNE: Thank you.

PRESENTATIONS.

O.B.E. FOR DR. SINGH AND MR. J. W. JACKSON

The PRESIDENT: Our next business is that we have the honour today of conferring the honour and dignity of an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire on two Members of this Council who have taken a very prominent part for many years in the affairs and on behalf of the communities in which they live. I call upon the Clerk to present the two hon. Members.

The CLERK: The Hon. Joseph Waterton Jackson!

The Hon. Mr. Jackson, supported by the Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E., and the Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E., was then presented.

The PRESIDENT: I request the hon. the Colonial Secretary to read the Royal Warrant conferring upon Mr. Jackson the Honour and Dignity of an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY read the Royal Warrant dated 8th June, 1944.

The PRESIDENT: Honourable Mr. Jackson in the intimacy of this Council amongst your colleagues, if I may say a few words expressing the privilege and honour I have in handing to you today the Dignity of this Award of Honour, you have been a Member of this Council, I think, since 1935 and on behalf of myself and all your colleagues I wish to say how we appreciate the helpful counsel you have given us throughout those years. During the course of a very long life of which we are also glad to congratulate you today on your remarkable health, you have been a member of that very honourable profession of School Teachers and by your sincerity and hard work and good purpose you had risen to the very top

of the rank of your profession. You have also taken a most prominent part in Local Government in this Colony, and I know how greatly your services have been valued in that too. Mr. Jackson is the head of a noble family of Africans of this Colony, and I know of no more suitable person to represent his people.

Mr. Jackson, by command of His Majesty the King as conveyed to me by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies I have the honour to bestow on you today the Insignia of an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. Mr. Jackson, may I congratulate you. (Applause.)

The PRESIDENT pinned the Insignia on Mr. Jackson's coat lapel and shook his hand.

Mr. Jackson bowed in acknowledgment and was escorted to his seat.

The CLERK: The Hon. Dr. Jung Bahadur Singh!

The Hon. Dr. Singh, supported by the Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E., and the Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E., was next presented.

The PRESIDENT: May I call upon the hon. the Colonial Secretary to read the Royal Warrant conferring upon the Hon. Jung Bahadur Singh, the Dignity and Honour on an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY read the Royal Warrant dated 8th June, 1944.

The PRESIDENT: Dr. Singh, I have just said to our colleague, Mr. Jackson, that it gives me very great personal pleasure here in the intimacy of this Council amongst your colleagues to bestow upon you the Dignity of this Honour. Dr. Singh has, I think, been an Elected Member of this Council for 20 years, and during that long period

has, I know, given us and this Council most excellent service to which I personally and on your behalf wish to thank him. Moreover Dr. Singh has been a most prominent, perhaps the most prominent in recent years, member of the East Indian community in this country, and I know very well the services he has given in that regard and which have been signified by the bestowal upon him of a title by his patriots. Dr. Singh is a busy professional man, and I know from personal experience how little he spares himself and how he is always ready and willing in the performance of those duties as a Member of the Legislative Council.

Dr. Singh, by command of His Majesty the King as conveyed to me by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I bestow upon you the Dignity of an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

The PRESIDENT pinned the Insignia on Dr. Singh's coat lapel and shaking his hand said: "Dr. Singh, I congratulate you." (Applause).

The Hon. Dr. Singh bowed in acknowledgment and returned to his seat.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 27th December, 1944, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE GEORGETOWN FIRE

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members of Council—In opening this meeting today, which is the first meeting since

we completed the Budget for 1945 on a night in December last, it will be our very first wish to record in the annals of this Council the calamity of the fire which struck Georgetown last week. It is not possible even at this date to estimate fully what that calamity has cost and will cost this country, and I am not going to attempt any such statement. I see such attempts have been made, and they may have accuracy touching the actual destruction caused to buildings and their contents. But a true judgment must consider also the long term of months and even years that must pass before we can see even the physical position restored. Still less, perhaps, is it possible to estimate the output of physical and mental effort that must go into this reconstruction just at a time when with the end of the first phase of the war in sight—as it begins to appear to us—we had hoped to turn to the tackling of the many post-war problems of our country, and a much quicker progress than war conditions have allowed.

I do not know if Members wish to record in any more formal manner, the deep sympathy which we must feel—I say we as this Council is representative not only of Government but of the community at large—and which we would desire to proffer to those who are the particular victims of the calamity. As President, I would wish to record that deep sympathy of this Council here and now. The loss of the Natural History Museum and of the Library of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society with its quite irreplaceable books and papers is moreover a minor public disaster.

I would pass on to extend our warmest congratulations and praise for the initiative and resilient spirit shown by all in effecting such a notable retrieval of apparent disaster within a short week.

Though it will always be easy to criticise this or that incident in an occurrence of this kind, I am quite

sure that Members of this Council will be of one mind that in general the conduct of the citizens is to be praised. The promptitude with which commercial houses have attempted to re-organize affairs not only in their own interests but in the public interest—I would particularly mention the Banks and the Demerara Electric Company, which has so effectively worked to maintain and restore lighting and power—the action of the Chamber of Commerce in so quickly restoring confidence as to unemployment—the promptitude and co-operation of the Press in combining to issue in a notably short space of hours news of importance, and that is a signal service in the maintenance of public confidence. A similar service has been performed by the Broadcasting Company. The Churches and public personalities have taken charge of necessary immediate assistance to individuals. I would particularly wish to praise the conduct of many individual persons who voluntarily assisted in fighting the fire. Of Government services I would wish to refer particularly to the excellent service of the Telephone Exchange in the busy hours of Friday evening and night: I was myself never far from the telephone from 5 p.m. to midnight and the promptitude and equanimity of the operators was to me most notable. To the Police and the Military, to the Commissioner, Mr. Orrett, and to Colonel Hooker and their officers in a very special degree the appreciation of Government and of the community is due. It has now meant many days of continuous duty and close preoccupation, particularly in these latter days of rain.

Lastly, I would wish to record our gratitude to our American allies, who gave very considerable assistance on land and water, and would, I know, have been prepared to give us very much more had it been necessary.

I have said I was making no attempt to assess precisely the damage suffered, and I make no attempt

to assess the causes of this calamity—whether or not it should have been avoidable or whether or not it might have been less disastrous. That will be a matter for others better qualified in that they will have by formal enquiry exact and specified information to weigh. I will refer to Government's action in this regard later.

As will always happen on occasions of this kind, there has been misconduct by individuals, dereliction of duty by individuals, as well as simple mistakes of judgment. There have been specific acts of crime by persons who have taken advantage of an opportunity which the lowest class of thief cannot pass by. By and large, the volume of such criminality or dereliction or folly has been little and, I think, Georgetown and Guiana may flatter themselves on the general standard of conduct of the citizens and the public services.

We should further record with thankfulness and gratitude to Heaven that no far greater catastrophe has overwhelmed us. I do not suppose that anyone had a clearer picture of the 'what might have been' than I, with the Commissioner of Lands and Mines and his Cartographer and my Aide de Camp, as Major Williams flew us down from Hyde Park when the fire was at his height. Knowing nothing except from an urgent telephone message at Hyde Park but that a serious fire had broken out and much damage caused, you can imagine our sensation when first the vast pall of smoke billowing westwards over the Demerara River came in sight, to be succeeded, as we passed over Diamond about 1,000 feet up, by the amazing spectacle of the high Post Office building flaming to the skies through the smoke and the red flames clearly leaping forward towards Water Street and the river. I had a very real fear at that moment that stoppage before it reached Stabroek Market or the Government Stelling might be unlikely.

We have been spared that disaster and we should say no more at this moment than express our heartfelt gratitude to whatever natural agency or human effort, the accident of wind or the power of dynamite, and existence of some stone, brick and cement buildings, has left us at least so much safe out of the greater disaster. One life only has been lost and a very small number injured. To the relatives of this one unfortunate and plucky young man and to the injured themselves we extend our sympathy. A limited number of persons have suffered immediate loss, but I understand their needs are being adequately cared for by public spirited persons.

I have received, the Mayor of Georgetown and many others have received, messages of lively sympathy from friends abroad and sister colonies and from the Secretary of State. Offers of assistance have been numerous, and though I think we do not need direct aid by way of charity, there will be many ways in which I am sure we shall get our requirements especially quickly met through the sympathetic interest of those to whom we may have to apply for supplies of such particular kind as we may need. I might here remark the extreme practical assistance given to our Post Office by the Postal Department of the Government of the United States which was in a position to furnish certain much needed necessities.

I should here record some of the steps taken touching important Government or public services. The most important has been that affecting public confidence in the financial institutions. You will remember that I recorded a broadcast round about mid-night on Friday, subsequently issued at 7.15 a.m., touching the Banks and action taken by Government on Friday evening. The apparent destruction of both bank buildings and the Post Office, wherein was housed the Post Office Savings Bank, certainly did appear catastrophic and

public confidence in the security of accounts and savings might have been sadly shaken. It was of course imperatively necessary to give these institutions time to turn round, but at the same time to do something to meet the obligation and requirements for payment of wages and such services. This was done in the first place by utilising all the machinery of the Government Treasury etc., and its organisation and its cash reserves to meet all cheques for essential services endorsed by the Banks. I would wish to pay a special tribute to the most excellent hard work of the Treasury Officers. And in the second place a moratorium was declared relieving the institutions from their legal obligation of meeting demands for a number of days, first over the week-end and then further pending examination of the vaults. Examination of the vaults and deposits has been happy. The two Banks have made a very remarkable effort to equip themselves for business and I am very glad to say that it has now proved possible to re-open before the end of the week. An amending Order is therefore issuing and certain kinds of more essential business will be possible on Saturday. It is to be earnestly hoped that with the public confidence, as I believe, well established there will be no kind of excessive demand on the staffs of the Banks working under real difficulties.

