

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FRIDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY, 1948.

The Council met at 8 p.m., the Hon. C. V. Wight, O.B.E., Deputy President, presiding in the absence of the President, His Excellency the Governor.

PRESENT.

The Hon. Mr. C. V. Wight, O.B.E., Deputy President, in the Chair.

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

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. E. M. Duke (acting).

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

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

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

The Hon. Dr. J. A. Nicholson, (Georgetown North).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

The Hon. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

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

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum (Nominated).

The Hon. Capt. J. P. Coghlan (Demerara River).

The Hon. D. P. Debidin (Eastern Demerara).

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. Dr. C. Jagan (Central Demerara).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. C. A. McDoom (Nominated).

The Hon. A. T. Peters (Western Berbice).

The Hon. W. A. Phang (North Western District).

The Hon. G. H. Smellie (Nominated).
The Clerk read prayers.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT WELCOMED

Mr. SEAFORD: Sir, before the business of the Council is proceeded with may I take this opportunity on behalf of the Council to offer you our felicitations on this the first occasion on which you have taken the chair. I offer you our congratulations, and may I say that I trust, in fact I am sure it is the beginning of long and happy relations between the Chair and Members of this Council.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Seaford and hon. Members, I thank you for your kind words. I feel sure that with the co-operation which I am positive I will get from hon. Members, this Council will not only get on with its business expeditiously but I feel it will also do its duty in the interest of the community as a whole. I thank you.

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday the 19th of February, 1948, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

PAPERS LAID

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL laid on the table the following documents:—

Legislative Council (Elections) (Amendment) Regulations, 1948 (No. 3)

Legislative Council (Elections) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations, 1948 (No. 4)

ESTIMATES, 1948

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1948.

MISCELLANEOUS (A) SUBVENTIONS, ETC.,
MUNICIPAL

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We completed Head XXIV—Miscellaneous, last evening, and I would ask the Council to turn to page 7 of the report of the Finance Committee. I move that the next Head XXV—Miscellaneous (a) Subventions, etc., Municipal—be carried out, as indicated in the report, at the total of \$139,488.

Motion carried.

MISCELLANEOUS (B) SUBVENTIONS, ETC.,
OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that Head XXVI—Miscellaneous (b) Subventions, etc., other than Municipal—be carried out at the total of \$343,336, including the amendments as shown in the report of the Finance Committee. There are several amendments, each of which is listed in the report. I should direct special attention to sub-head 67—provision for the University College of the West Indies. Members will see that the total provision for 1948 in the Draft Estimate of \$16,000 has been increased to \$33,000, and when this Head was considered by the Finance Committee I indicated that the report of the Committee which dealt with this matter at Montego Bay had indicated that the annual cost, a proportion of which will be borne by this Colony, for the next three years, was something like \$99,000; that the contribution by this Colony for the next three years would be \$33,000, and thereafter it would be in the vicinity of \$100,000 a year. Since then I have tabled a Message from the Governor which gives precise details of these figures and how they have been arrived at. There will be no formal motion on that Message because the Council has already approved in principle of a proportion of the cost of the College being paid by British Guiana. I thought I would draw Member's attention to it and remind them that if they wish details they could be found in the Message which has been laid.

Mr. SEAFORD: May I just point out that I was a representative of this Colony at the Jamaica Conference, and in accepting those figures I pointed out that I did not in any way bind this Government or this Council which had the right to accept or reject the proposal as it thought fit.

Mr. LEE: With respect to item 56—Subsidy to British Guiana United Broadcasting Co., Ltd., \$6,500—I take it that the broadcasting service is being carried on in such a manner that political discussions or views are not permitted, otherwise I would certainly move that this subsidy be withdrawn. I do not usually listen to the talks which are given on commercial programmes, but I understand that now and again they are used for broadcasting political views. If that is going to be allowed then each and everyone should be allowed the same facility. But I think it was decided by the Advisory Committee when it functioned, that no political views should be allowed to be broadcast, and I take it that Government will see that that is observed. If I get an assurance that that policy will be carried out I would take no exception to the item.

