

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

FRIDAY, 1ST MARCH, 1957.

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT:

His Honour the Speaker,

Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford,
O.B.E., Q.C.

Ex-Officio Members :

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. F. D. Jakeway, C.M.G., O.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney General,
Mr. G. M. Farnum (Ag.)

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. F. W. Essex,

Nominated Members of Executive Council :

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

The Hon. **P. A. Cummings** (Mem-
ber for Labour, Health and Housing).

The Hon. **W. O. R. Kendall** (Mem-
ber for Communications and Works).

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

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj

The Hon. R. C. Tello

Nominated Unofficials :

Mr. T. Lee

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

Mr. C. A. Carter

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb

Mr. H. Rahaman

Miss Gertie H. Collins

Mrs. Esther E. Dey

Dr. H. A. Fraser

Mr. Sugrim Singh

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

Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. B. M. Viapree (Ag.)

Absent :

Mr. J. I. Ramphal—on leave.

Mr. W. A. Phang —on leave.

Mr. E. F. Correia on leave.

Mr. R. B. Jailal — on leave.

The Speaker read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the
Council held on Thursday, 14th Feb-
ruary, 1957, as printed and circulated,
were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRINCESS ALICE EXPRESSES THANKS

Mr. Speaker: I have received a communication from His Excellency the Governor saying that Her Royal Highness the Princess Alice has been pleased to send a message of thanks for the resolution and wishes to express her gratitude over the action of our doing so.

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Lee will be leaving and has extended his leave from the 30th of March to the 15th of August 1957, as he would be out of the Colony. Mr. Jailal has asked to be excused from today's meeting. I hesitate to refer to Mr. Correia's application for leave from today's meeting until the first motion on the Order of the Day is reached. I don't know if the hon. the Chief Secretary agrees with me.

I would like to say in regard to other matters that the 7th of March is the scheduled day for meeting Mr. F. Kennedy of the Colonial Office if the opportunity is available. I don't know whether there may be a sitting of the Council on that day. Even if there is, I hope Members will find it convenient to meet Mr. Kennedy here, unless, of course, his own arrangements are altered; but the 7th of March is the agreed date.

PAPERS LAID

The Attorney General (Mr. G. M. Farnum, acting): I beg to lay on the table:

The Report of the Administrators of the Fatoir Trust Fund for the year 1956, together with the Director of Audit's certificate and report thereon, also

The Annual Report of the Official Receiver for the year 1956.

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex): I beg to lay on the table:

Report of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council on its consideration of Sessional Paper No. 1/1957—Proposals of the Salaries Revision Committee for Nursing, Allied and Subordinate Staff of Medical Institutions and The Palms.

Sir Frank McDavid (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines): On behalf of the Member for Labour, Health and Housing, I beg to lay on the table:

The Annual Report of the Labour Department for the year 1955.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Mr. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works): I too would like to give notice of a motion standing in my name and I beg leave to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Orders so that that motion may be taken through all its stages today.

Mrs. Dey: Sir—

ORAL ASKING AND ANSWERING OF QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Any questions? Mr. Correia is not here for Number 1.

Mr. Tello: Mrs. Dey wishes to deputise for Mr. Correia.

Mrs. Dey: In keeping with the motion by the Member for Communications and Works I was craving your indulgence to say something, Sir. Perhaps I should wait until the Order of the Day. I was begging to add something, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: The matter is not before the Council. Mr. Kendall is going to move a motion later on.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to give notice of a Bill intituled "an Ordinance to amend the Customs Ordinance," to be published in tomorrow's Gazette.

ACQUISITION OF LAND (LAND SETTLEMENT) BILL

Sir Frank McDavid: I beg to give notice of the introduction and first reading of the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to repeal and re-enact the acquisition of Land (Land Settlement) Ordinance."

This Bill has been published for the first time only today and I may say that it is the revised version of Bill No. 21 of 1956 which is down for second reading on the Supplement to the Order Paper. Sir, I would like to say now that I have been authorised by His Excellency the Governor to withdraw that Bill with your permission. Ample time will be allowed for hon. Members to study this Bill and for other persons interested to make themselves acquainted with it before it reaches the second reading stage.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. Kendall: I beg to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Orders in order that I may proceed with the motion that is under my name.

Mr. Farnum (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Orders suspended.

INDEPENDENCE OF GHANA

Mr. Kendall: I beg to move the following motion

"Be it resolved: That this Council records its profound pleasure and satisfaction over the historic event which will take place on March 6th, 1957, when Ghana will attain the status of an independent state within the Commonwealth and desires that its greetings, congratulations and good wishes be communicated by telegram to the Parliament of Ghana."

Mr. Speaker and hon. Members, it is with pleasurable pride that I move this motion in which you, Sir, have been asked to forward to the Parliament of Ghana our congratulations and good wishes on the occasion of that country gaining its independence and becoming a full Member of the British Commonwealth of Nations with all the rights and privileges to participate in international assemblies where world problems and policy are being discussed and formulated.

As you are aware, Sir, I, like a very large section of this Colony, am a descendant of Africans whose forbears came to this country against their will and who, I understand, were captured as slaves from that very portion of West Africa which is celebrating the event of its independence at this very moment. It is regrettable that, constituted as we are presently, this country and Government will not be represented officially on such a historic and momentous occasion when our kinsmen in Africa are proclaiming the approach of a New Day. To me, this new achievement, the independence of the Gold Coast, will go down the corridors of time as an outstanding victory for colonial peoples, particularly for those descendants of Africans concentrated throughout the

[Mr. Kendall]

Caribbean area, and we must rejoice with our brethren and share their joys in being the first African colony to achieve political independence.

I am very mindful of the fact that all subject races are aspiring towards self-government and I do sincerely hope that the methods adopted by that great African leader and statesman, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah will be an inspiration to the leaders of the British Caribbean who are also on the march towards self-government. It is my further wish that British Guiana will be an active participant when the new West Indian nation is ready for Dominion status. We who are here will watch with pride and keenness the progress of the new Dominion of Ghana, and we devoutly pray she will continue to travel along the democratic highway to a fuller and greater development in all aspects of her endeavours. We also pray that the Great I Am will see that Ghana will turn out to be one of the brightest gems in the British Commonwealth and so prove to the world that "We are Rising."

I am moved to quote the words of Dr. Aggrey of Africa in a letter to his nephew, when he said:

"To those who have fire, I give more fire

To those who have might, I give a might mightier than man's.

I will sing a song of hope to the despairing—

A song of love that will chase away all hating.

Then, and only then, will right conquer might,

And harmony take the place of despair."

Miss Collins: Sir,—

Mr. Speaker: Mrs. Dey has given a sort of notice to me that she would like to speak.

Miss Collins: Very well, Sir.

Mrs. Dey: I must thank you very much for allowing me to speak at this stage, Sir, and I shall be as brief as possible. I rise to endorse all that has been said by the hon. Member for Communications and Works (Mr. Kendall) and to beg that you, Sir, in collaboration with the proper authorities, try to get this most historic day declared a public holiday for the benefit of the youths of this country. As a Guianese, I feel that all Guianese think the same way about this date, and I also know that non-Guianese, especially those who have had something to do with Africa, feel just as proud as the people of Ghana about this event. My reason for asking that the day be proclaimed a public holiday, is because I feel that here, in British Guiana, we have Carvers, Aggreys, Washingtons, Nkrumahs and — who knows? — even a greater than Dr. Nkrumah. I wish we all fully realise what will take place on March 6, and that Ghana should be a beacon light to British Guiana.

Miss Collins: It is with very much pleasure that I rise to second the motion so ably moved by the hon. Member for Communications and Works. I feel happy to know that the Governor in Council has decided to permit any officer or employee to be absent from work without loss of pay on March 6, in order to join in any celebration of Ghana's independence. I desire to congratulate Government in this respect.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I cannot allow this historic occasion to pass without allying myself to this very admirable and appropriate resolution moved by the hon. Member for Communications and Works. The achievement of independence by Ghana is, I think, an achievement for all colonial peoples within the Empire and it has set up

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

a target which might very well be a beacon light to every sister colonial territory. It constitutes tangible proof — cogent proof — of how we (in British Guiana) also, if we travel on the constitutional road, could achieve that political maturity which Ghana has now achieved. I, personally, feel extremely proud at this moment because, in my student days, I had the honour of being very closely associated with Dr. Nkrumah. It might not be known that I was the only West Indian chosen for the famous Independence demonstration and that I stood up and spoke in Trafalgar Square on that occasion.