P. O. SAVING BANK

The Post Office Savings Bank has of course continued to operate at all branch offices. A new central office is being established, and to relieve the Postmaster General of a completely impossible burden of the Bank as well as of getting the ordinary services of the Post Office going and planning their reconstruction a separate Comptroller of the Post Office Savings Bank is being appointed who will operate from this week. Mr. John Durey has been appointed to this duty. A special committee, probably statutory, will be appointed to deal with the claims which may be in doubt from loss of papers. The

work will be difficult and again I must appeal to the public to extend the utmost tolerance in giving the officials time and opportunity to get established their organisation.

It has been necessary to house the Post Office in new buildings temporarily, by the kindness of the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, in St. Andrew's Hall, and other and more commodious premises are expected to be ready soon.

The District Commissioner's Office was destroyed but no insuperable difficulty attends the restoration of that particular branch of public service in Georgetown.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING.

A very major difficulty has however resulted from the destruction of the *Argosy* printing press which carried the Government contract. As Members are aware, a small committee under the chairmanship of Mr. F. J. Seaford of the Executive Council, with Mr. O. S. Wight, General Manager of the *Argosy* and the Publicity Officer as his colleagues, and a Government Secretariat officer, Mr. King, to carry the executive side, was appointed and by admirable co-operation has succeeded in tiding over the immediate difficulties and planning future maintenance of this important service of Government. The first *Gazette* was produced under no little difficulty and we are over immediate troubles which might have hampered us greatly, thanks to the public spirit of the gentlemen concerned

Supplies from abroad will of course be essential for our restoration. I discussed this very early with the Controller of Supplies and authorised him generally to frame our demands and thereafter to proceed immediately to North America and use every possible lever to secure early fulfilment. It may be necessary for some essentials to be purchased on Government account, and Mr. Macnie will be authorised to pur-

sue every possible avenue and employ every possible method of securing these things with Government's credit fully employed.

It will be necessary in this emergency also to enable merchants to replenish stocks freely and for the time being at least to waive much of the restriction which wartime compulsions have forced upon us. I am confident that the necessities of our position will be understood by these authorities in London and Washington who are concerned.

I am also authorising a very large credit by advance of funds for the securing of building supplies wherever they might be obtained, and in particular taking over buildings at Mackenzie which, if not immediately useful in replacement of buildings destroyed, will by use elsewhere greatly relieve the total demand on supplies.

As regards the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society, I have consulted also the representative of the British Council here, who on his own initiative and with my support, has asked that Body to consider every manner of special assistance which may be possible, not of course by building construction but in the restoration and even advancement of the Society to its important place in the common life of this community. I will have a visit from Sir Harry Luke, the principal representative of the Council in the West Indies, and I hope we can carry this further.

COMMISSIONS OF ENQUIRY

I come to the question of the steps we must take in regard to the fire itself, the investigation of its causes, recommendations as to the future and the reconstruction of the area. I am in the first place appointing a commission of enquiry with the precise duty of fact finding, which must be the basis of later steps. That commission will consist of

a single person with legal powers and standing. Mr. Van Battenburg Stafford has been appointed to this duty, and I am grateful to him for his service. I am further appointing another commission—this cannot however function until the first has reported—which will have terms of reference of a more general character as regards the action taken by all agencies concerned in combatting the fire itself, as regards recommendations for the future organization of such services, and still more generally as to the rebuilding of this area with such plans and in such manner as may minimise the risks of such conflagrations in future years. I have also requested a visit from the Town Planner attached to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare, and I have received a telegram that he will come for the specific purpose of this replanning. Certain desirable measures of legislation governing such things as layout of the area, building lines, fire prevention safeguard by material or otherwise will also be pursued. I may say that such things had some time ago been referred to and considered by the Zoning Committee appointed by me and presided over by the present Mayor.

Lastly, I shall be asking this Council for a substantial credit, for expenditure to meet all the necessities of the present position affecting the maintenance of Government services or other miscellaneous needs which we can scarcely anticipate at this moment, of \$50,000.

There will be much other action which will fall upon Government, on the Executive Council and on this Council in these future months. I am sure that there will be evinced, as in these past few days, the maximum degree of co-operation and community spirit which may be one of the good things arising out of the ashes.

RE-GRADING OF FEMALE CLERKS

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.), communicated the following Messages.

MESSAGE No. 25.

Honourable Members of Legislative Council,

Honourable Members will recollect that when Government introduced the reclassification scheme for the Clerical Service on 1st May, 1944, the Colonial Secretary, in seconding the Motion, stated that an application had been received from the Civil Service Association to the effect that the women who were formerly in Class II should be graded as Class I under the reclassification scheme for the Clerical Service as are being graded the men employees formerly in Class II, and that they should not be graded in a separate class "Grade A (Women)." It was then recorded that Government was "giving careful consideration to this question."

2. Consideration of it elicited a number of arguments both for and against this proposed concession, and the matter has been referred to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for his advice. It should be stated that eight women employees are affected as at date. The reply is as follows:

"I have no hesitation in saying "that it is desirable that women in "Government service be given equal "opportunities with men, though this "does not necessarily imply that the "same salary scales should be offered "to them. That particular question "raises debatable points but on bal- "ance I am of the opinion that the "request of the Civil Service Associa- "tion in this matter should be met, "unless you see strong objection."

3. The principle that a differing salary scale could be applied to women employees in view of the character of work normally performed, was accepted by Legislative Council and the Secretary of State as one of the articles of the reclassification scheme. On the other hand women employees may be promoted to Class I, and to the higher grades, if the work being done by them should justify such classification. The present claim is in effect that the eight women employees in question should proceed direct to Class I, without a specific promotion on the special ground of equality that they had held equal grade and remuneration with male employees right up to the moment of the putting into effect of the reclassification scheme, and that that being so they should not be excluded on the ground of sex from the automatic advancement given to their male colleagues, by being placed in a separate grade. No other women

employees are effected and later promotions of women would of course be treated by regard to individual merit for promotion.

4. The primary objections to the proposal to grant a special concession to the eight women employees in question have been stated as follows:—

(a) the assumption is that only a few of them would have qualified for promotion to Class I under the previous conditions and that those who would have qualified may still get promotion to Class I from Grade A under the present scheme, which provides that women will not necessarily be precluded from appointment to a senior post normally held by a man if special circumstances make this desirable.

(b) under their existing salary scale they are entitled to a maximum of \$1,620 with a service allowance of \$192 or \$1,812 per annum— an amount in excess of the efficiency bar point and only \$108 below the actual maximum of the new Class I.

5. It will be observed that in his comment the Secretary of State on balance favours the proposed concession unless the Governor sees strong objection. I agree with the view expressed, and I am unable to regard the objections stated as so strong as to outweigh the claim of the eight women employees in this particular case.

6. The original scheme was placed before Legislative Council and accepted, and the concession affecting eight women employees herein stated should be now considered also by Council, with the recommendation as para. 5 *supra*. No immediate addition to expenditure is involved.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

23rd January, 1945.

REVISION OF SALARIES OF T. & H. D.
EMPLOYEES.

MESSAGE No. 26.

Honourable Members of the Legislative
Council:

In view of certain general representations as to emoluments obtaining in the Transport and Harbours Department, notwithstanding improvements which followed

on the recommendations of the 1941 Report of the Transport Workers Enquiry Committee, a new Committee of Enquiry was appointed on 22nd March, 1944, to consider salaries and wages of the personnel of the Department (excluding certain posts on the fixed Establishment of the Colony which had already been considered) and to make recommendations as to what revisions of the existing salary scales and wage rates were desirable.

The Committee's report in its final form, Legislative Council Report 28/1944, was received on the 4th of November, 1944, and copies of it have been circulated to Members.

2. The recommendations contained in the report have been given careful and detailed consideration by the Governor-in-Council who have advised their adoption subject to certain modifications suggested by the Commissioner of Labour. A statement of these modifications is appended to the Report.

3. The Report has since been considered by the Board of Commissioners of the Department who have informed Government that they consider the Committee's Report to be a very excellent one with which they have little or no fault to find. The Board have nevertheless invited attention to various anomalies arising out of the proposals in the Report which they recommend should be adjusted, and it is proposed to give careful consideration to the representations of the Board in consultation with the Commissioner of Labour and the Trade Unions.

4. The Committee estimates that the cost of carrying the proposals into effect will be approximately \$108,000 for the year 1944, rising eventually to a maximum of approximately \$154,000. A corresponding increase in the provision from general revenue to meet the annual net deficiency of the Department will accordingly result, subject however to any reduction in the deficiency arising from an increase in the revenues of the Department that may be secured by an increase in the tariff charges. In this connection recommendations have been put forward by the Board for a general increase in the tariff, consideration of which has been deferred pending the investigation into the whole question of the working of the Department which will be undertaken by Mr. C. E. Rooke, late General Manager of the Nigerian Railways, who will shortly visit the Colony for this purpose.

5. It is proposed to authorise the Board to introduce the revised salaries and wages recommended with effect from 1st January, 1944, and I accordingly invite the Council to undertake to provide on supplementary estimates for the current year the resulting addition to the net deficiency vote. The Secretary of State has notified his approval of the introduction of a Motion in Council to this effect.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

10th February, 1945.

ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS FOR RICE
EXPANSION SCHEMES

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.) communicated the following Messages:

MESSAGE NO. 23

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to refer to Council Paper No. 21 of 1944 containing the series of eleven despatches addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies forwarding applications for financial assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act to meet the cost of schemes being undertaken in connection with the expansion of rice production in British Guiana.