The next item to which I would like to call attention is item 55—Contribution to British Guiana Airways, Ltd., \$45,000. I take it that this increase of \$10,440 does not come within the new contract. I feel that Government should not enter into any new contract without the full approval of this Council. If this is only a token vote with respect to the existing contract until the Council has had an opportunity to debate the question of a new contract I would not oppose it, otherwise I would move a reduction of \$10,440. We all know the benefits to be derived from a subsidised air service for transport to the interior, but if Government is going to prevent other companies from coming into the field I would be one of the objectors to such a policy. It was reported in the newspapers that an English Company desired to operate an air service to the interior at much cheaper rates. I do not say that Government should not subsidise an air service to the interior, but it should not prevent other Companies from joining the field if they want to. If this increase of \$10,440 is towards the new contract I would move its deletion and allow the Colony's contri-

bution to remain at the present figure, and if there is any excess expenditure it could be voted on supplementary estimate.

On page 58 of the Estimate I see item 68—Grant to Salvation Army for Belfield Girls' School, \$17,000. I take it that the Salvation Army is taking over the control and management of this Girls' School at Belfield. If it means that Government will pay 50 per cent. of the cost of the new site and building and have no voice in the management of the School I would certainly take exception to it. Wherever Government money is being expended there should be some Member of this Council on the Board of management.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I am rather happy to have had the observation of the hon. the First Nominated Member (Mr. Seaford) on the item dealing with the University College of the West Indies. I am not going to oppose the item at this time but I reserve the right to do so when it comes up again.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I again point out that this is the time to do it? It is no good encouraging the authorities of the University to believe that this Colony is going to stand by its previous resolution to support it financially, and then bring it up at another time. If we are not going to join in the scheme this is the time to say so.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I do not think so. I think we have been committed already, very much so by the previous legislation, and for that reason I am not going to attempt to dislocate matters at this stage, but my observations may be of some help in training our thoughts in a certain direction, and I hope the ideas which I shall express in a moment may be considered by Jamaica particularly. I remember well when Sir James Irvine's Committee came to this Colony. I was one of five who represented the Queen's College Old Boys' Association and submitted a memorandum asking that in the establishment of this University College, Faculties should be spread among the Colonies concerned. I have seen no announcement, nor have I been able to

glean any information of any promise made in that direction so far as British Guiana is concerned. We have been called upon to subscribe a very large sum of money, and incidentally all the money subscribed by the various Colonies will be spent in Jamaica which will derive the benefit from that money in one form or another. I am not against the principle of having a University College in the West Indies, but I feel that it was like putting the cart before the horse when we agreed at such an early stage without knowing to what extent a West Indies University would be a blessing to the Colonies in the Caribbean area. For one thing it will be equally expensive to send a boy to the West Indies University in Jamaica as to send him to a University in England, and even if it cost a little more I would send my son to a better University if I had the opportunity to do so, and let him have the best. I feel that it is merely through sentiment at the present moment that we have agreed to subscribe this large amount. Unless we have a definite pronouncement that the Faculties would be extended to other Colonies I would on subsequent occasions oppose the annual votes.

With regard to the point raised by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) in connection with the B.G. Airways, Ltd., I agree that if we allow this increase to pass now we would be fettering our scope for debate on the motion to be moved later. I therefore strongly urge that consideration of the item be deferred until the question of a subsidy to the Company is being debated. I formally move that consideration of the item be deferred.

Mr. LEE: I suggest to my friend that we should first get a reply from the Colonial Treasurer before we move the deletion of the item. We are subsidizing this service under a contract which, I think, has nine months more to run. I am now told there is no contract at the present moment, but I still think we should put something on the estimate as a token vote until we have the debate on the new contract. If we delete the item our air service to the interior would be curtailed, and we are aware of its benefit to the people in the interior.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I must correct the hon. Member. He is under a total misapprehension in this matter. He is repeatedly saying that if this item is deleted it would throw the Company out of the service. I wonder if he knows that funds of the Company involve hundreds of thousands of dollars, and that Government has guaranteed the Company so many flying hours per month, therefore they would be getting something from the Colony so far as service is concerned.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. Member certainly knows more about it than I do.

Mr. ROTH: The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) has mentioned a token vote. Does he mean to suggest that Dakotas and Grummans can fly on token votes? Does he want the air service to the interior to be closed down? It takes money and a lot of money to fly Dakotas and Grummans. We are under an obligation to pay this money.