One thing emerges which might very well be a lesson to our fanatical local leaders. India achieved her independence; thousands and thousands suffered in the struggle, but what the outside world has seen is that in spite of all this, India decided to remain within the Commonwealth of Nations. There are very good reasons for this. India did not enlist the direct or indirect support of any alien ideology in order to attain her objective. The game of politics always involves a difference of opinions; it must, necessarily be so, I feel that Dr. Nkrumah has achieved a fine job and that our local leaders might well take a lesson from him. If we are insane let us fight ourselves to sanity to achieve our objective, but hold to the high tradition and the high ideals and the environment in which we have been brought up.

Dr. Nkrumah and his party are to be congratulated for what they have achieved for the people of Ghana, and I repeat that our local people may very well learn a lesson when “fire brands” choose to address them at the street corners saying, so many

things that are harsh about the British Government not wanting to grant us independence and wanting to keep us down. It is my unshaken view that Her Majesty's Government would be only too pleased to give British Guiana a higher degree of responsibility if the people here display the ability to conduct themselves in the comity of Nations with dignity and decorum.

Some of our leaders (in British Guiana) are people of African descent and like Dr. Nkrumah, have learnt to respect the idea of progress and development within the formula of the Commonwealth of Nations. They have therefore had experience as pioneers. I do not want to go into history at this moment, but they were the ones who made the blueprint for development in this country, and gratitude must also go to the pioneers. I wish to congratulate the people of Ghana and to join in supporting this motion which, I hope, as a mark of our appreciation, will be forwarded to them. To them all I wish to offer a word of congratulation.

The Chief Secretary: As one of the non-Guianese to whom the hon. Member, Mrs. Dey, has particularly referred, I should like to associate myself sincerely and enthusiastically with this motion. I have not myself had the honour to serve in Ghana, although I have visited that country and a member of my family has served there, but I have spent the greater part of my serving career in a neighbouring country which I think will follow hard on the heels of Ghana — at least the part in which I served, and quite possibly within a short time we shall be celebrating another emancipation in West Africa.

On the point raised by the hon. Member, Mrs. Dey, I am sure she

[The Chief Secretary]

knows, as the hon. Member, Miss Collins, has said, that Government has announced that Government employees will be excused from duty on March 6 if they wish to join in any celebration of the independence of Ghana. The day has not been declared a public holiday as such. We have followed the precedent taken in the case of the independence of India, and private employers are of course free to follow the lead given by Government in this matter.

Mr. Luckhoo: I would like to support most heartily the motion which has been moved by the hon. Member for Communications and Works (Mr. Kendall). As I see it, the giving of self-rule within the Commonwealth does two things. It is a reflection to the credit of the people—and there are some 4.6 millions in the Gold Coast—and it is also a reflection to the credit of British rule which, especially within recent years, has adopted the policy of giving to colonial peoples their independence as soon as the time is propitious. Thus this event on the 6th of March is not only one of a historic nature; it is one which, to my mind, is exciting and stimulating to the peoples who are living in other colonial territories, that they too may well be able to achieve and emulate the example which has been set, and obtain their independence within (that is a very important word) the Commonwealth. To those people in Ghana we in far-off British Guiana wish that in this climax of their social and economic progress, that they may long live to enjoy the fruits of their freedom, their emancipation, their independence

The name Ghana is taken from the ancient African kingdom. In the modern world we have a new Ghana springing up whereon with respect

we may gaze and, I hope, also with admiration. I have great pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. Tello: I also desire to associate myself with this very timely and appropriate motion, and I wish briefly to say that the achievement of Ghana certainly has brought hope to many of us who had become almost frustrated. I think it is a very striking example that has been set to us, especially to our local politicians. What I have seen, and I believe it has contributed a great deal to this achievement, is the fact that in the Gold Coast there were two major political parties, which allowed the people to choose one or the other for their Government. If British Guiana could follow Ghana's example I seem to think that no longer would the world look askance at us.

I am very pleased to be associated with this motion, and I think I have the right to say that the British Guiana Trade Union Council also proposes to send a message of congratulation. I think that British Guiana has a very good chance, if we take this great example of Ghana and renew our hope, to march on to progress similar to that of Ghana.

Rev. Mr. Bobb: I rise to support the motion which, as previous speakers have said, is most appropriate and very timely. I am sure that everyone of us, given the opportunity, would be willing to express our own feelings of pride and pleasure at the achievement which Ghana will soon be able to record in the history of that race of people. I think it is also true to say that we could all moralize on this great historical event; there is so much for us to learn. I will content myself with just referring to two aspects which arise out of this situation. I wish briefly to refer to the fact that here were

a people who knew when and how to use an opportunity, and there is now before us ample evidence that that opportunity has been used wisely and well.

The second aspect is that there can be no suggestion now as to lack of ability of the people of the Gold Coast, or of that entire region. Too often insinuations have been made that colonial peoples were unable to rise to heights. Now we have another illustration which should entirely dissipate any such illusion, and it also means that other colonial territories, British Guiana included, will accept as a beacon which Ghana holds out before them, and strive towards that stage of independence which is every man's duty to ensure for his neighbour.

Perhaps it is also fully known to what extent great movements are going on even now within the people. We are told and we know of the great movement which is issuing now in the independence of Ghana as a nation, but within the nation groups are conceding to the people the right to look after their own affairs, and I am very happy to be in a position to say right now, as a minister of the Methodist Church, that the Gold Coast, which is the third largest section of the Methodist Church in the world, is going to have its own autonomous body, known as the Conference, which will be looking after its own affairs and has the right to elect, appoint and dismiss its own ministers.

Another important fact which arises from that is that within that arrangement no question of race arises. We shall be having on our staff Africans, Europeans and all the other races we can think about, and the independence which Ghana has got simultaneously with the independ-

ence which the Church will have will ensure that every man will have his rightful place and be respected thereby.

I am very pleased for the signal which this independence movement now climaxed has given to the world, and I trust that here in British Guiana we will not be slow to learn another lesson of the use of opportunity and of our ability to develop what we have.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion adopted.

Mr. Speaker: A copy of the motion will be sent to the proper authorities.

ORDER OF THE DAY

The following Bills were read a first time—

BILLS—FIRST READING

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Customs Ordinance."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to repeal and re-enact the Acquisition of Land (Land Settlement) Ordinance."

AGREEMENT WITH B.W.I.A.

Council resumed the debate on the following motion by Mr. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works)—

"Ee it resolved: That with reference to Sessional Paper No. 13 of 1956 this Council approves of the conclusion of the proposed Two-Year Management Agreement with British West Indian Airways, Limited."

Mr. Speaker: Seven Members have already spoken to this motion. — Mr. Correia, Mr. Luckhoo, Dr. Fraser, Rev. Mr. Bobb, Mr. Sugrim Singh, Mr. Carter and Mr. Ramphal. I may mention before the debate resumes that Mr. Correia has written an appealing letter to be allowed further opportunity of speech. Mr. Correia hopes to be in his place in two weeks' time. For some reason Mr. Correia is very anxious to speak again to the motion. Hon. Members who were pre-

sent on the previous occasion will recall that Mr. Correia was very anxious to put an end to the debate after several Members had spoken and before the hon. Mover had replied, but I knew at the time there were other Members who would like to speak on the subject. I am going to ask that those who have not spoken will do so now and defer consideration by me as to whether the hon. Member's request should be granted.