2. For convenience of reference these schemes with their estimated costs as set out in the despatches and related applications, are summarized below:—

Despatch	Scheme.	Estimated Cost
(a) No. 203	12/11/43	Perth Canal.....\$ 18,800
(b) „ 204	do.	Mahaicony Rice Mill..... 20,000
(c) „ 205	do.	Anna Regina Rice Mill 32,000
(d) „ 206	do.	Crabwood Creek, Corentyne 170,000
(e) „ 207	do.	Weldaad, W.C., Berbice 42,600
(f) „ 212	23/11/43	Lots 63 to 74, Corentyne 73,600
(g) „ 213	26/11/43	Mahaicony-Abary 275,000
(h) „ 137	20/7/44	Bloomfield-Whim, Corentyne 96,000
(i) „ 149	4/8/44	Mechanical Equipment 324,087
(j) „ 150	do.	New Central Rice Mill 418,750
(k) „ 151	do.	Mahaicony-Abary Rice Cultiva tion 301,356
		\$1,772,193

the first seven of the schemes enumerated above, and that by Resolution No. XIX of the 16th of October, 1944, Council approved acceptance of these funds on the terms stated.

4. The Secretary of State has now notified approval of the three schemes at (i), (j), and (k) above, and has sanctioned financial assistance under the Act by way of grants and loans as follows:—

(i) Mechanical Equipment.

A free grant not exceeding £33,750 or \$162,000 to cover one-half the cost of the equipment, the other half to be met by the Rice Marketing Board from surplus funds.

(j) New Central Rice Mill.

(i) A loan not exceeding £84,750 or \$406,800 to cover the cost of purchasing and erecting the mill, on terms to be prescribed later, but to be free of interest and repayment charges for the first five years;

(ii) A free grant of £23,500 or \$12,000 to cover the cost of experiments in the mechanical drying of padi for the manufacture of parboiled rice, and the visit of an expert to supervise the erections and preliminary operation of the mill, etc.

(k) Mahaicony-Abary Rice Cultiva-
tion.

A free grant of £31,400 or \$150,720 and a loan of the same amount. The loan will be free of repayment terms for three years,

3. It will be recalled that in his Message No. 6 dated the 2nd of August, 1944, the Officer Administering the Government informed the Council of the grant of funds to a total of \$632,000 on terms specified by the Secretary of State to meet the cost of

and thereafter repayable over the fourth to the thirteenth years with interest at 3½% per annum.

5. With respect to the moiety of the expenditure on the Mechanical Equipment Scheme, which is to be met

from the surplus funds of the Rice Marketing Board, an allocation for this purpose has been made by the Board, with the approval of the Governor, in terms of Regulation 22 of the Defence (Rice Control) Regulations which permits the profits of the Board to be used and expended generally for the benefit and advancement of the rice industry and, in particular, in the adoption or execution of any measures calculated, in the opinion of the Board, to be conducive to the maintenance or extension of export trade in the industry. While one half of the units of mechanical equipment will be more or less fully employed on the Mahaicony-Abery Rice Cultivation project, the remainder of the equipment will be utilized on hire service to rice farmers throughout the Colony. It has been agreed, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, that the Rice Marketing Board (or their successors) will be free to apply for a loan from general revenue to replace the funds so expended should it be necessary to restore the amount for use or any other essential purpose.

6. Consideration of Scheme (h) above for the Bloomfield-Whim, Corentyne, area has been deferred by the Secretary of State pending the receipt of estimates of the cost of carrying out internal works necessary in the area. The estimates have now gone forward.

7. I now invite the Council to approve by formal resolution of the acceptance of funds provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act towards the cost of scheme (l), (j) and (k) above on the terms and conditions set out.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

16th December 1944.

COMPASSIONATE ALLOWANCE TO MRS.

L. E. SORTON
MESSAGE No. 24

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

Government has had under consideration the question of the grant of pension to teachers in Regulation 95 Schools, and Executive Council has already approved in principle of the grant of pensions to this class of teachers, but it has not yet been possible to proceed with the necessary enabling legislation.

2. An application has been received from Mrs. L. E. Sorton, Head Teacher of Dalgin Regulation 95 School, for a pension under the Teachers Pensions Ordinance.

Chapter 197, but as the law stands at pres-

ent her application cannot be granted as she has not the necessary 10 years' continuous service in fully aided schools to enable her to qualify for a pension under the Teachers Pensions Ordinance, Chapter 197. She, however, has additional service in Regulation 95 Schools, and her total service amounts to 29 years, 26 of which would count for pension, the remaining 3 years being service while she was under the age of 20 years.

3. The Education Committee has recommended that Mrs. Sorton be granted a compassionate allowance equivalent to the pension which would have been payable to her as an uncertificated teacher of her length of service.

4. As Mrs. Sorton's service has been continuously satisfactory, and she has had to retire on account of impaired health, and in view of the fact that Executive Council has already approved in principle of the grant of pensions to teachers in Regulation 95 Schools, Council is accordingly invited to approve of the grant to her of a compassionate allowance at the rate of \$10.40 a month from the date of her retirement—24th April, 1944, inclusive.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

2nd January, 1945.

SPECIAL PENSION FOR MRS. MURIEL GIBBS.

MESSAGE No. 27

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

Mr. E. Gibbs, deceased, was in March, 1943, appointed a Ranger, Local Government Department, on the Fixed Establishment with effect from the 1st of January, 1943. He was attached to the staff of the District Commissioner, Mazaruni-Potaro District, and commenced contributing to the New Widows and Orphans' Fund from March, 1943.

2. While his contribution to the Fund was automatic on his appointment to the Fixed Establishment he could not become entitled to any benefits under the Ordinance until he had passed the necessary medical examination, had been accepted by the Directors of the Fund, and registered as a contributor.

3. Mr. Gibbs died on the 3rd of October, 1944 as a result of drowning, two days before the date fixed for his medical examination which could not be arranged earlier owing to his prolonged absence from

Georgetown on his official duties. He was therefore never accepted and registered as a contributor to the New Widows and Orphans' Fund and on his death his widow was not entitled to a pension under the Widows and Orphans' Pensions Ordinance, Chapter 207.

4. This case has been examined by the Executive Council, and in view of the fact that it was through no fault of his own that the late Mr. Gibbs failed to become a registered contributor to the Fund, the Executive Council considered that his widow should not be deprived of the pension for which she would have been otherwise eligible, and advised that the necessary action be taken to provide for her from public funds, a pension equivalent to the amount she would have received if her late husband had been admitted as a registered contributor to the New Widows and Orphans' Fund.

5. Had the late Mr. Gibbs come under the Widows and Orphans' Pensions Ordinance, his widow would have received a pension of \$56.23 per annum payable during her life-time, or until she remarried when it would have ceased.

6. Council is accordingly invited to approve of the grant to Mrs. Gibbs of a special pension of \$56.23 per annum payable during her life-time or, if she remarries, until the date of her remarriage.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

10th February, 1945.

CONTINUATION OF SUBSIDIZATION
MEASURES.

MESSAGE NO. 28

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to refer to Resolution No. XL passed by Council on 14th March, 1944, approving of the incurrence of expenditure on subsidization measures during the year 1944 to a maximum of \$3,000,000, and of the provision on the Colonial Estimates for 1944 of a sum of \$1,000,000 towards this expenditure in anticipation of the receipt of financial assistance from His Majesty's Exchequer to cover the remainder of the cost.

2. I have to report to Council that the net total expenditure incurred on subsidization in the year 1944 amounted to \$1,969,531. Of this total \$1,000,000 has been

met as a charge on Colony Revenue, the balance of \$969,531 being provided as a grant from H.M. Treasury.

3. A statement showing the expenditure on the various commodities subsidized in 1944 is printed as Schedule I below this Message.

4. I have already informed the Council that it is proposed to continue subsidization during the current year on the same basis as in 1944, subject to certain modifications. Some of these modifications have been decided on after careful consideration and have recently been announced. A statement showing the estimated expenditure for 1945 is furnished in Schedule II below.

5. As Honourable Members are aware, no provision for the cost of subsidization was made in the approved estimates passed by Council for the service of the year 1945, and in accord with the procedure previously followed, Council is now invited to approve by Resolution of the continuation of these measures in 1945 on the basis indicated and to undertake to provide on Supplementary Estimates the amount required to be met from Colony Revenue towards their cost, estimated at \$1,000,000 as in 1944. In this connection, I shall be reporting to the Secretary of State for the Colonies as regards assistance to cover expenditure in excess of \$1,000,000.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

21st February, 1945.

SCHEDULE I.

EXPENDITURE IN 1944 ON SUBSIDIZED
COMMODITIES

Commodity.	Expenditure.
Flour	\$ 973,796 29
Cornmeal	9,778 07
Split Peas	132,431 42
Condensed Milk	293,468 26
Cooking Butter	77,837 69
Pickled Beef	169,873 24
Salt Fish.....	223,425 00
Fresh Beef	21,010 92
Agricultural Implements	1,644 05
Gas Oil	19,490 23
Diesel Oil	15,102 22
Margarine	1,323 97
Kerosene	169 35
Mepacrine	7,126 85
Charcoal	14,127 92
Edible Oil	8,925 64
	<hr/>
	\$1,969,531 12

SCHEDULE II.

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE IN 1945
ON SUBSIDIZED COMMODITIES.

Commodity.	Expenditure.
Flour .....	.....\$ 870,000
Cornmeal .....	..... 12,050
Split Peas .....	..... 115,000
Condensed Milk .....	..... 125,000
Cooking Butter .....	..... 75,000
Pickled Beef .....	..... 175,000
Salt Fish .....	..... 290,000
Fresh Beef .....	..... 40,000
Agricultural Implements .....	..... 5,000
Gas & Diesel Oils .....	..... 50,000
Margarine .....	..... 10,000
Kerosene .....	..... 500
Mepacrine .....	..... 2,000
Charcoal .....	..... 18,000
Fresh Milk .....	..... 144,375
	\$ 1,931,925

PAPERS LAID

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following reports and documents:—

Despatch from the Secretary of State dated 9th October, 1944, on the subject of the West Indian Conference Resolution regarding Inter-Caribbean Trade.