Dr. JAGAN: I think what the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) was trying to say—(laughter)

Mr. DEBIDIN: Thanks very much.

Dr. JAGAN: I did not mean to cast any slur on the hon. Member. There seems to be some confusion on the matter he has spoken about. We know that Government has entered into contracts with the B.G. Airways, Ltd., and that those contracts have expired. As the Colonial Treasurer has said, we are now running under the old contract and paying an annual subsidy, but if I may correct the hon. Member I think in Finance Committee the Colonial Treasurer told us that this item would be deferred until the general debate comes up. This is merely a subsidy to the Company, and if we are going to consider the question of another contract the question of a subsidy will not arise. The B.G. Airways should continue to operate as they have been doing under the old contract, until the question of a new contract is decided. It may be decided to allow other Companies to come in, in which case we may not have to give a subsidy. I think that is what the hon. Member was trying

to say. (laughter). We have been presented with the report of the B.G. Airways, Ltd., and there is some controversy as to the necessity of continuing to subsidise one company. If the whole question of a contract is to be fully debated I do not see why we should make provision for a whole year's subsidy.

The CHAIRMAN: I personally feel like certain hon. Members. I would like a full debate on the question of the contract with the B.G. Airways but personally I feel that we should pass this amount of \$45,000, and as the Colonial Treasurer has said, we will get an opportunity to debate the matter fully. I quite appreciate the remarks made by certain hon. Members, and I sympathize with them. Perhaps at the moment I may say I agree *in toto* with some of the remarks which have been made, but I think at this stage we should pass the head as it is and rely on the undertaking, which I can assure you will be implemented by the Colonial Treasurer, that the matter will be debated in full.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The discussion on this head touched on three points. First of all there was the question of broadcasting, and if I understood the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) correctly, he said he was aware that political views and opinions were now being expressed in the ZFY broadcasts. He objects to that, or at least he reserves his objection unless and until all political views were also allowed over those broadcasts. My understanding of the position is exactly contrary. I well remember that before the recent elections ZFY were pressed in some quarters to allow political speeches over their broadcasts, and in my humble opinion they very wisely prevented any such talks from taking place over their broadcasts. I do not know what legal actions might have followed if certain speeches we are now hearing about some of them in the Courts had been allowed to be broadcast. For that reason, among others, ZFY deliberately sets its face against handling political subjects. It is a surprise to me to hear that the Company is allowing political broadcasts; I think it is not. However, the position as regards ZFY is somewhat doubtful and, I think, I men-

tioned in Finance Committee that the Company had applied for a licence and that we were awaiting advice from the Colonial Office in the matter. We have now a copy of the licence and agreement under which the Trinidad Broadcasting Coy. is operating and negotiations are actively in progress as regards the issue of a licence to ZFY. If that licence is issued it would contain the conditions—maybe they are stringent conditions—as regards the matters to be broadcast and also as regards such questions as the amount of time to be used for public matters, while there will also be some control over technical development. I have seen advice from someone who knows about it that we should also have a modern service, but the more stringent you have conditions the more difficult it would become to make the service a commercial proposition. The Company might find that it is no longer a commercial proposition at all and we may then have to indulge in some scheme similar to that of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

The next point deals with the Salvation Army. I think I made it clear in Finance Committee that Government had been fortunate in securing an arrangement with the Salvation Army to take over the Belfield Girls' School. Government would contribute one half of the cost of a building and the Army has agreed to run this very difficult school for only \$4,500 a year, provided of course that the size of the school does not increase very much.

Lastly, there is this question of the contract with the British Guiana Airways Ltd. There has been a great deal of misconception and misunderstanding about it, and again we have a long speech by one hon. Member stating that the contract to be entered into has to come before this Council or, at any rate, before it could be ratified. The terms of the contract were set out in the report of the Committee of which I was Chairman, and the figure in the contract—\$45,000—is the amount which the Committee, comprising Members of this Council, recommended for inclusion in the Estimates as being a reasonable forecast of what the deficiency for the current year of operation would be. Of course, it is wise that we should put that in be-

cause in the event of opposition—I would not say division—this sum is still unquestionably due, and I have no doubt that when the motion is taken in this Council the contract would receive approval. I do hope that in the financial provision there is some justice to the Company. The Company is now operating under the terms of an agreement with the Administration itself—that agreement is subject to the approval of this Council—and it is desirable that the figure to be put in as a subsidy should be in relation to current operations, whether or not there is final approval of the terms of the contract itself. Lastly, I desire to say something about these operations. It is completely ridiculous for anyone to expect that other companies from outside are going to come to British Guiana and run air services free of cost to Government or at the same rates, or at cheaper rates. Another air service in the Colony, under present conditions, cannot pay; and of that I am completely convinced. Subject to development of the interior, however, there is a possibility that it would be able to pay.