The information the Member has brought to this Council may not, I think, have reached this Council, and he has rendered a public service in this way. However we may look at it, it is a fact that Mr. Correia's request allows an opportunity for ventilation. I personally think that very good and detailed reasons for entering this Agreement have now been published in all the papers. There are very many reasons why the Agreement was made and entered upon. Personally I am inclined to approve of the Agreement, but Mr. Correia may or may not be at the moment in possession of certain facts that I do not know or was previously acquainted with. I would ask hon. Members, if the debate continues, that whatever they have to say be with some definite intention. But we must bear in mind that the principal users of B. G. Airways are strongly opposed to the transfer of the management. At the conclusion of the speeches I shall ask Members' assistance as to whether I should allow Mr. Correia the opportunity to reply. There should be some agreement about the matter. I now ask if any Member wishes to speak.

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, I have already spoken on this question and I am not going to speak again. But I am asking, since Mr. Correia and I have the same views and he is absent, that the debate be deferred until Mr. Correia is able to be present.

Mr. Speaker: The time has not

come yet for that. I wish it to be endorsed by Members who have not spoken yet.

The Chief Secretary: I do not wish to exercise the right to speak at the moment, but to express the hope that the situation will not arise whereby the debate is finished today but the vote on the motion deferred. That would be very undesirable. I will agree that it be left possibly to seek the views of the Council as to whether there should be an adjournment. I think my hon. colleague has an amendment to the motion and, I think, the best thing is for him to move that amendment before we re-open the debate.

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. Member like to move his amendment now?

Mr. Kendall: Yes, Sir. I think that will give hon. Members an opportunity to speak again.

Mr. Speaker: Very well, the hon. Member may proceed.

Mr. Kendall: As the result of certain observations made by Members during the debate, Government has decided to delete clause 15 of the Agreement and substitute therefor the following new clause.

"15. This Agreement shall come into operation on the day of nineteen hundred and fifty-seven and shall continue in force for a period of two years from that date."

That makes it abundantly clear that the proposed management according to the Agreement is for two years and, if there is need for an extension, to come to this Council for ratification. I think hon. Members have copies of the amendment. At the same time opportunity will be taken to make a slight correction in clause 3 (1) of the Agreement.

Mr. Speaker: The debate is on the agreement and the hon. Member moves that this amendment be incorporated in the Agreement.

Mr. Kendall: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I accept it as such.

The Chief Secretary: The amendment has been circulated and I have a copy of it myself.

Mr. Kendall: Members have copies.

Mr. Speaker: I will allow you to make your amendment and to supplement it with remarks you may like to make, so as to avoid Members making mistakes.

Mr. Kendall: As you have rightly said, this matter was discussed in Finance Committee, and after the supplementary paper was handed to Members a good many Members who had expressed fears as to the wrongness of having the Agreement with B.W.I.A. have changed their views and I do not know whether it is prudent for me to speak further on the amendment, because I have to reply, and I prefer to wait and see whether there will be any need to extend the points I have listed to reply on according to further observations made by Members today.

The Financial Secretary: I would like to say a few words on the financial side of the Agreement and particularly to try and clear up some misconceptions about the financial status of B.G. Airways and of B.W.I.A. as far as I can. A great deal of play has been made of the apparent anomaly that B.W.I.A., as an airline, operates at a loss whereas B.G. Airways operates at a profit. Indeed, someone suggested partly on the strength of this, that the B.G. Airways ought to manage B.W.I.A. and not *vice versa*. I cannot say very much about B.W.I.A.'s loss, but the position must surely be that some of its services run at a profit and some at a loss; that it is obligated to run a number of uneconomic services, and it cannot pick and choose those routes which pay and just operate those.

But does B.G. Airways make a profit? A good deal has been said about the figure of \$88,000 as the operating profit in 1955, between July and December. It was even said that Government had taken the profit over from B.G. Airways. Of course, it was not a true profit at all. As Members will know, the Government has advanced B.G. Airways its working capital and this \$88,000, although it was an operating surplus from 1955, was money kept in the bank by B.G. Airways and was not being used. It was therefore put into Government's account, thereby saving Government 5% on money we would otherwise have had to borrow. It must also be taken into account that in 1956 the Government provided \$112,000 for the new Grumman aircraft, and \$69,000 to buy a building for B.G. Airways (Govt.). There was no mention of this by hon. Members. There was nothing in the 1955 or 1956 B.G. Airways (Govt.) accounts representing the capital cost of the undertaking or depreciation of the assets. We do not really know what this figure for depreciation ought to be; there has been no proper detailed evaluation of the assets for the express purpose of determining depreciation, but a provisional estimate has been made, and it would seem from available data, that the figure for depreciation and obsolescence for the two Grummans and three Dakotas, is something like \$144,000 a year.

The \$88,244 is essentially an excess of actual revenue over expenditure on salaries and operating and maintenance costs. For the period of the apparent profit of \$88,244 the depreciation charge would have been about \$66,000, leaving an apparent profit of \$21,000. Of this apparent profit of \$21,000, \$17,000 was received in commissions which were almost entirely paid by B.W.I.A. and B.O.A.C. at the rate of 10% on every B.W.I.A.

[The Financial Secretary]
ticket sold through B.G. Airways office. So that \$17,000 was not gained through the running of B.G. Airways at all, but by simply selling tickets as an agent. The remaining \$5,000 could I assume be easily accounted for by hidden costs which need not be mentioned.

As regards the 1956 financial operation the gross profit was about \$119,000 but again without anything being put aside for depreciation. The figure which should have been included for this, again on a provisional basis for evaluation, was about \$139,000. So on those figures alone there is a loss of \$20,000. But the loss of \$20,000 is arrived at after we have taken into account the B.W.I.A. commission paid in 1956, which was \$47,000. So that if those agency commissions were not there, the loss would have been \$67,000. I think that will dispel the theory that B.G. Airways (Govt.) as an airline is a highly profitable undertaking.

One of the functions of the managerial agreement is, of course, to establish exactly how the finances of the undertaking stood after running the undertaking on a strictly commercial basis for a limited period. We would then be able to discover where the loss, if any, occurs and, we would hope it might be remedied. It might well be that the fares and freight are too low, and forgive me if I am being too cynical if I say that some of the public opposition might be based on the feeling that fares would have to go up if we knew what it really costs to run the undertaking. It is clearly right that if there is a Government subsidy the public taxpayer who is providing it should know what it is.

But that is not to say that the subsidy should be necessarily withdrawn. It would depend on circumstances but we must find out first how the under-

taking is running. Ancilliary to the purpose of finding out the real significance of the accounts would be the institution of a modern system of stores accounting and ordering, particularly of spares. The Auditors pointed out in the 1955 accounts that no physical inventory of stores on hand at the 31st December 1955 was taken. There is apparently none available. All these things need to be systematised but there is no one here who has the time to do it, even if he has the ability.

Some of the work is highly specialised, especially on the costing side. You have got to get people who know a good deal about aircraft accounting to do it. Obviously the best reservoir near at hand is British West Indian Airways in Trinidad who under this Agreement would provide such specialised staff as was necessary from time to time. So it is clear that from the Agreement we are getting not only a manager but also the services of an organization. There is not the slightest doubt that some such managerial organization is necessary, and we cannot indefinitely carry on by brilliant improvisation and by brilliant flying as a substitute for it.

There seems no doubt in my mind that the organization of B.W.I.A. in Trinidad would be of great benefit and that under the Agreement they would provide such staff as was necessary from time to time to do such things as accounts, budget control and that sort of thing. It is clear from the Agreement which is to extend over a period of two years that we are getting not only a manager but also the services of an organization, and there seems to be no doubt in my mind that for this limited period of two years some measure of improvisation was necessary for the proper management of the Company (B.W.I.A.).

The Chief Secretary: I should

really like to invite the close attention of hon. Members to the supplementary White Paper that has been laid before them, and do I ask them to read it carefully because I think it clears up a number of misconceptions which were apparent on the occasion of the last debate. In particular, I think, it disposes of the belief which underlay the remarks of some Members when speaking on the last occasion this Agreement was before the Council. These Members seemed to think that here was an octopus reaching out to collect any undertaking in its way, but nothing could be farther from the truth. The real truth of the matter is that we sent an S.O.S. from this Government, asking the B.W.I.A. to stand by to come and keep our airline running. They answered our appeal and it was afterwards that we proceeded to open negotiations with the hope of reaching an agreement for them to take over as managing agents along the lines and terms of the Agreement now before us. It is quite wrong to suggest that the B.W.I.A. offered themselves to the Colony as persons who would like to do these things. They were asked by Government to do so and, in the first place, they were invited to assist in operating our air communication. I think we were fortunate in having got them to agree to do that, and that is made clear in the White Paper, at paragraph 31.