United States Survey (Special Powers) Order, 1945.

List of articles specially exempted from duty under item 2 of the Fourth Schedule to the Customs Duties Ordinance, 1935, during the year 1944.

Order in Council No. 2 of 1945 made under Section 4 of the Criminal Law Procedure Ordinance 1931.

Statement regarding British Guiana Drainage and Irrigation Schemes under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1940.

The Telephone (Amendment) Regulations No. 1 of 1945 made under section 94 of the Post and Telegraph Ordinance (Chapter 185) as amended by section 4 of the Post and Telegraph Ordinance 1935.

Report of the Malaria Investigations Service of the Medical Department for the year 1943.

Comments made by His Excellency the Governor in Legislative Council on Wednesday, the 27th of December, 1944, at the conclusion of the Budget Debate.

Report of the West Indian Schooner Pool and Statement of Accounts for the half year ended 30th June, 1944.

Defence (Georgetown Electricity Restriction) Regulations 1944.

Defence (Georgetown Electricity Restriction) (Amendment) Regulations, 1944.

Defence (Rent and Pasturage Fees Restriction) Regulations, 1945.

Reports of the Comptroller of Customs for the years 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943.

Reports of the Commissioner of Lands and Mines for the years 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943.

Report of the General Manager, Transport and Harbours Department, for the year 1940.

Report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies for 1944.

The COLONIAL TREASURER laid on the table the following:—

Schedules of Additional Provision for the quarters 1st July to 30th September, 1944, 1st October to 31st December, 1944, 1st January, 1945 to 31st March, 1945.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

RE-GRADING OF FEMALE CLERKS

The COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motions:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 25 dated 23rd January, 1945, this Council approves of the women who were formerly Class II Clerks being regraded as Class I Clerks under the reclassification scheme for the Clerical Service.

REVISION OF SALARIES OF T. & H.D.
EMPLOYEES

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 26 dated 10th February, 1945, this Council undertakes to provide the necessary additional funds on the Net Deficiency Vote of the Transport and Harbours Department Head XXXIX in the 1945 Estimates, to enable effect to be given to the recommendations contained in the Report of the Committee of Enquiry. Leg. Co. No. 28 of 1944.

ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS FOR RICE
EXPANSION SCHEMES

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motions:

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 23 of 1944 dated 16th December, 1944, this Council approves of the acceptance of funds provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act to a total of \$882,240 comprising fee grants of \$324,720 and loans of \$557,520 on the terms and conditions set out in the Message in respect of the following schemes:—

Mechanical Equipment	.....	\$ 162,000
New Central Rice Mill	.....	418,800
Mahaicony-Abary Rice Cultivation	.....	301,440
		<hr/>
		\$ 882,240

COMPASSIONATE ALLOWANCE TO MRS. L. E. SORTON

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 24 dated 2nd January, 1945, this Council approves of the grant of a compassionate allowance at the rate of \$10.40 a month with effect from the 24th of April, 1944, inclusive, to Mr L. E. Sorton, ex-Headteacher of Dalgin Regulation 95 School.

SPECIAL PENSION FOR MRS. MURIEL GIBBS

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 27 dated 10th February, 1945, this Council approves of the grant to Mrs Muriel Gibbs, widow of Mr. E. Gibbs, deceased, late Ranger, Local Government Department, of a special pension of \$56.23 per annum to be paid from the 4th of October, 1944, inclusive, for her lifetime or, if she remarries, until the date of her remarriage.

CONTINUATION OF SUBSIDIZATION MEASURES

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 28 dated 21st February, 1945, this Council approves of the incurrence of expenditure on subsidisation measures during the year 1945, and of the provision on the Colonial Estimates of a sum of \$1,000,000 towards this expenditure in anticipation of the receipt of financial assistance from His Majesty's Exchequer to cover the remainder of the cost.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1944

That, this Council approves the Schedules of Additional Provision for the quarters 1st July, 1944, to 30th September, 1944, and 1st October, 1944, to 31st

December, 1944, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the estimates for the year 1944, which has been laid on the table.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1945

That this Council approves the Schedule of Additional Provision for the quarter 1st January, 1945, to 31st March, 1945, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the estimates for the year 1945, which has been laid on the table.

RESTORATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

That, this Council approves of the expenditure of such amounts as may be necessary, not exceeding a total of \$50,000 on measures for the restoration of public services disorganized as the result of the fire which took place in Georgetown on 23rd February, 1945, and undertakes to provide the necessary funds on Supplementary Estimates.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills:

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Mining (Consolidation) Ordinance by making provision for the prohibition or restriction of prospecting in unoccupied Crown Lands."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the extension of certain Drainage and Irrigation Areas; the declaration of New Drainage and Irrigation Areas; the validation of the construction of certain works; the vesting of certain lands in the Drainage and Irrigation Board; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

REMISSION OF DUTY ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

Mr. ROTH gave notice of the following motion:

WHEREAS it has been stated it is Government's wish to do all possible to promote and expand the interior development of this Colony.

AND WHEREAS one of the most important industries in the interior is the exploitation of forest products.

AND WHEREAS such exploitation of forest products is most seriously handicapped by the high duties assessed on these petroleum products essential to such exploitation,

AND WHEREAS the said high duties, coupled with the unusually high cost of transporting fuel to the points of extraction, contribute to the fact that local forest products cannot normally be produced at a price to compete with similar articles manufactured outside the Colony and sold locally,

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommend to Government the remission, subject to necessary safeguards, of all duty on petroleum products used in the exploitation of forest products and the development of the interior generally.

HOUSING PROBLEM ON SUGAR ESTATES

Mr. THORNE gave notice of the following motion :

WHEREAS the Housing for Workers on Sugar Estates has for several years past and is at the present time far from satisfactory and in very many instances detrimental to the health of workers and their families:

AND, WHEREAS the duty and obligation of Sugar Estates to supply Housing for the vast majority of their employees as Indentured Immigrants ceased with the cessation of Indentured Immigration some twenty years ago;

AND, WHEREAS the health of the inhabitants of the Colony, including those on Sugar Estates, is of prime importance to the Government of the Colony;

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Honourable Legislative Council strongly recommend to His Excellency the Governor the immediate appointment of a suitable Committee or Commission to investigate the Housing Problem on the Sugar Estates in the Colony, and to report their findings with proposal or proposals for establishing townships in or near the Estates in which workers can own or lease their own houses or be able to rent reasonable houses or living quarters at rates proportionate to their earnings on the said Estates.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MINERALS

Mr. ROTH gave notice of the following question:

WHEREAS it is in the interest of the Colony to encourage the search for and development of new minerals, and whereas the imposition of royalty charges and export taxes by Government on such minerals would tend to retard rather than to encourage such development by adding to the cost of production and export, will Government consider favourably the adoption of a policy whereby no royalty or export tax will be levied upon minerals not hitherto produced or exported for sale during the initial stages of development.

NON-PENSIONABLE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Mr. THORNE gave notice of the following questions:

1. How many and what classes of Government employees are at the present time **not eligible** for pensions at the expiration of their periods of active continuous service to Government though the said periods of service may exceed ten (10) years?

2. What is the approximate number of such employees in the service of the Government of the Colony at the present time?

3. Does the Government contemplate any action through which such employees will get pensions other than through the **OLD AGE PENSIONS ORDINANCE** for indigent persons above the age of Sixty-five?

ACCOUNTING POSTS

4. How many Accounting Posts are there in the Government Service under the following sub-divisions?—

(a) Self Accounting

(b) Non Self Accounting?

5. What is the status, and, what the salary drawn by each of these Officers under (a) and (b)?—(It is being asked that the Status and the Salary of the Accountants and the Accounting Clerks be given separately, and the Department to which each and every one of these is attached.)

SENIOR CLERKS

6. To which Departments of Government have Senior Clerks been added or created during 1944? (b) What is the number of Senior Clerks added or created

in each of these Departments? (c) Are all or any of these Senior Clerks continuing in the said Departments in which they are made or to which they were added? (d) If any transfers, what are their names, whither have they been transferred, and why?

INCREASED SALARIES IN T. & H.D.

7. How many Officers in the Accounting and Clerical Branches of the Transport and Harbours Department have had raise of Status and consequent Increase of Salary during 1944? (b) Are any of these performing Clerical or Secretarial duties in the Harbour Division? (c) What was the Status and the Salary of each of the said Officers who have had the raise of Status at 31st December, 1943?

PROMOTION OF SENIOR CLERKS

8. How many Senior Clerks on the list in 1943 have not been promoted during 1944? And, to which Department does each of these not promoted Senior Clerks belong?

SALARIES REVISION OFFICER

9. Is the Government Officer who prepared the Revised Salary Scales of the Clerical Service during 1943 the same Officer who prepared the Revised Salary Scales of Heads, Deputies and other Assistants of Government Departments?

EMPLOYEES RECEIVING LESS THAN \$10 PER WEEK

10. (i) Are there any Overseers, Foremen and Nursery-foremen employed by Government with continuous service exceeding twenty (20) years being paid less than Ten Dollars (\$10) per week? (ii) Will such cases, if any, be given consideration so as to enable them to escape qualifying for Old Age Pension?

REINSTATEMENT OF OFFICERS ON WAR SERVICE

11. How many Government Officers have been forced by Government to relinquish their posts so as to be able to join the Forces fighting for liberty and freedom?

12. Will Government on the return of these Officers reinstate them and fully in the Government Service?

THE NEW ORDER-IN-COUNCIL

The PRESIDENT: Before we proceed to the Order of the Day I would like to say that the new Order-in-Council made by His Majesty the King to bring into effect the new franchise and other constitutional changes which have already been stated in Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, has now been prepared and seen by me. With certain unimportant verbal amendments it is now with the Secretary of State and may be executed at any moment. I have not yet received the report of the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. J. A. Luckhoo) and his Committee as to the necessary legislative action to be taken by this Council, but I hope to receive that report shortly. The execution of the Order-in-Council clears the way for the necessary Ordinance to be passed by this Council.