Next, I want to say that there has never been any application from any reputable firm to come and take over the air service now being operated by the British Guiana Airways and run it free of cost. There has been an enquiry by a firm—an organisation in England called Air Works Ltd.—and that organisation has a fleet of aircraft with which it operates a charter service in England, but outside of England the greater part of its work is comprised of the technical management of aircraft belonging to Governments and large commercial undertakings. For example, they manage the operation of an air fleet by a large oil company in Ecuador and they also manage the operation of the Sudan Airways. Of course, I believe all the operational expenses are paid by the owners and this organisation only provides the technical management of the air fleets. It is most unfair that the public should be given the impression that there are two or three reputable commercial airways that are only too willing to come into British Guiana and do the work, and do better than what the British Guiana Airways is doing. That is not so. I have already taken up too much time, but

this question will come up later in the form of a specific motion dealing with the proposed agreement.

Mr. DEBIDIN : May I be allowed to make a statement? I happen to have seen a correspondence from the firm to which the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has referred, and from what I have seen it is clear that it wants to operate in this Colony. I am not going to refer to that now, but I would like to observe that I am against a monopoly and the only way we can know whether more than one company can operate or not is to have competition. It is only by that means we will know whether we can get services without having to pay for them from Colony funds and provide cheaper transportation for the benefit of the general public. I feel that no attempt should be made to prevent such competition in this Colony, and as regards item 55—Contribution to British Guiana Airways, Ltd., \$45,000—I would like to know how far we are going as regards aviation in this Colony and whether this item is for bringing people from the interior and so on, or whether it is for surveying in order to determine whether it is practicable for other airways to operate here. Why should we be asked to give \$45,000 to the British Guiana Airways, especially when we are undecided as regards competition?

Mr. SEAFORD : The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara referred first of all to the proposed West Indian University and stated that Jamaica is going to get the major benefit from it. That is perfectly true, but it must be pointed out that Jamaica is paying 45.4 per cent. of the total expenditure and it is only natural, I think, that that island should expect to get more benefit than other places. The members of the Staff will, naturally, receive their salaries there and their living expenses will be spent in that island. As regards the question of having various faculties in various islands, I am told that the Principal is going to find it rather difficult to run a University under those conditions. It is not so easy to get from one island to another unless one travels by air, and it is better to have the University in one place than on several islands. Jamaica

has 60 per cent. of the population of British Guiana and the British West Indies, and it is for that reason that Jamaica has been decided on as the site for the University.

As regards the question of the British Guiana Airways, I do think that when we come to consider the agreement we should be absolutely impartial. I feel, however, that the work done by the existing company has been of very great benefit to this Colony. We must not forget the pioneering work it has done, and but for that work many of the big companies now exploring the interior would not have come to this Colony. This company did much pioneering work and, I think, we are indebted to it to a very very great extent. I will always recall the very valuable work this company has done for this Colony. The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara said he was against monopolies; I am also, and I had hoped he would have used the word nationalism because that is the greatest form of monopoly there can be. I hope he would consider the bus services and the railways in this Colony, because those are real monopolies. I am sure it will not be beneficial for more than one airways company to operate here even under ideal conditions. It is quite true that other companies might come here and say they are prepared to operate, but they would only operate along certain lines that would pay them. The Cuyuni Gold Coy. would say they are willing to operate, but they would only guarantee to take people up to the interior. The British Guiana Airways can carry freight and while the company might lose money in doing so they would do it for the benefit of the people in the interior. They also bring sick people down—sometimes free of charge—from the interior and do things of that kind, and they have entered into an agreement with Government to fly at certain rates which, I am sure, will never pay them. If we allow another company to come in here and fly as they like they would only make the situation more difficult and, perhaps, make it impossible for Government to get rid of them.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. Member

for Eastern Demerara insisting on his amendment?