Another point to which I would like to invite the attention of hon. Members is the actual purpose of the Agreement. As my colleague (the Financial Secretary) has said, we are seeking only a two-year Agreement with the B.W.I.A., and the purpose is laid down quite clearly

in paragraph 7 of the Agreement which reads as follows:—

“These recommendations were accepted by the Governor in Council on the 3rd November, 1950. Messrs. Williams and Hunter however disagreed with the suggestion that Airwork should be invited to join British Guiana Airways and undertake the function of managers, and the Committee was subsequently invited to reconsider their recommendations in the light of this development. The Committee thereupon recommended that the proposal for reorganising the Company with Airwork participating should not be pursued, but that the existing Agreement should be extended to the 31st December, 1953.”

It is also provided that after the expiration of one year from the date of the coming into force of the Agreement, the B.W.I.A. should submit to Government a comprehensive report on the operation and the future development of the Air transport services. The report should deal particularly with potential requirements for the next 10 years and would also contain an estimate of the amount of traffic to be handled, the prospects of a special charter service and an assessment of the different type of aircraft to be supplied. In effect, we are asking them to give us the benefit of their organization and experience and to advise Government as experts as to what is the best way of running this air service. On the basis of the information we get at the end of this period we shall be able to decide — and it is for this Legislature to give approval to it — as to what form our service would take. It is for hon. Members to adopt an alternative if this Agreement is rejected. We are not deciding in advance whether Government is going to run this air service as a commercial undertaking, because that is not how it is being

[The Chief Secretary]

done at the moment. It is being run directly under Government managerial control and, in some respects, I say it is being well run. There are some things that the present company has to do which it cannot do, such as trying out new type of aircraft, working out the question of depreciation and so on. If we miss this opportunity Government will have to provide for that themselves, but we shall be in a worse position in another two years and may have to send another S.O.S., probably, to secure assistance.

This commission which B. G. Airways obtains from B.W.I.A. and the B.O.A.C. makes all the difference to its financial working position, but it is something which B.W.I.A. can take away as soon as it pleases. Nevertheless B.W.I.A. have not said "if we do not get the management under the terms of this Agreement we shall remove the commission." They have said that if Government operates its own service they will leave the agency providing the service given is satisfactory. I think it is fortunate that we will have a modern company to operate our air service, otherwise we shall have to look for a new management. We shall be faced with the prospect of losing an income of about \$47,000 per annum, which is quite a sizeable sum. I shall ask hon. Members to consider the purpose for which we are entering into this Agreement, and I think it is not right to say that we are selling out our air service to B.W.I.A. We are merely being given an opportunity of making use of a large organisation with resources which would cost a large sum of money, and it is giving us a basis upon which we can plan our

future operations. That is the object of the Agreement.

Rev. Mr. Bobb: Since the debate on this motion was deferred, certain information has been circulated to Members and I had the opportunity of reading that information. I am sorry I was out of the Colony on Government business and was unable to be present when the Finance Committee discussed this matter, but at this moment I am satisfied in my mind that the stand Government has taken is the correct one. The Chief Secretary has been good enough to give us an idea of Government's policy and with these points of view — with the information contained in the documents given to us — I cannot entertain the idea that this Government would wish to take what to my mind would be a very unfortunate step in attempting to delay action as proposed by Government.

Briefly, I think that if we attempt to oppose this motion we would be avoiding an opportunity of putting our air services on a satisfactory basis and, secondly, we are going to lose an opportunity of conserving what we have and looking to the future with considerable confidence. I do not know if any words of mine are necessary to express what is abundantly clear — that the steps taken by Government are quite satisfactory and deserve the full support of this Council, being entirely in the interest of the community. I should say at this stage that when the debate resumes I will seek to make the point, and perhaps my colleague who has been responsible for this motion would be in a position to release further information to this Council. I happen to know that

Government thought it wise to change the conditions relating to the present form of the service. As I have already stated, the position was not clearly set out at first, but I hope hon. Members realize that it would be most unbusinesslike to adopt any other course.

Mrs. Dey: I have listened carefully to the remarks of the last speaker and also to the remarks of the Chief Secretary who mentioned that he was quite sure that the issuing of this supplementary White Paper would prove Government's decision to be the right one and that he hoped hon. Members had read, studied and inwardly digested it. I have not known myself to be a "rubber stamp" here as yet and I will recall that on the last occasion when the matter was debated the floor members and myself were against the motion. But, having received the supplementary White Paper and the amending clause 15, I am pleased to say that the dust has been removed from our eyes. Nevertheless, I shall listen and only time will say whether I should be for or against the motion. I was, first of all, struck at the strange co-incidence of the name "Handover;" I had the dust removed from my eyes. This was no hand-over but rather a straightening out of divers difficulties — an absolute need for efficient management. Would that Government had placed more confidence in us — we, the lesser fry so often dubbed "floor Members." This is not the first occasion. After all, it takes the big as well as the small waggon wheels to draw this Government

waggon. Having inwardly digested the supplementary White Paper, there is nothing else for me to do but to support the motion.

Having received this document, I said to myself "Now I am seeing clearly; the mote has been removed from my eyes." Why must we, the "floor" Members, be always kept in the dark as regards fundamentals, and when one or two Members show disapproval, we get documents like this.

We have always been grumbling in this Chamber and outside, and asking: "Is Government going into business to make a mess of something else?" Having read the document, and having heard the hon. the Chief Secretary's explanation, I am convinced that the proposal is not a hand-over of B. G. Airways to B.W.I.A., but a step in the right direction. I am therefore supporting the motion.

Mr. Lord: In the light of the information disclosed in Sessional Paper No. 2 and the other confidential document placed in the hands of Members, I do not see how Government could have taken any other step than to negotiate this Agreement with B.W.I.A. I feel, however, that Members of this Council should have been taken more into the confidence of Government by an earlier release of this confidential information. I recall that at the time when Government decided to take over B. G. Airways a request was made by a Member of this Council for a copy of the handover report, but that has never been forthcoming. Had that been done I think the Council would have been spared this lengthy discussion

[Mr. Lord]

which has taken place over the Agreement.

Mr. Luckhoo: I am not happy at all about this—not happy because I feel that this is an excellent example of the position in which we, as Members of this Interim Government, find ourselves; where we are not given a full opportunity of knowing all the facts, and where we have to make decisions and come to conclusions upon facts which are not full and sufficient enough.

I feel that two points must clearly emerge from this. One is that whenever there is an embarrassing situation, or a situation which requires positive action, that Government should come—and should have done so in this instance—to Finance Committee and give the “floor” Members of the Government an opportunity to be informed on it to enable them to debate and discuss the matter.

The next point is that if we are to get a Sessional Paper it should be a full and comprehensive document, and we should not be treated in this cavalier manner, like school children, and given an apologia for a Sessional Paper. We can only come to conclusions upon the basis of information which is brought forward to us, and except we are gifted with the powers of divinity, to know more than we should know, it would not be possible for us to arrive at a true appraisal based upon facts which are insufficient, when there are other facts which would certainly influence our judgment.

I make this point very feelingly, because I do feel that we should have had from the outset a full opportu-

ity, wherever it was — in Finance Committee or by means of a White Paper — to have had all the facts placed before us.

There is a further corollary which emerges from that, and it is that one wonders what the position would have been if, prior to this debate in Council, events so transpired which would give support to the hand-over, a type of action which is now contemplated. One of the documents is marked “Highly Confidential,” and as such one has to choose one’s words very carefully, but I think your Honour will appreciate what I am getting at. It is that there would have been an indictment of the whole Government for not taking early action on such matters which were clearly within their particular knowledge and within their province. I feel that this is perhaps an eleventh-hour attempt to save the whole Government from making very grave errors, because I venture to say that if on the last occasion the question had been put the motion would have been thrown out. I have no doubt about that, having regard to the general tenor of the speeches made by those Members who were then present, and the information which was put before us.