PRINTING DIFFICULTIES

I should also report with regret one consequence of the fire and our printing difficulties, that is that many despatches which were being printed for circulation to Members and to the public cannot now be so printed early. These deal largely with development schemes arising out of the visit of Sir Frank Stockdale. I am sorry for this but I will try to send type-written copies to Members.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

RESERVE FUND OF RICE MARKETING BOARD

Mr. EDUN asked the Colonial Secretary the following questions:

1. Has any of the Reserved Fund of the Rice Marketing Board been utilised in the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme?

2. If the answer is in the affirmative please state when, how and for what purpose or purposes such sum or sums of money have been spent?

3. If the answer is in the negative, will the Board make a public declaration that no portion of the reserved fund shall be spent in the aforesaid scheme?

4. Has any of the profits of the Board (unreserved fund) been spent in the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme?

5. If so how much and for what purpose or purposes?

6. Wouldn't expenditure of the Board's Funds in the aforesaid scheme be a violation of the Defence (Rice Control) Regulations 1939, page 5 par. 2?

7. In the event of such expenditure would not any rice producer have the legal right to seek an injunction and damages against this violation of the aforesaid Regulations resulting in loss of his monetary rights?

8. Is the Board contemplating distribution of the profits to the rice producers in the form of bonus or otherwise as was the original idea of participation in the profits?

9. How many acres of padi were cultivated, and how many bags of padi reaped on the Rice Expansion Scheme? What is the average yield per acre in other rice areas in the Mahaicony-Abary district?

10. What is the total expenditure in the cultivation and reaping process, the cost of production per bag of padi reaped, and the total capital outlay in the inauguration of the aforesaid scheme?

11. What work was done under contract, piece rate and time systems?

12. What is the total number of employees working presently, and how many were dismissed?

With the consent of the Council the following replies by the Colonial Secretary were taken as read:—

Questions 1 to 7: The Honourable Member is invited to refer to His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 23 to the Legislative Council dated 16th December, 1944, in which full particulars are set out with respect to the financing of the various rice production expansion schemes including:—

- (a) Mahaicony-Abary Drainage Irrigation
- (b) Mahaicony-Abary Rice Cultivation
- (c) New Central Rice Mill (Mahaicony).
- (d) Mechanical Equipment.

It will be noted from the Message that the total costs of items (a), (b) and (c) and one-half that of item (d) are being met from funds provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. For the reasons stated in paragraph 5 of that Message the other one-half of the cost of item (d) will be met by the Rice Marketing

Board from surplus funds and an allocation for this purpose has been made by the Board, with the approval of the Governor, in terms of Regulation 22 of the Defence (Rice Control) Regulations.

Question 8: The answer is in the negative. Statements of policy on the question of the appropriation and use of the Board's surplus funds for the general benefit of the Rice Industry and explaining the reason why the plan (as originally conceived) of distributing such funds by means of continuous advances in the Board's purchase prices has ceased to be either practicable or appropriate, have been made public from time to time. The question was debated in the Legislative Council on 10th November, 1943, when the Honourable Member's motion recommending the distribution of the surplus funds of the Board was not accepted by the Council. The Honourable Member is invited to refer in particular to the publications detailed in the footnote* hereunder.

It may be stated that sums have been allocated for and are being expended for the general benefit of the rice industry with a view to the maintenance and expansion of export trade in the industry, more particularly in the pure line seed padi production and distribution scheme, the construction of bonds, the subsidization of bags and the purchase of mechanical equipment for communal use on a hire basis, while a reserve is also being built up to maintain temporarily reasonable price levels in the immediate post-war period, and for working capital.

Question 9: The area planted in 1944 was approximately 2,300 acres. The padi reaped was 33,500 bags. The yield per acre planted is accordingly only 14½ bags instead of 20 bags as expected. The shortfall was due to mechanical difficulties and to the fact that a block of some 500 acres was damaged by heavy wind. A detailed report of the results and of expectations for the future will be published by the Board. This experiment is of the highest importance to the Industry. If mechanical cultivation can be proved successful on a large scale there is no reason why it cannot be applied with even greater success on a communal basis where the farmers themselves will perform what manual labour is necessary, and this is the ultimate aim which the Board has in view.

Question 10: The results for the year 1944 are not yet available. Full particulars of the financial and cultivation results of the operation of the Mahaicony-Abary Rice Cultivation Scheme will be published in the half-yearly reports of the Rice Marketing Board.

Question 11:

- (a) Under contract—Collecting and transporting sheaves and threshing machines.
- (b) On piece rates—Cutting padi and transporting bags of padi.
- (c) On time systems — Operating mechanical equipment and all work other than at (a) and (b) above.

Question 12: As in other agricultural activities the number of employees vary from season to season. The maximum number employed at any one time during 1944 was as high as 1,505. The number employed in January, 1945, was only 15 but will increase as the work of ploughing and planting proceeds; in the reaping season the number employed will again increase although it should not rise to anything approaching the total employed in 1944.

- *(a) Paragraph 4 of Board's Report for period 1st April, 1942, to 30th September 1942 (Council Paper No. 1 of 1943).
- (b) Official Communique issued by Board and published in the Press on 6th March, 1943.
- (c) Paragraph 4 of Board's Report for period 1st October, 1942, to 31st March, 1943 (Council Paper No. 8 of 1943).
- (d) Official text of the report of the statement in the Legislative Council by the Colonial Treasurer (Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board) on 10th November, 1943, on the occasion when the Honourable Member's motion recommending the distribution of the surplus funds of the Rice Marketing Board was not accepted by the Legislative Council. (This was published in full in the Press on 14th November, 1943).
- (e) Paragraphs 5 and 6 of Board's Report for period 1st April 1943 to 30th September, 1943 (Council Paper No. 1 of 1944).

RESTORATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

The **PRESIDENT:** With the consent of Members we will proceed to take first the motion, of which the Treasurer has given notice, with regard to special provision of funds to meet the liabilities caused by the fire.

The **COLONIAL TREASURER:** I beg to move:—

That this Council approves of the expenditure of such amounts as may be necessary, not exceeding a total of \$50,000, on measures for the restoration of Public Services disorganised as the result of the fire which took place in Georgetown on 23rd February, 1945, and undertakes to provide the necessary funds on supplementary estimates.

I wrote the draft of this motion but I cannot undertake to give any estimates or even the direction in which this expenditure will be incurred. Naturally our primary task is to re-organize and restore the postal and other services, but the expenditure will cover a very wide field. We are asking as a preliminary step for an advance of \$50,000, and subsequently I will report to Finance Committee the direction in which the expenditure will be placed. At present this is merely a token vote to enable very necessary services to be restored at once. I formally move the motion.

The **COLONIAL SECRETARY** seconded.

Mr. SEAFORD: Before you put the motion sir, may I take this opportunity to say that we often hear criticisms of the Treasury Department in this Council, and I think when the occasion arises that the Department has shown itself to be so extraordinarily efficient official notice should be taken of it. I refer to the way in which the Treasury has risen to the occasion in these last terrible days. I believe that had the Treasury not come forward and been able to do the wonderful work they have done we in this Colony would have found ourselves in a very serious position. That Department has, I believe, paid out in this short time as much as \$2,000,000. Members will realize what that means when I say that the Treasury has had to pay out small sums, and that several people in the country districts had to be paid their wages at the end of last week. By Saturday morning arrangements had been made so that the people on the countryside could be

paid their wages. As Members of this Council I think the least we can do is to offer to the Colonial Treasurer and his staff and Government generally our very deep gratitude and congratulations for the way in which they stood up to the very heavy strain. I think we should take off our hats and congratulate them on what they have done. (Applause).

Mr. EDUN: Speaking on behalf of the workers on the sugar estates I felt very dismal on Saturday morning when I met Mr. Cowell among the ruins in Water Street. I tendered him my sympathy and the first thing he told me was that every effort was being made to see that the workers got their money before 11 o'clock. I found out that they did get their money, which is very commendable indeed, and I wish to endorse everything that has been said by the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford). I wish to add this much: those are the things that are expected of men who are at the head of affairs. They have done their work ably and well, and I think we ought to congratulate them.

Mr. THORNE: On behalf of the working people in Georgetown and in the country districts I desire to add my quota of congratulations to the Treasury for the work done. On Friday night large numbers of people came from the East Coast and other parts of the Colony and there was almost a panic when they felt that they were going to lose their money and would have no money on Saturday, and it was a very great relief to us to know on Saturday that the people would not only take back money with them but confidence in the Government which was of very great assistance to us whose judgment could not be used but who would have to depend entirely upon action which, on this occasion, has been most expeditious. (Applause).

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I would like to express my gratitude to

Members who have spoken on behalf of my staff for the work they have done. I know that my staff worked extraordinarily hard on Sunday—the Treasury as well as the Currency Commissioners—and it leaves me with a feeling of deep gratitude and satisfaction. On their behalf I again thank Members.

The PRESIDENT: With the consent of Members I will now put the motion. The next time I hear the Treasurer criticized because of his close-fisted and conservative financing I will remind Members of what they have said today of the advantage of having a substantial surplus in the coffers of Government. (Laughter).

Mr. LEE: Before the question is put, may I ask the Treasurer and Government to do one favour? I have been told by several persons that they have lost their Savings Bank books, and they have no record whatever of their deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank. If publication were given of the method by which the Treasurer or the Government will deal with the matter it would save those people a great deal of expense. I am a lawyer and I know, but on behalf of those people I plead with Government to give publication to the method that will be adopted.