Mr. DEBIDIN: Yes, Sir: I am.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I should just like to say a brief word on this question of the agreement with the British Guiana Airways, Ltd., and about the need for the establishment of the post of Director General of Civil Aviation. The Director General is the adviser to all the Colonies in the Caribbean on civil aviation matters. He goes around the British Empire—he was here recently—and gives the benefit of his advice on the increasing number of problems we have to deal with as regards civil aviation. Up to the present this Government has not had to exercise very elaborate control over civil aviation as there is only one company operating in the Colony, but there are many more aeroplanes arriving in the Colony at the moment than in the past and there are many problems on which I have to seek advice, such as when we have to introduce Regulations governing the safety of aviation in the Colony—particularly as regards transport flying—and there is no one with specialised knowledge who can give it. At the moment we have not got special advisers, but I am not saying we will not have to get one. We might have to get a programme for the technically designated civil aviation service which is to come into operation, and we would probably have to get him to take over the administration side of the civil aviation service, for when that gets going we will need to have a full-time officer with technical knowledge to control it. At the moment we have not got any and we have to get the advice of the Director General of Civil Aviation in the matter. That, I think, is not a question of monopoly, but it is obviously an unsatisfactory state of affairs if some question arises on which we require advice, and there is no one to advise us. I think it is desirable that we should contribute towards the establishment of the post of Director General of Civil Aviation.

Mr. SMELLIE: As regards the motion moved by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara for the deletion of the vote, I would like to say that I intend to

vote against it because I am taking the long view in relation to the report of the British Guiana Airways Committee. I have risen to speak because I feel there is a great deal of substance in what the hon. Member for Central Demerara has stated. I think that putting the item on the Estimates like this is rather like putting the cart before the horse. I intend to vote against the motion, however, as I think the debate on the report should have preceded the Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: I will proceed to put the original motion.

Mr. LEE: I think you should put the motion for the approval of items 1 to 54, and then the motion of the hon. Member for the Eastern Demerara should be put. You will realize, Sir, that many of us would like to vote on some of these items, but if you put the original motion like that and we agree afterwards with the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara we would have to go over the whole thing item by item. It was customary during the regime of Sir Gordon Lethem that where there was a dispute over an item any amendment moved was not put before the original motion.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Are you going to put my motion, Sir?

The CHAIRMAN: No; I was going to put the original motion and if hon. Members vote against it then I should have to put your motion. If you look at the Rules you would see that I am following Rule 17 under Debates very meticulously. If the Colonial Treasurer has no objection to the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Essequibo River I would adopt it. It is that items 1—54 be put.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do object to that. I think you should follow precisely the Rules and put the motion which I myself have moved. It is within your province to put a substantive motion for the deletion of an item, but I would not like to put sub-head by sub-head.

Mr. LEE: If that is going to be the attitude of the Colonial Treasurer I

would suggest to hon. Members that we go back to the old system whereby item by item is put and adopted. We have come here with a motion and we think it should be adopted. The principle adopted in this Council before the Finance Committee was introduced was to take each head item by item and adopt or delete it as the case might be, and to my mind that was best. We found that time was being lost by that method, however, and the introduction of the Finance Committee was also intended to save printed matter and a lot of expense. But, if Government is going to use the Finance Committee in order to block-vote all these heads, I would certainly not agree to that and I would ask my brother Councillors not to agree also. The old principle and custom was to take item by item and put it to the vote, and I am asking that that system be followed. Let items 1 to 54 be taken and then the motion by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara should be taken. If that is not done I would ask hon. Members again to let us reconsider this question of the policy of the Finance Committee and change it. We might adopt an item in Finance Committee but when we come here that item might not be passed. I ask that items 1 to 54 be taken and that the motion by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara be taken afterwards.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think we are at cross-purposes. In the first place, the Finance Committee has been set up by this Council and is provided for in the Standing Rules; consequently, we might say that it is a statutory body. The hon. Member desires to have the motion put in such a way as not to embarrass him or other Members and he might wish to vote for the whole head or to vote against a particular item, but I would not have any objection to a substantive motion being put for the deletion of any particular item. Why should we go through the rigmarole of voting on all the items put under this head simply to make a particular point in relation to one item? I would suggest that the motion I have moved be put.