Let us say that we now have additional information, and as such we should give full consideration to it. The position is one which calls for immediate action. We are not now running merely a bush service; it has gone beyond the stage of a bush service. If that is so then we must see that the standard set is such as would give to the people of the country the confidence which they deserve to have.

One other point. I am glad to see that the period of the Agreement has been reduced to two years without the right of renewal and opportunity of extension. I sincerely hope that during that period of time our local personnel will be provided with full opportunity to acquire the requisite knowledge so that they may be able to carry on and conduct the management in such a manner as would reflect to their credit. In other words, our aim at all stages must be the question of local management. If we do not have persons with the requisite skill and knowledge then we take others, but we must learn from them and opportunities must be presented whereby local personnel may acquire knowledge and skill and benefit from that period of management so that they may be able to carry on from that period. That is all I desire to say at this particular stage.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I find myself this afternoon completely humiliated, having spoken against this motion a little over two weeks ago when I criticized it violently, and being now in possession of the true facts I have to reconsider my opposition. Previous speakers have expressed their views on this aspect, and I wish to say quite frankly that members of the public have referred to Members of this Council as "rubber stamps." It is not a laughing matter, Mr. Speaker. If there is one vote against this motion it will be Sugrim Singh's today. It may be silly but I will vote against the motion in protest against the manner in which it has been put before this Council.

Mr. Speaker: You need not vote at all.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: That is so, Sir, but I want to vote against it. Government says that B.G. Airways has made a profit of \$88,000.

The Financial Secretary: No one said the profit was \$88,000—certainly not Government.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: We need no financial experts. The picture presented to us was: here is a local company making this enormous profit why should we hand it over to other people? That was the picture presented to this Council. There was nothing said about profits in the vicinity of \$47,000. Each of us must have some consideration for his public life. We cannot on the one hand say that the Company has made a profit, and when that is broken down to mean that there is actually no profit in the sense—

The Chief Secretary: No Government speaker has ever said that B.G. Airways was making profit. Hon. Members may have assumed that, but that has not been said.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I want to say this: the hon. the Chief Secretary's explanation has been timely, and I accept his words, but it cannot be denied that all of us who spoke on this B. G. Airways motion were not completely in possession of the facts. That was responsible for the speeches made. The hon. Member, the Rev. Mr. Bobb particularly emphasized that point. At this late hour we have this further information. I do ask that in the short life of this Interim Government there should be no repetition of this. We are not "rubber stamps" and I shall never be a "rubber stamp". We were never in possession of all the facts, and so we expressed our

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

views as we did. Now that we have all the information, it is for us to consider it. We have our careers to think of. Here you have the Interim Legislature violently opposing something and three weeks later supporting the very thing. What are we? The Members of the Executive Council may take it lightly, but we have our public life to think of. I do ask that there be no repetition of this and a full explanation be given to show that now that we are in possession of the true facts we have to change our opposition.

Dr. Fraser: I spoke against the motion a few weeks ago as presented by Sessional Paper No. 13, which, I said, was barren of all information. Since then we have been given a supplementary White Paper which stated the whole purchase of B.G. Airways—from 1947 to the agreement with B.G. Airways making it retrospective for three years. But we had not been given the information that we should have had before that Sessional Paper was put before us. As the hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo, said and I thoroughly support all he said, the opposition to the Agreement would not have been, if we had all the facts. Therefore we have to come back here today and agree with Government that B.W.I.A. should be given a two-year Agreement.

I do not think we were afraid that B.W.I.A. was going to absorb B.G. Airways. We were not given the information and we had to speak on the information placed before us. I feel that this Council has been very badly treated by Government. I hope that in future there will be no recurrence. If we are to speak on any proposition, all the information available should be given to us. We have been asking for that information for

18 months, and it was not given to us. I had said that we had been told that B. G. Airways made a profit of \$88,000: That was told us in Finance Committee and it is there on the records of Finance Committee.

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, I have no regrets and I am not prepared to ask for forgiveness for my vehement opposition to this motion a few weeks ago. I do not want to go over the views that had been expressed by the hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo, a few moments ago, but I am one of those Members who have to face the electorate and I have no hesitation in saying that very little has been done by this Council—nothing private Members have asked for. Several motions I have had debated here and un-animously carried, even motions from the House of Assembly, but not even the simplest one has been implemented. I will have to go back to the electorate and say that all I have got done is a lot of talk.

The B. G. Airways question is known by a number of persons employed by B.G. Airways and Members of the Government, particularly the Administration. If I had to speak in favour of the Agreement submitted to us for approval and that is taken to mean that I am seeking appointment as a Nominated Member in the next Legislature, that would be wrong. I am not. I would not support something unless I am convinced of its value. Therefore, I have to take the same stand as the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh. I am going to vote against White Paper No. 1 and White Paper No. 2, as I did in Finance Committee. The only thing I am prepared to approve is to find a manager for B.G. Airways so as not to have it operated through B.W.I.A., because I know that Government cannot run a business. I

know I shall live to see that B.G. Airways eventually become a subsidiary of B.W.I.A. or a liability to the taxpayers like the Transport Service. I shall therefore vote against the motion when the time comes.

Mr. Kendall: Mr. Speaker, much has been said on this proposal. I am very much disappointed at the remark made by two hon. Members that they will vote against the Agreement on principle because of the fact, although they received added information — information that should convince them of the necessity to have B.W.I.A. as managing agent of B.G. Airways — they had said "No" on the previous occasion they are unable to change that decision. If that is the type of leadership we are going to get in this country, I am very disappointed because at any time any man can make a statement but when convinced that that statement is wrong he should have the courage of his conviction to say so publicly. I am disappointed at my two friends who have been unable and not strong enough to face these facts.

It is true that the information needed by Members, as they have indicated, was not given as they would have liked, but their main fear is that B. G. Airways is being absorbed into B.W.I.A. That should be eliminated, because Government did everything to protect B.G. Airways from falling into the hands of B.W.I.A. If Members look through clause 3 of the Agreement they would find the relevant points with which Government tried to protect their interests, and also clause 15. It is also unfortunate that Members should continue to make observations of the inadequacy of information given. If this administration has to bring to this Council all the information it has,

we would not have enough paper to supply that information. There should be a certain amount of confidence in one's colleagues. That is where my other disappointment came about, when I saw the lack of confidence displayed.

What happened in the debate? Some Members who spoke against the management were briefed outside and given information outside and when the facts were put to them here, they were unable to change the stand they took. That was one of the unfortunate features of the debate. So it should not be labelled lack of information. That was the real reason for the opposition we have received to this motion. As you will appreciate, Sir, this debate at one stage reached a very unfortunate point, and I would like to deal with it because I have received a letter from B.W.I.A. on the disappointment which they had over the statements made by certain Members of Council concerning the employees of B.W.I.A. Mr. Speaker, you promptly arrested the attack before it could have gone further. Nevertheless, I think it is my duty to state that the management of B.W.I.A. vehemently deny the allegations made, and on behalf of the Administration I am now taking the opportunity to express our regret that the entire incident should have occurred in this Council Chamber.

I want to state, however, that Government is doing everything possible to make it certain that the greatest care is being exercised in the selection of an individual, competent to serve as Manager of the Airline during the currency of the Agreement. I want at this stage to thank the hon. Member, Rev. Mr. Bobb. In the early stages of the debate he complimented the Government on acquiring the Air Service. It is not often that the Administration receives compliments al-

[Mr. Keadall]

though when the Service was acquired certain Members felt that we were purchasing a white elephant as it could not pay its way. When they wanted to oppose the Management Agreement, we had such glowing terms of our Air Service that grew up in our hands, and no one else should have anything to do with it, and there was a gross profit made. Let us admit that there was a gross profit made. All business men know that gross profit is not net profit, and when you arrive at the net profit there is nothing left.

Mention was made by the hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo that the opportunity should be given local men to be trained and to control all our services. Well, Government has considered that already, and now that Mr. Luckhoo is a "floor Member" and not a Member of the Government, these things may have slipped him but it is reported in the newspapers that Government, after careful consideration, has advertised offering scholarships with the object of training individuals to man those ships. I hope that people will make full use of this opportunity.