The PRESIDENT: Members will appreciate what exactly I was referring to when I spoke of the Post Office Savings Bank and said that I would have to appoint a statutory Commission. I will do so as soon as I possibly can. I also said that I hoped the public would have reasonable tolerance and patience, and I would say this now: let everybody hold on to their books and do not lose them or burn them. (Laughter).

Mr. LEE: I was referring to those books burnt at the Post Office.

Motion put and agreed to.

REGRADING OF FEMALE CLERKS

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: beg to move:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 25 dated 23rd January, 1945, this Council approves of the women who were formerly Class II Clerks being regraded as Class I Clerks under the re-classification scheme for the Clerical Service.

I am not going to detain Members very long in moving this motion. Your Excellency's Message No. 25 sets out the case both for and against very clearly, and it states that there is no financial commitment involved. But there is a very important principle involved. What I would ask Members to consider is whether it is fair to place these ladies in a separate grade only on the ground of sex, for Members will realize in reading the re-organization scheme for the Clerical Service that it is very clearly stated that these ladies have been put into a separate grade because they are women. The Civil Service Association claims on their behalf that in this particular case it means a further handicap to their advancement which it considers they have already earned, and I will go into that aspect of the matter a little more closely. Actually only eight ladies are involved. Two have already reached their maximum salary, and the other six were appointed more recently, but the future of all eight would be improved if they were permitted to remain in the new Class I.

It has been argued that the admission of such a claim now would imply that it is improper in the general scheme to place in a separate grade ladies who were already in the Service at the time of the introduction of the reclassification scheme, but I personally do not accept that argument. These eight ladies are in a particular position. They were all working together under the old Class II which has now been amalgamated with the new Class I. Their male colleagues in the old Class II have been given the opportunity of proceeding to a higher maximum without promotion. Of course they have to pass efficiency bars, but they are all in Class I and they go up to that maximum provided they are efficient, whereas those

ladies who were with them up to the date of the re-classification, and because they have been taken out of that Class and put in Grade A they must now justify promotion to reach the maximum of their male colleagues now in Class I.

On the general question I do not think any Member would deny that most Governments are moving towards equality—at any rate of opportunity—for men and women—not necessarily equality of salary but equality of opportunity, and if this Council approves of the motion it will surely only be in agreement with an accepted modern practice. It is a matter of personal opinion. You, sir, on this particular occasion have given the Official Members of this Council freedom to vote as they wish. I do hope that all Members here today will not be afraid to give the women in the Service of British Guiana equal opportunities with the men. I now formally move the motion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Mr. de AGUIAR: It seems as if Members are somewhat reluctant to take the floor with respect to this motion. I have risen even if I stand alone raising a single voice in protest—to say that I cannot support it. This Council took a very long time in considering the re-classification scheme for the Civil Service which was prepared by the Colonial Treasurer. After a debate in this Council that scheme received acceptance, and now we are faced with an alteration of those proposals on the ground that certain members of the Civil Service (they happen to be women in this case) will not receive the full benefits under that scheme. One of the strongest objections to the proposal is this: If these eight ladies were entitled to this consideration it seems to me that we ought to scrap the whole scheme and begin *de novo*. Why should eight ladies in the Service, because they were Class II Clerks, be entitled to be treated separately

and be allowed to carry on and be promoted to Class I merely because the only point in their favour is that they were in the Service, and if they were allowed to continue the chances are that they might have received promotion to Class I, and in that case they might have enjoyed the emoluments of that grade? The whole thing is wrong in principle. We must either make up our minds, if we want to adopt a proper classification scheme, to accept the scheme put forward or reject it. We accepted it not so long ago and we cannot come back today and say that we should differentiate in order to benefit a section of the Service.

If these ladies are entitled to this special consideration then those who are below would be entitled to similar consideration, in which case the whole scheme should be scrapped and nobody would be prejudiced.

What is wrong? Why should capital be made of the fact that they would be deprived of enjoying the same salary as the males? Even if they were deprived of the same salary as the males, what can be wrong about that? I do not agree—to use the words of the hon. the Colonial Secretary—that it imposes a handicap on their advancement, nor do I agree that they are in any particular position at all. An endeavour was made to point out that they are in a particular position. I do not agree. At the present moment they are in Class II and, according to the Classification Scheme as prepared by the hon. Colonial Treasurer, their absorption in Grade A is permitted while at the same time allowing them to advance further than at present under the present scale of salary. The whole thing is wrong, and even if I stand alone I would vote against the motion.

Motion put and the Council divided, the voting being as follows:—

For: Messrs. Thorne, Ferreira, Roth, Edun, King, Humphrys, Peer Bacchus, Dr. Singh, Gonsalves, Percy

C. Wight, Austin, Dias, Jackson, J. A. Luckhoo, Seaford, Woolford, the Attorney-General, the Colonial Secretary—18.

Against: Messrs. Lee, Jacob,

Motion passed.

REVISED SALARIES AND WAGES T & H. DEPARTMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the following motion:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 26 dated 10th February, 1945, this Council undertakes to provide the necessary additional funds on the Net Deficiency Vote of the Transport and Harbours Department, Head XXXIX in the 1945 Estimates, to enable effect to be given to the recommendations contained in the Report of the Committee of Enquiry.

Hon. Members have been issued with copies of the Report of Mr. Duke's Committee, and Your Excellency's Message now invites this Council to authorize the supplementary expenditure involved. It is very gratifying to be able to report that the conclusions reached by Mr. Duke's Committee have been generally accepted both by the Board of Commissioners of the Transport and Harbours Department and by the Trade Unions concerned. Both bodies have written to Government saying that they consider Mr. Duke's Committee has produced an excellent report. On the other hand, both the Board of Commissioners and the Trade Unions have written Government pointing out certain defects which Government is now going into. I hope hon. Members have read the Report and, if you have, I think you would agree with me that the subject is highly technical and that it would be better to leave to the people most competent to judge any adjustments by means of the ordinary machinery of Government. I do not personally

propose, therefore, to enter into any details about the Report in introducing this motion. I wish to put the view of Government, which is that Government is most anxious to get the acceptance of the Report by this Council—the acceptance in principle of the Report and of the main recommendation. The main recommendations have been accepted by both sides, the Board of Commissioners and the men, and if this Council would accept the Report in principle the men may receive their pay as from the 1st January, 1944, in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee.

The members of the Board of Commissioners who are here today may be interested to know, and it will allay some anxiety in their minds, that the defects pointed out by the General Manager—I am sorry the hon. Member for Central Demerara is not here to listen to this—have been most thoroughly considered by the Commissioner of Labour in consultation with the General Manager and with the Trade Unions, and from the latest news I have received from Mr. Bissell it is hoped that a solution quite satisfactory to both sides can be reached. The main consideration before hon. Members is the sum involved. The figure quoted of \$108,119 is the estimate for 1944 as back pay. If the modifications agreeable to both sides are introduced, from the information I have now, I do not think this estimate would be greatly exceeded. It may be a little, perhaps.

As regards the maximum of \$154,043, this total may in fact be reduced as a result of consideration of other factors during the near approaching visit of Mr. Rooke who, as you know, is coming to go into the whole question of the Transport and Harbours Services. The employees of that Department have been awaiting the decision of Government for a very long time now, and I do ask hon.

Members here today to accept this motion and let Government get on with correcting the defects and making the necessary adjustments. In conclusion I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Committee, Mr. Duke and Mr. Ray Green, Commissioner of Lands and Mines. I think they have undertaken with most painstaking care a very arduous examination of a very complex organization and have submitted an excellent report. With your permission I formally move the motion standing in my name.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Mr. THORNE: As a member of the Trades Union Council I desire to say that it is very gratifying to find Government taking the care it has done with this Report in putting Commissioners who threw themselves heart and soul into this work. It was a pleasure to me to read the Report through and to follow it carefully. Much time and attention must have been given exclusively to it and to the working out of difficult details, and I have no hesitation in saying that this Report is going to be very valuable to other Unions which have not got to deal with Government, where we have similar difficulties with private concerns and are unable to make any headway. We see through this Report the possibility of goodwill and the intention to give a square deal to the "underdog." It can be done. I went through this Report twice, and I am satisfied it is a beacon for Unions to travel along safely to obtain justice in other directions of labour. I am particularly pleased to find matters in which the Commissioners were able to bring order out of chaos, matters which were always considered too difficult to handle. Sitting here I am satisfied with Government and the Commissioners who dealt with the matter, and further I may state that these unfortunate transport workers had been at this for several years

before the Royal Commissioners visited and there was an enormous amount of dissatisfaction. Your Excellency will remember that one of the first troubles you had on arrival in this Colony was almost a strike in this most useful Department of Government, because the people could not get a headway and had become impatient.

I venture to think that what has been done in this instance is going to help us very largely in other directions where we have not been able to catch the eye and ear of Government. Several are waiting on this, and now that this has been done I feel sure that several humble employees of Government, whose grievances have not been heard for years and whose grievances are genuine, can now look forward with hope and will be coming forward in order to get Your Excellency to see that persons who have served Government faithfully and honestly all their lives have some hope that they will not, as soon as they cease to be useful, be thrown aside and told that Government has no further concern for them. I have very great pleasure to thank those Government Officers who dealt with this very difficult task for the very exhaustive and careful manner in which they have done it.

Mr. JACOB: I agree with this motion and particularly do I agree with the statement that this Council should accept this motion in principle so that further adjustments can be made later on. I wish I can speak as optimistically as my hon. friend, who has just taken his seat, regarding the attitude of the workers in this Department. I do not happen to be a member of the Trades Union Council, and I take it that the official spokesman of the Trades Union Council has approved of this scheme and of this Report, and that the workers are generally satisfied. I know the workers are not generally satisfied. I happen to be the President of a Trade Union that is not

recognized by the Government, not recognized by the Labour Department, and as such it cannot be a member of the Trades Union Council. I give credit to the Commissioners for the very exhaustive report they have submitted and for classifying the workers in the way they should be classified, but I am doubtful whether the classification is complete. I trust, however, that this classification will lead to further improvement and the workers will feel satisfied in the position they are put in this Report.

Only last week I read this Report right through. I read Your Excellency's Message and I read the motion before this Council to-day and, therefore, I speak with a very close and early knowledge of the contents of this Report and of the various papers connected with it, but the Report, as I said, is exhaustive. But what struck me was the fact that the really human element was not put in this Report. Paragraph 10 reads as follows—I am not going to read the whole paragraph but one portion of it:

"This recommendation does not, however, apply to those unskilled labourers who are not engaged on heavy work or on work requiring a certain degree of skill, who should continue to be paid at the rate of 10 cents an hour."

The unskilled workers—and there are a good many of them working in this Department, I think, over 200—are to receive no increase at all. Most of them are to continue to get 10 cents per hour or 80 cents per day. Looking at the general situation in the Colony I am alarmed to think that a Committee has gone into this matter and has left these people with an average earnings of \$20 per month as stated in the Report, that is working 25 days per month, and I am sure in some cases they do not get 25 days' work. Over 200 of these workers are to continue to receive \$20 per month only. I had in mind that

Government had appointed a Cost of Living Survey Committee to go into the question of wages and the cost of living, and that Committee had sent in a very valuable report. I have that report here with me. It is Legislative Council Paper No. 6 of 1943. That report fixes the wages of 1,418 families at an average of \$7.41 per week and the average expenditure at \$7.81, showing a deficit of 40 cents per week. That means it takes more than \$1.00 a day for the average workingman to maintain himself and family, and that means he must earn not less than \$30 per month. But this Committee has recommended that these workers are to continue to earn \$20 per month, although another Committee had recommended after making a survey in Georgetown and its surroundings that the working class people cannot live on less than \$1.00 a day. In fact when it is considered the amount of malnutrition, the amount of privation some of these people have to undergo, it is very clear that \$1.00 a day is not even sufficient for the ordinary workingman to maintain himself and family, and so I can continue to emphasize the fact that unless a worker is paid \$1.00 per day, that is at least earning \$6.00 a week, he will not be able to maintain himself and family. That should be the bare minimum, \$25.00 per month, but this Committee is satisfied with \$20 per month as the average earnings of a number of persons.

I trust the Labour Department, a department organized for the benefit of labour, will do all it can to get these workers at least \$1.00 per day. I am ashamed to think that this Government will continue to pay its own working people less than \$1.00 per day, which is less than \$6.00 per week, after knowing fully well what the position is. Yet we hear all this talk about nutrition, scientific men coming out, experts coming out to get things on a practical footing so as to improve the condition of life of the people and their way of living. We have a Labour

Department working in co-operation with certain Trade Unions and an official spokesman saying, this Report, this arrangement, is perfectly satisfactory to the working class of people. I wish to say I am not at all satisfied that this Report dealt with that aspect of the matter in the humanlike way it should. I am disappointed to think that at least one Government Officer, who is Chairman of the Committee should have written such a report.

There are several other details in this Report that do not reflect credit on the Committee. Paragraph 12 (2) makes this statement:

"Generally speaking, these employees work on 5 days (Mondays to Fridays) in every week, excluding public holidays, so that the average monthly wages of a platelayer earning \$1.00 per day do not exceed in the aggregate \$21 per month."

In regard to certain classes of workers who earn less than the other class who earn \$21 per month, I think, the Committee recommended that those people should be given some slight increase, but the increases in those particular cases are not sufficient. And so I say the Report on the whole does not reflect credit on the writers of it. One paragraph of this Report makes this comment, paragraph 45:

"Efficiency of Department— The allegation has been made that there is lack of efficiency among employees of the Department, and is given as a reason why salaries should not be increased to those paid by private employers. If this allegation is true, it may be due, in a great measure, to the fact that the Transport and Harbours Department has much fewer supervising officers than most private employers, and to the demoralising effect of the impossibility of making both ends meet low and resulting in a deficit which is due to freight and passenger rates being made up from general revenue. The alleged lack of efficiency cannot therefore be properly used as an argument against the grant of increases in salaries and wages."

On the last occasion we met in this Council I criticized very strongly this Department. I termed it a bankrupt concern. At least over \$4,500,000 has been lost since the Government took it over in 1929 and, I think, I said that the Government—in fact I said the Governor-in-Council — was responsible for not increasing the freight rates so that this Department should show a less deficit than it has shown during the last 20 years or so. I see the Government has put the whole matter off and is waiting for the expert to come here and tell us how to run this Department. While I have some confidence in experts, this Colony has been most unfortunate where experts are concerned. If all the experts had been advising us in the proper manner British Guiana could not have been in the position we are, and I say likewise the Transport and Harbours Department. It would not be in such a chaotic state that it cannot pay the ordinary workers \$1.00 a day, that it cannot employ sufficient supervisors so that the workers would give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. The whole thing is so demoralizing that I do ask this Government to have men with interest looking after this Department, men interested in the people of the country and not men with personal interest.

I am not satisfied that the Board of Commissioners is sufficiently interested in the welfare of the large percentage of the people who make up the population of this country. But Government is fully satisfied about it, and Government is satisfied with the chaos and demoralization everywhere. That is the position as I see it, and all I can say is that I hope the Department will pay its workers a living wage beginning from the very bottom, a wage that they can live on. I do not see why the ordinary porters in the Transport and Harbours Department are not entitled to earn a living wage because they are Government employees. I think if that method is

adopted from the bottom, ways and means can be found to find the revenue to meet it. I am fully satisfied that the freight rates and passenger rates are far too low. Why should they be kept so low? Why should the freight rates remain as they are, fixed probably 10 years ago? The passenger rates have been increased but not the freight rates. A few hundred dollars, I am sure, can be collected in that way resulting in greater efficiency of the Department and less loss to the taxpayers.

I am supporting the principle that this motion be accepted and that all the recommendations of this Report be not accepted. The recommendations whereby workers are to earn less than \$1.00 a day should be reconsidered and no worker in the Department should earn less than \$25 per month or \$6.00 per week. The workers should be given a full week's work too. There has always been a principle in this Colony, a principle which is strongly sponsored and supported by Government, to give a few days' work a week and say that is the best we can do. If Government has not the initiative and ability to run this country as it should, then the Government should go, and the Transport and Harbours Department should be abolished. It should be scrapped. I say there is sufficient ability in this country to run it and, as I say, if the Government cannot find the ability to run it then this Government should go too.

Mr. EDUN: Members will notice that I am not in a position to speak very much because my throat is affected, but I had much to say regarding this report. I agree with the Colonial Secretary regarding the acceptance of the report in principle so that the matter of further anomalies might be rectified. I hate to think that a Committee should submit a report which is accepted by this Council, and after a week some Government official comes

forward and tries to make adjustments. It seems so interminable; there is no finality anywhere. I am sure that if we accept this report now as it stands and vote \$200,000 in support of it there would still be anomalies existing. So long as there is human interest existing and there is a system of acquisitiveness there will be anomalies. I do not think that in a Christian country we should have something so deplorable as is pointed out in paragraph 6 of the report. I wish every Member to read that paragraph and to say whether the Commissioners were doing their duty when they did not see fit to recommend goggles in the interest of the drivers of locomotives. Isn't it reasonable to assume that men of the type of the Commissioners and the General Manager should have thought about goggles to protect those drivers from becoming blind? No, it was of no interest to them. Only now they are thinking of sending to the U.S.A. for goggles.

I am ashamed to think that I gave the Department *carte blanche* support at the last session, and to have a report of this kind placed before this Council. I am very sorry indeed that I cannot speak too long because I was prepared to handle the members of the Board as well as I could. When I voted on the last occasion I expected to see the end of the deficit in this Department, but here again I find that \$154,000 will be spent in order to create more deficit. In the name of everything that is decent how can we continue a Government like this creating deficits all the time in every Department?

I expect that instead of waiting for Mr. Rooke to come Government will take steps to increase the freight rates in order to get revenue to pay those employees who have been working under deplorable conditions. In order to obtain self-government in this country we will have to sacrifice all sorts of

things. Perhaps we will have to sacrifice education within the next few years. I think the Commissioners are competent now to say how the tariff should be increased in order to raise \$154,000. Why should we have to wait until Mr. Rooke comes to tell us? It is a matter of administrative ability. I am of the opinion that Mr. Rooke will be coming here to see after the mechanical defects of the Transport Department, — the locomotives, the rolling stock and the rails. I do not expect him to tell us about increased freight rates. It is a simple thing to increase the rates by 10 or 15 per cent., and Government would get the money to cover the increased expenditure, but Government and the Commissioners are not prepared to do that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of correction. I must inform the hon. Member that the Commissioners are only too anxious to increase freight rates. The responsibility lies with the Government. The Board has continually recommended an increase, and it is only fair to correct the hon. Member on that particular point.

Mr. EDUN: I am glad to hear that, and I commend Government on making these recommendations, but why should Government exercise its influence and say "Do not increase freight rates?" Why should Government interfere when there is perfect autonomy in that Department? Isn't there something sinister about it?

The PRESIDENT: No, there is not.

Mr. EDUN: I do not expect that there is anything sinister because, after all, I feel that all officers of Government are honourable men, from Your Excellency down to the messengers. I do not expect sinister motives on their part, but I do expect that they will not break the backs of the taxpayers too much. Already we are committed to an

expenditure of which we know nothing. I feel that the time has come when even workers should be given consideration when they ask for increased wages.

The PRESIDENT: I think I should intervene at this point to say that Government quite deliberately preferred for the time being, not to permit increases of freight rates because it was thought they would result in hardship on the poorer classes in the Colony. It may be a matter of opinion but it was the view taken by Government that such increases would have resulted in increased prices of sugar, rice, and provisions of all kinds to the poorer classes, and Government thought it worth while for a certain period to carry that expenditure as a subsidy. That may be a matter of opinion but it is not a sinister motive on Government's part. It is a perfectly genuine and sincere desire to avoid hitting the poorer classes. ("Hear, hear.")