In moving the motion I indicated to Members that Government appreciates very much the services rendered by the employees of B. G. Airways, and I want to repeat this, that our desire to have a managing-agent is no reflection at all on the present employees of B. G. Airways. It is unfortunate that Members should think that it is the wish of Government to disregard the valuable services given by the employees of B. G. Airways since its inception. The purpose of this Agreement has been mentioned by the Chief Secretary, and I think Members now appreciate the purpose.

Those who find it very difficult to vote in the face of these facts will cause me to be very disappointed, because if I were in their place I should have the courage to change my view without being a "rubber-stamp". If they lack this courage it is not my fault, but I am certain that the public, whose support they want to receive, will see the reasonableness of their attitude if they change and forgive them for any slips which they feel they have made.

I have mentioned the amendment to clause 15 of the Agreement which has served to take away the fear of Members as regards the continuity of that Agreement. The amendment is clear, and Members will see that the Agreement is only to last for two years and at the expiration of that time if it becomes necessary for it to be extended it will come before this Legislative Council, and I hope some of the present Members who are going to face the electorate will be here again to continue discussing this particular Agreement.

I would like to confirm that there is no question whatever, as seems to be the feeling all about, that it is the wish of Government to hand over this "baby" of ours to another company. There is no intention to surrender any obvious rights to B.W.I.A. and I would be the last person to agree to such an operation. I want to add that B. G. Airways has reached a stage where it is not merely a bush service; it has to be run on proper lines, taking into account the fulfilling of all air navigation orders, and it is our business to see that all requirements are carried out. It is the obligation of this Council to see that the people who use B. G. Airways get from it a service worthy of their support. That service can only be had if it gets new management, and

it is the responsibility of Government to secure this new management, and I am asking every Member to support this motion regardless of whether they are "rubber-stamps" or not. This is not a rubber-stamp operation: it took 18 months because Government did everything possible to see that every interest was met.

Mr. Carter: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, that I have not got the power to reply.

Mr. Kendall: The hon. Member will have it at election time.

Mr. Carter: Division, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: About that, I may say this: if you feel strongly about the motion, then, of course, you vote against it. If it is merely to show your displeasure—and I am not lecturing you—then the proper parliamentary procedure is to abstain from voting.

Mr. Carter: It will pass in any case.

Mr. Lee: The hon. Member is calling for a division, but either he withdraws that amendment or—

Mr. Carter: Unless there is a division, my abstention will not be recorded.

The division was taken, Members voting as follows:

For :

Mr. Lord
Dr. Fraser
Mrs. Dey
Miss Collins
Mr. Rahaman
Rev. Bobb
Mr. Luckhoo
Mr. Tello
Mr. Gajraj
Mr. Farnum
Mr. Kendall
Mr. Cummings
Sir Frank McDavid
The Financial Secretary
The Attorney General
The Chief Secretary—16.

Did not vote:

Mr. Sugrim Singh
Mr. Carter
Mr. Lee—3.

Motion carried.

ORDER IN COUNCIL No. 6 OF 1957

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that it be resolved,

"That this Council in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 6 of 1957, which was made on the 22nd day of January, 1957, and published in the Gazette on the 2nd of February, 1957."

This Order is to correct an anomaly whereby the preferential duty on iron and steel mesh used for reinforcing concrete is three times as much at 15% Preferential and 30% General, as the 5% and 10% for iron and steel bars and concrete reinforcing rounds. There is no real reason for drawing this distinction for the two items as they are used for similar purposes, and it is obviously justifiable to take the lower duty of 5% (with 20% General to keep the same preference margin) in view of the purpose for which the wire and steel mesh will be used. Ordinary wire netting and wire fencing will remain at 15% and 30%.

I therefore beg to move the motion.

Sir Frank McDavid: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

SALARIES REVISION FOR NURSES

Council resumed the debate on the following motion by the Chief Secretary:—

"Be it resolved: That with reference to Legislative Council Sessional Paper No. 1/1957 on the proposals of the Salaries Revision Committee for Nursing, Allied and Subordinate Staff of Medical Institutions and The Palms, this Council approves of the recommendations contained therein."

The Chief Secretary: I did, in fact, move the motion on the Order Paper on February 14, but on that

[The Chief Secretary] occasion some Members suggested that it would be a good thing for the Committee's report to be referred to the Finance Committee for examination and report back to this Council. With this the Administration readily agreed. The report has been examined in Finance Committee and the report of the Finance Committee has been laid on the table this afternoon, but in the light of that report I wish to move an amendment to the motion. The amendment has been circulated to hon. Members, but I shall read it. In fact, I will read the entire motion as amended. The motion on the Order Paper reads as follows:

"Be it resolved: That, with reference to Legislative Council Sessional Paper No. 1/1957 on the proposals of the Salaries Revision Committee for Nursing, Allied and Subordinate Staff of Medical Institutions and The Palms, this Council approves of the recommendations contained therein."

The amendment suggests "the deletion of the full stop at the end and the addition of the following:

"subject to the modification proposed in paragraph 3 of the report of the Finance Committee, which was laid on the 1st March, and subject to further consideration by the Administration of the suggestions contained in paragraphs 4 to 7 of the Finance Committee's report".

There is a misprint in the circulated copy; the word "full" should read "further". These, in fact are the recommendations of the Finance Committee. It is gratifying to see that the Finance Committee has endorsed, in effect, the Administration's view that this is a very well-considered and carefully thought out report. In it is stated that no fewer than 31 meetings were held and it is quite clear that the Chairman and members took their task very seriously and went into everything with commendable thoroughness. I should like to associ-

ciate my own congratulations with those of the members of the Finance Committee and to the Chairman, the Members and the Secretary of the Salaries Revision Committee for their excellent job of work.

As hon. Members are aware, the decision to set up this Committee stemmed from the Hands (Salaries) revision of 1955. There was a general feeling amongst Members then that there were some inequalities of salary of the nursing staff, both among the staff themselves and also in relation to other sections of the Public Service. This feeling applied particularly to female staff. The Committee's task, therefore, was a rather difficult one; it was to iron out these inequalities and to produce a salaries structure which bore a fair relationship to the rest of the Public Service. In my humble opinion this has been done but not without involving some changes in respect of these relationships. Inevitably these changes have caused some heart-burning and have led to a number of representations, but unless the existing relationships were perfect, which was demonstrably not the case, these changes were unavoidable. The representations put forward have been most carefully considered but few have stood up to examination. Those that have done so are incorporated in the report of the Finance Committee.

The original motion recommended the adoption of the report — the D'Andrade Committee report I will call it, for the sake of distinguishing it from the Finance Committee's report. It recommended the adoption of the report in toto, with the exception of one paragraph — para. 11 — which recommended that male

student nurses and staff nurses should be granted an additional increment in their scale so as to give them compensation for losing their position of long seniority over their female counter parts.

The Administration, whilst sympathising with the intention of this recommendation, has not felt able to accept it as it seems to be entirely without justification. It is Government's view that every woman in the Service should be paid the same as men, all things being equal. There are many previous instances where women have been brought up to an equal footing with men. A recent example is woman police officers. Never before has an extra increment been awarded to a male opposite number. Otherwise, the Administration felt that the whole report should be accepted as it stood.

Finance Committee has, almost entirely, endorsed that. It has, however, made one positive recommendation of a change in paragraph 3 of the Finance Committee's report. There, Finance Committee recommends that present holders of the post of uncertificated nurses should not be redesignated "Ward Orderlies, but should retain their present nomenclature. This is accepted by the Administration. The Committee also recommended that the Administration should give further consideration to a number of points. One is in connection with the post of Woman Child Welfare Officer which the Finance Committee recommended should be revised downward, but that recommendation should not apply to the present holder, so there is no loss of salary to the present incumbent of the post. The Administration will shortly consider whether that recommendation should be given

effect to, and the result will appear in the next Estimates. The Finance Committee also recommended that the minimum salary scale of the subordinate female staff should be stepped up by the Administration as it may be on the low side. There again, the Administration will think that over, and the point has to be looked at rather carefully because it may have repercussions on other sections of the Service and minimum wage orders of staff outside the Government Service.