Mr. EDUN: I travel every morning and afternoon across the ferry. I also travel on the East Coast train, and I certainly see people travelling today perhaps more than before the war. I am of the definite opinion that travelling should be restricted. I do not like to see my own people travelling for frivolous things, and there are times when they travel frivolously. Isn't it Government's duty to raise passenger fares in order to curb travelling?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That was done. Fares were increased by 50 per cent. with that precise object in view. Complaint was made that passenger rates were increased and not freight rates. We hoped that it would restrict travelling in war time but it did not have that result.

Mr. EDUN: Coming back to the report, I too have read it. I have found in it tangible evidence of certain malad-

ministration which should be read through the lines, but this is not the place to deal with those things at the moment. Perhaps at another time I will be able to deal with one or two of them. I should not detain the Council any longer, except to say that trade unions ought to be given the opportunity with the Commissioners, and perhaps representatives of Government, to rectify certain anomalies. I am prepared to make certain recommendations myself so that the anomalies may be minimized. I shall do so with the collaboration of the trade unions concerned. Those anomalies were brought to my attention, and I have indeed found that if this report is accepted, even with the modifications of the Commissioner of Labour, injustice would be created. Therefore, before finality is reached the trade unions concerned and Government ought to meet and hammer out a proper adjustment policy.

I wish to endorse what the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Thorne, has said regarding Mr. Duke and Mr. Ray Green. Knowing how difficult it is to obtain facts and examine them, I think they have done a thorough good job. There is a tendency presently on the part of everybody in British Guiana to assist in any form when called upon to sit on Committees and Boards of enquiry. That is a good thing because it is a portent of the outlook among men to do as much as they can to assist Government when called upon. With that spirit prevailing I feel that the time will come when not only Members of the Legislature but the general public should be asked to assist in arriving at a solution of any problem.

Mr. THORNE: May I be permitted to make a correction? The statement has been made that the Trades Union Council has not had an opportunity of any communication from the two unions involved. The Transport Workers'

Union and the Seamen's Union, both affiliated to the Council, have met the Council and stated that they accepted this report and looked forward to the improvements outlined at the back. I may also be allowed to state that the question of skilled labour has not escaped the attention of the Trades Union Council who, though they feel that piecemeal attention should not be given to it as it did not affect the Transport workers alone but the whole Colony, did not make any particular recommendations on that question by itself.

Mr. LEE: As a member of the Board of Commissioners I promise that I will only speak for five minutes. Before I was appointed a member of the Board I was very concerned about the increase of the deficiency of the Department from year to year. On inquiry into the working of the Department I think praise should be given to the General Manager and his staff, and if my friends in this Council were members of the Board they would realize the difficulties under which the General Manager and his staff of supervisors work, and would commend them very highly on the work they do.

There is only one comment I would like to make. It will be observed that the report of the Committee was not sent to the Board of Commissioners until it was considered by Government and forwarded to the respective unions. I think it would have avoided a good many anomalies if the report had been first submitted to the Board for its observations.

Mr. JACOB: May I rise to a point of correction and refer my friend to paragraph 5 of the report which states:—

"5. Transport and Harbours Board.—
The Transport and Harbours Board,
and the Chairman of the Board, were

given the opportunity of appearing before the Committee, but neither the Board nor the Chairman of the Board did so."

I think if the Board was interested in the inquiry it should have gone there and allowed itself to be questioned, so that a more comprehensive report could have been submitted.

Mr. LEE: I absolutely agree with my friend in the way he has put it, but the representations of those concerned, the working people of the Transport Department, were considered by their respective trade unions, and the Board had nothing further to say. The Board was only there to consider whether the inquiry was fair or not. Why should the Board go out of its way and instruct the General Manager to say that there is inefficiency when there is not? I do not think the Board has done anything wrong.

What I would like to point out to this Council is that the Board has recommended to the Governor in Council that freight rates should be increased, and Your Excellency has given an explanation of Government's attitude in the matter. The Board can do nothing further. If Members would read the Ordinance they would see how limited are the powers of the Board. Are Members saying that these payments should not be made? Are they suggesting that the Committee has recommended to Government that money should be given away?

Mr. JACKSON: I rise to support the motion and I am pleased to note that anomalies will be looked into. I am, unfortunately, not in a position to know what those anomalies are, but may I be permitted to point out one which, if it has not yet been pointed out, I hope will be taken into account? On page 17 of the report I notice that there are 15 platelayers on the East Coast railway receiving \$1.62 per day, and immediately after that item there

are 9 gang foremen of the East and West Coast railways receiving \$1.48 per day. I can understand a differentiation between the East Coast men alone in the rate per day. Perhaps the work they have to perform may not be exactly similar, but I cannot understand why the West Coast gang foremen should be paid at a lower rate than the East Coast gang foremen. I would be very glad if the matter was enquired into, and what I regard as an anomaly considered along with other anomalies.

I have read the report very carefully and I join in congratulating the members of the Committee who enquired into the matter. I support the motion with the hope that the anomaly to which I have referred will be looked into.

Mr. deAGUIAR: I am somewhat at a disadvantage in dealing with this report to-day because, unfortunately, I happen to be one of those persons who have had to make shift as a result of the recent fire. The notes I made and attached to my copy of the report cannot be found, and I have to depend more or less upon my memory and a hasty glance I have made at a fresh copy of the report which I have just seen.

In dealing with the report I would like first of all to compliment the author on the able manner in which he has dealt with such an important and vast subject as an inquiry into the personnel and rates of wages of the Transport Department. In paying him that compliment I would like to say that I am personally aware of the huge task that was set him, because not so long ago—I think it was in 1933—I happened to be a member of a Committee of the Legislative Council appointed at that time to make a similar inquiry, the report of which was laid before the Council and accepted. I recall what happened on that occasion, and in this respect I wish to associate myself with

the remarks made by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee). On that occasion it was a report by Members of the Legislative Council, the authority that is responsible for the ultimate acceptance or rejection of the report, but at that time it was found necessary, prudent and wise, before that report was presented to this Council for adoption or otherwise, to submit it to the Commissioners for their consideration. Today we find ourselves in a different position altogether. The report was considered by Government and it has now found its way to this Council, and as a Commissioner I do not understand what my own position in the matter is likely to be.

The motion by itself is somewhat harmless, if I may use that term, as all that it asks this Council to do to-day is to undertake "to provide the necessary additional funds on the Net Deficiency Vote of the Transport and Harbours Department Head XXXIX in the 1945 Estimates, to enable effect to be given to the recommendations contained in the Report of the Committee of Enquiry."

It is true that an estimate of what the cost will be is given. My own view is that that estimate is likely to be varied. What I would like to be informed on is this: what is this Council being asked to do today? I have heard Members who have spoken before me state that they are willing—whether willy nilly or not I do not know—to accept the principle embodied in this report. To my mind all this report has done is to endeavour to re-arrange the salaries that are being paid to the workers of the Department. It is true, as was stated by one hon. Member, that the Board of Commissioners and the Chairman of the Board were given the opportunity to appear before the Committee in order to give evidence, I presume, and that they did not take advantage of it. But it is not true to say that while the Commissioners and

the Chairman of the Board found it imprudent to appear before the Committee, they did not authorize the necessary assistance to be given to that Committee. The General Manager appeared before the Committee, but he was charged with the duty that he was merely there to give assistance—not to express any opinion one way or the other—and what was important, not to commit his Board to anything which he might have stated. It naturally followed that the General Manager, having been charged with that duty, merely rendered such assistance as he felt he could give to the Committee.

I wonder what the position would be, or what hon. Members would say if they were informed that some of the conclusions arrived at in this report were based on wrong premises. I wonder what hon. Members would say if they were informed that some of the recommendations would probably interfere with other services of the Department. Members know that in a Government Department there is always a considerable amount of difficulty in increasing the salary scale of a particular officer, or to promote him on the ground of seniority. I wonder what hon. Members would say if they were told that in this report there are certain recommendations which would infringe on such rights. Already certain representations are being made in order to point out what are described as anomalies in various respects.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I may explain that in introducing this motion I pointed out to Members that the defects pointed out by the General-Manager were being carefully considered, and they include some obvious mistakes of which we are well aware, but with the help of the Commissioner of Labour, the trade unions and the General Manager, we hope to put those right. I will give just one example. The Duke Committee recommended a certain rate of pay for Chief Engineers of boats, and it has been pointed out by the

General Manager that the Board had given an undertaking to Workshop Foremen that their pay would not be less than that of Chief Engineers of steamers. Mistakes of that kind are quite impossible to avoid when dealing with the whole subject, and those are the kind of mistakes we hope to put right. If this Council accepts the report in principle we will be able to put those mistakes right.

The PRESIDENT: Before we adjourn I would like to take the first reading of two Bills in order to expedite further action. With the consent of Members I will call upon the Attorney-General to move the first reading of those two Bills.

MINING (CONSOLIDATION)
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 1945.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the following Bill be read the first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Mining (Consolidation) Ordinance by making provision for the prohibition or restriction of prospecting in unoccupied Crown lands."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

Notice was given that at the next or a subsequent meeting it would be moved that the Bill be read a second time. (Attorney-General).

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION (DECLARATION OF AREAS AND VALIDATION OF ACTS) BILL, 1945.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the following Bill be read a first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the extension of certain drainage and irrigation areas; the declaration of new drainage and irrigation areas; the validation of the construction of certain works; the vesting of certain lands in the Drainage and Irrigation Board; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Notice was given that at the next or a subsequent meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read a second time. (Attorney-General).

The Council was then adjourned until 2 p.m. the following day.