The Finance Committee also recommended that Government should give consideration to dispensers with long service. It also recommended that Government should consider the balance or ratio of salary for promotion posts to the grades of Senior and Chief Dispensers. A fairly strong barrage of representations was put up on behalf of the dispensers; all of them were closely examined and it boils down to the question of whether dispensers doing highly responsible work in country districts, independent of supervision by a Medical Officer, should draw higher pay. That point has been considered by a Whitley Council Committee and is now being examined by the Administration. Further information on this subject will be given to the Council when I am in a position to do so.

There is another point made by the Finance Committee to the effect that the post of head seamstress at the P.H.G. might possibly be jacked up as it carried greater responsibilities than those of a Head Seamstress at other institutions, and it was suggested that this difference, hitherto recognised by way of responsibility allowance, should continue to receive recognition by the payment of increased emoluments with respect to the Georgetown post. It has also been suggested

[The Chief Secretary]

that the duties of the Attendant at the Mental Hospital, Berbice, who runs the printery at the Institution, might warrant his receiving some extra reward. All these points are being considered and decision will be taken whether there should be any revision.

Another recommendation in the Sessional Paper, accompanying the D'Andrade report, is that the revised salary scales should take effect as from January 1, 1955 — the date on which the revised Primary School teachers' salaries took effect. The circumstances under which the two reports were made are very similar. They both stem from the general revision of 1955 relating to the Civil Service. It must be pointed out that a Supplementary Provision in the Estimates will probably be required in this particular case, because although provision has been made to cover the new salary scale for 1957, no provision has been made for the cost of back pay on the new salary scales as from January 1, 1955.—two years' back pay which would cost approximately \$360,000 in all. It is unlikely that that could be met from savings under the Medical Department head, and therefore it may be necessary for supplementary provision to be voted to meet it. I beg to move the motion as amended.

Mr. Cummings: I beg to second the motion. I should just like to point out that the Chief Secretary has referred to the fact that the nurses' salaries revision sprang from the recommendations of the Hands report, but I would like to remind him that the recommendations stemmed from representations made by me in this matter. In this respect I should like to recall from Hansard of August 18,

1955, some views which I expressed in this Council, and I quote:

"The hon. Member is nevertheless convinced that the mere building of hostels will not necessarily result in the development of the sense of duty and vocation required of the nursing staff. In order to improve our nursing services, conditions of service must be ameliorated. Where high standards of nursing skill and a sense of vocation are fundamentals of an efficient nursing service, there can be no justification for the absence of proper leave and pension regulations. This type of employee is surrounded during all her working hours with human suffering caused by mental and physical strain. Under such depressing conditions she is nevertheless required to preserve a tactful, cheerful and sympathetic approach, while at the same time exerting a high standard of professional skill towards the amelioration of condition of her patients. Surely this entitles her to better conditions of service than she now enjoys — in particular, better wages, adequate long leave and pension rights."

I continue to read: I stated then:

"This has been considered with other recommendations, and I am pleased to say that, acting on the recommendation of the hon. the Chief Secretary, and, I think, the Finance Committee of this Council, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government has appointed a Committee to go into the question of nurses' salaries, and I know the hon. the Chief Secretary is conscious of the conditions under which the nurses work, and is making every effort to improve those conditions."

I quote that merely for the record, because I wish it to be clearly recorded that it was the result of recommendations made by myself that this Committee was appointed by His Excellency the Governor. I wish to thank the hon. the Chief Secretary and the Committee which was appointed, for the excellent work which has been done in this connection. I have not found it possible myself to agree readily to everything that has been done, but I consider that the conclusions reached have been reasonable

and in accordance with democratic principles, and they have my full support.

Again I wish to thank hon. Members for their very careful examination of the Committee's report, and for the representations that have been made. Although the nurses may have expected a little more, \$360,000 is a substantial amount, and I hope it will go somewhere towards relieving the very depressing conditions under which nurses in this country have been labouring, and labouring so ably for such a long time. I have very great pleasure in seconding the motion as amended.

Miss Collins: In supporting the motion for the adoption of the Committee's report I wish to start from the bottom, and with your permission, Sir, I propose to quote from Volume VII of the Revised Laws, at page 767, where the Alms House Rules are published. It is provided in those Rules that the Principal Nurse "shall, subject to the direction of the Superintendent, have the immediate control of the nurses, probationers and ward-maids, and shall report to the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent all cases of neglect of duty on their part. She shall have the general control of all the wards. She shall assist in the training and practical teaching of probationers and nurses in the wards, including such details as testing of urine as may be directed from time to time by the Medical Officer. She shall be responsible for the proper performance of the duties of the nurses, probationers and wardmaids, and shall see that the Medical Officer's orders are faithfully carried out, and that all rules and regulations written and unwritten are strictly obeyed." The duties of Charge Nurses and Assistant Nurses are also defined.

On page 14 of their Report the Committee say:

"10.4 We consider the designation of the post of Uncertified Nurse to be misleading. No training is required of the holders of these posts either prior or subsequent to their appointment to them. The duties they perform are essentially non-professional in nature and more in line with those required of hospital ward orderlies. We recommend that the post of Uncertified Nurse be redesignated Ward Orderly and placed on the special scale recommended for hospital posts of the same designation at paragraph 23."

"10.5 The following scales are accordingly recommended for nursing posts at The Palms:—

Departmental Sister (substituted for i post of Junior Departmental Sister) . .
A 14a : \$2,760 x \$144—\$3,480.

Junior Departmental Sister . . A 15a :
\$2,160 x \$120—\$2,640 / x \$120—\$2,880.

Ward Sisters (formerly designated Trained Charge Nurses) . . A 17a :
\$1,560 x \$120—\$2,160.

Staff Nurses (formerly designated Certified Nurses) . . C 1 : \$912 x \$60—
\$1,212 // x \$60—\$1,512.

"10.6.....The above recommendations do not include the post of untrained Charge Nurse which, we understand, was abolished during 1955 on the retirement of the holder, and will be replaced by an additional post of trained charge nurse, now designated Ward Sister. In the circumstances we propose no change in the salary scale which this post carried (C5: \$950—\$1200). In view of the fact, however, that the holder performed duties no less onerous or responsible than those carried out by the trained charge nurse, we recommend that a **personal allowance of \$240 per annum** should be attached to the recently abolished post of Untrained Charge Nurse from the effective date of implementation of this report."

In Finance Committee I tried to persuade hon. Members not to accept these proposals. Members have agreed that the present uncertificated nurses at The Palms should maintain their status as nurses, and having heard

[Miss Collins]

what I read from Volume VII of the laws I am quite sure that they will agree with me that those women were employed at The Palms as probationers and worked their way up to nurses, acting as charge nurses and Supervisors from time to time. I do not think it is fair that these nurses should be redesignated Ward Orderlies, and I wish to congratulate Government on having decided not to accept that recommendation in the Committee's report. But what I am concerned about is the financial aspect. The Committee recommended an allowance of \$240 per annum to those nurses, provided they are redesignated Ward Orderlies. Now that that recommendation has been rejected I am urging that at least half of that allowance be given to the hard-working untrained nurses at The Palms. There are about 600 inmates of that institution, of whom between 300 and 400 are hospitalized and need care and attention. Some of those untrained nurses have given as much as 18 years' service, and I am sure hon. Members will agree that after so many years of practical work they perform duties no less responsible than those of trained nurses. Some of them started at a salary of \$12 per month, and I am asking that they be paid the same salaries as the attendants, so that justice may not only be done but appear to be done.

I will now pass on to the dispensers who are deprived of certain amenities. They are called out sometimes at midnight, and I think the labourer is worthy of his hire. Now that their case is before the Whitley Council I trust that they will be given fair treatment. I would consider that I had wasted my time in this Interim Legislature if I had not brought the grievances of those public servants to the attention of Government.

As regards the recommendations with respect to Health Visitors, etc., I do not wish to make comparisons, except to say that I think the Junior Departmental Sisters deserve more than the salary recommended. They are given a big name with little money behind it. Our trained nurses are constantly leaving the Colony because we cannot afford to pay them salaries commensurate with their qualifications. I know of one nurse who went on a scholarship and returned with high qualifications for service at the Best Sanatorium, but instead of being placed there she has been put to supervise the work of wardmaids at P.H.G. and given living quarters without proper amenities.

In the case of the Health Visitors I doubt whether non. Members of this Council have read the syllabus for the Royal Sanitary Institute examination which they have to take. I think that if they have read it they would agree with me that our Health Visitors deserve to be paid better salaries.

The wardmaids at the Best Sanatorium are working under very bad conditions, and they have no protection. I am dissatisfied with the recommendations for the artisans. If the cost of commodities to them was the same to them as to the civil servants—for example, they can buy sugar at 4 or 6 cents per lb. while the civil servant paid 10 cents per lb. for the same sugar—it would make all the difference. Every time salaries are increased the cost of living goes up, and the increase in salary given to these artisans never seems to be equitable. They are entitled to reasonable living conditions as anyone else and I feel their case should be considered.

I appeal to the Heads of Departments to co-operate with Government by discharging their duties in such a manner as to ensure to those working

under them their rights. At the last General Election the Public Servants had their grievances and exercised them at the poll. I want to congratulate these artisans on having made their representation in a constitutional manner. I would like to hear from the hon. Member for Labour as to whether he thinks these artisans have made representations to him too.

Mr. Luckhoo: Your Honour, this Report stems from a recommendation of Finance Committee in May, 1955. It says so here (Legislative Council Paper No. 1/1957) and, Sir, as in most revisions you have three things happening. In this particular instance, because posts are improved, that is, with extended salary scales, the holders can get benefits; then you have others who remain stationary and do not move at all; and the third are the ones which are under-rated. It is only human nature, although the first lot is satisfied, the second lot is necessarily not satisfied, and when their contention is backed up by potent argument it is necessary that there be a reconsideration of their case where they have not had the benefit of an increase.

It is for that reason I had asked that this matter be taken to Finance Committee where we will have the opportunity to go through each of the sections. We spent two afternoons on it in Finance Committee, and the time was well spent. I can well see this debate lasting three days if that had not been done. Points made in Finance Committee which were not accepted I will repeat here, because I feel that if Government is made cognizant of the weight of opinion it would give further consideration to matters brought to its attention.

The first point relates to the dispensers. I hope the hon. the Chief Secretary will give his undertaking, as

I think we can read into his words that the Dispensers have a good case and should receive adequacy of consideration. But there is one point I may make in connection with what we asked in Finance Committee and, that is, when a decision is made in respect of the Dispensers Government will do us the favour of two things—to have this decision drawn up as early as possible, and to bring it back to Finance Committee. We do ask the hon. the Chief Secretary and the hon. the Financial Secretary as Chairman, to bring that decision back to Finance Committee and so give us an opportunity for further discussing the matter. I was happy to read in the words of the hon. the Chief Secretary there is appreciation of the case of the Dispensers. It does not permit me at this stage to “gild the lily” except to say that the potency of their case rings an appeal to those who have to make the decision.

We move from the case of the dispensers to that of those people known as ward orderlies, and here I join the hon. Member, Miss Collins. I am happy to observe that Government is accepting the fact that these people should not change their designation but continue to be called nurses. The point I am making is this. We are in a new era and everything is being done by means of certificate. Today one places undue importance on certificates. I believe it is well and good to have certificates. But let us go back into the history of the people in that category, people who for a long number of years have rendered valuable service as nurses and caretakers of the inmates of the Alms House (now called The Palms). Those people have rendered faithful service and have been promoted to the top position, that of charge nurses of the institution. Yet today we turn around and say to them “You do not have a certificate and can no longer

[Mr. Luckhoo]

hold your position; you must remain as Junior Nurses." With this background of wealth of experience they are to become Juniors, people who have spent their lives in this particular cause. I feel that these people have a justifiable case for reconsideration, whether they should not be given further benefit by means of an extension of their salary scale. They have done their work well, but you now ask for certificated nurses to hold their posts. Why should you require nurses with a certificate of technical experience to do work which those persons have been doing efficiently for many years?

These women should be retained in their posts. They have been giving valuable service, and as such they are deserving of a reconsideration of their case, for although it is now decided to remove the designation of "Ward Orderly" from them they will obtain no tangible recognition for their long experience and service. In amplification of that point I would like to point out that some of the Probationers who joined the staff were afraid that after two or three years they would be made Nurses. Yet they find themselves after five and six years in the same uniforms. In other words, they are still deemed "Probationers". These are things which cause a great deal of heart-burning to people whom I have referred to before as "the forgotten people of the remembered profession". I feel that we should in our little way give recognition to these people and see that they receive a salary which is commensurate with their particular work. I feel Government should give further consideration to this case. I hope our humble representation on their behalf will produce results for this category of workers.

We move on from the female nurses to the male nurses. Although

I accept the contention that the woman is equal to and deserving of the same pay as the male if they are doing the same work, yet where you have disparity existing for a long period of time and where the male nurses have had no benefit given to them, I say it is singularly unfortunate in a document, such as this Report that we have one particular section of its recommendations not implemented. I refer to Recommendation 11 (2) on page fifteen which says:

'However, in order to allow the present holders of these posts to retain some of the advantages they enjoy at present over their female counterparts, we recommend that they be granted an additional increment in the scale at the effective date of the revision.'

I feel that this Committee comprised of the hon. Member, Mrs. Dey, and others is desirous that its recommendation in this respect should be given due and proper consideration. I ask that Government review this recommendation which stems not from this Council but from the Committee itself.

Let us turn to another category the head seamstress. A strong case has been made out and consideration is to be given to the particular case of the head seamstress of the Georgetown Hospital. But let us take the seamstresses as a whole body. In Georgetown, for example, they work not only for the hospital, producing work of a high grade, but make the uniforms for the Health Visitors, the School Nurses, the staff of the Palms and of various other institutions. It must be a source of delight to the eyes of the public to see the Nurses resplendent in beautiful uniforms so immaculate, reflecting the high grade skilled service these seamstresses are putting forward. It is a very important point

for consideration. Are they just "butchers" handing out work or highly skilled seamstresses who have acquired the skill of taking ordinary material and presenting clothing of great attraction? They are literally technicians. The more one thinks of it, the more one sees how true it is. But are they receiving the salaries of technicians? Is their quality of work reflected in the salaries which they are going to receive? The answer is emphatically "No". I ask, as I have done previously, that further consideration should be given to these particular people.

The hon. Member (Mr. Lee) is suggesting that the time is now 5 p.m., Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Never mind what the hon. Member is suggesting.

Mr. Luckhoo: The salary scale of the ward maid is \$43 per month, by \$3.50 to \$72. It will take them about eight years, if my mathematics are correct, to reach the maximum. At the present time they are paying back certain excesses which they received when the Hands-Jakeway Report was implemented, and they have to repay this at the rate of \$3 per month. They were given money, and now they have to pay it back every month. I do appeal to Government for sympathetic consideration on behalf of these ward maids. Perhaps they can be given an additional increment or some relief from this repayment month by month. It would be giving them some added form of recognition and would assist

them to continue to make their very valuable contribution to the institution. I see from the Finance Committee report that laundresses will now be receiving further consideration from Government. They are using a steam laundry and this requires persons with some type of skill. I am happy to see they will be given some consideration, this they are entitled to receive.

Mr. Speaker: How much longer is the hon. Member likely to go?

Mr. Luckhoo: I am trying to go as fast as I can.

Mr. Speaker: I am not saying that.

Mr. Luckhoo: Your Honour, about 15 minutes more.

Mr. Speaker: Would any other Member like to speak on this motion?

Members: Yes.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Secretary: Unless Members wish to go on until tonight I think we can take the adjournment now.

Mr. Speaker: I think perhaps we had better take the adjournment now. Would the hon. Member find it convenient to continue on the 7th?

Mr. Luckhoo: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Council is adjourned until Thursday 7th March, 1957.