Mr. FERNANDES: I will not be

drawn into a controversy. I just want Government to give me some information as regards the Belfield Girls' School. From what I understand I would like to ask Government whether the site for this school has been already selected and, if so, whether the school would not be in the middle of a residential area?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: As far as I know the site has not been selected as yet.

Mr. DEBIDIN: That school is within my constituency and I happen to have heard complaints that not only is the school within a residential area but that inmates of the school are being allowed to attend Primary schools and mix freely with the other children there. I understand parents are taking very strong objection to that, and I myself do not think it is a very desirable state of affairs at all. I also understand that the reason for sending inmates of the school to the Primary schools is to try and uplift them, but I am afraid the opposite effect would result on the other pupils if they are allowed to mix with them. As regards the estimates under discussion I am going to agree with the Colonial Treasurer that we should not go in a roundabout way if we want to oppose a particular item and, I think, it would be desirable to move a motion in that way and after it has been considered the whole head could be put.

Mr. FERNANDES: Perhaps I did not make myself clear just now. When I said residential area I meant in the City. I wanted to be sure that the school was not going to be put up in the middle of a residential section of the City.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. the Colonial Treasurer was replying to that effect.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not know. I understand a site was being considered by the Salvation Army but it is many miles away from the City. I cannot give an assurance that the site would be at any particular place. The hon. Member is quite right in saying that the school should not be put in the centre of Georgetown. I certainly agree

with him. I would certainly ask him not to use that because he cannot get an assurance to strike out the vote.

Mr. LEE: As an official visitor of that school, I would like to defend it in this manner. I would like the hon. Member to consider it in this way. It should not be considered as a Home for delinquent girls, because in many instances the girls are weak in mentality and, if segregated from other girls except those of the school, they would develop an inferiority complex. That will not be bringing them up in the proper manner. I have seen what improvement has taken place in some of the girls of the school. In point of fact, there was one of them from my constituency, and I was surprised, when I saw her. Her mental faculty had been so developed by the Matron that she could be permitted on her own to mix with the children of the public school. That wipes away entirely any inferiority complex. I think if Members look at it in that way, and the girls are placed on an equal standing with the children of the village, they would see the benefits derived from the school. If they cast aspersions on the school as is cast on the Underneeming School the inference would be drawn that the girls are criminals. It creates that impression and that is what we want to wipe out in respect of these children. I feel that if they can be given the opportunity to come to the City on a visit by themselves at times, they would feel themselves under no inferiority complex.

Mr. PETERS: I am sorry we have gone off in a tangent in discussing this matter.—the question raised by my good friend, the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara. When it comes to the question of the delinquency of boys and girls, you are touching a subject that is very close to my heart and to the general perspective of my life. If one has any knowledge of child psychology, one would realize the best way to deal with the delinquent boy and the delinquent girl, is to adopt such a process of rehabilitation of that boy or girl to the common life of the community of which he or she is a part as to give the child the feeling that he or she is not condemned to live in a sort of moral or mental lazaretto

whereby he or she develops a perspective inimical to the interest of the future and to the community of which he or she should be a part. The process or the method of procedure in approaching the problem of the rehabilitation of the delinquent child is the method of evolving schemes and -- shall I say -- plans and projects that more and more will give the child to understand that he or she is a part of the community. He or she should be trained to live in that community in a sort of ultra-social fashion compared with the manner he or she lived before, and so be able to equip himself or herself for community life in the days that are to come. I think the desire or the purpose is to keep the delinquent child as long as possible away from the known life of the community of which he is a part. That is a very dangerous way of approaching the problem, and so I can never agree with my hon. friend, the Member for Georgetown Central, when he says we should take good care not to bring the delinquent child to mix with city life, and we should try to avoid that as far as possible. We shall be at pains in the long run to be able to switch that child back into the life of the community from which its own evil action in his or her childhood may have caused him or her to be separated.

Mr. FERNANDES: I crave the indulgence of Council to correct my hon. friend. I never suggested that this Home should not be put in the City. I made no such suggestion. I said nothing about segregated or not allowed to mix. I never heard. I do not think it would do much good to Georgetown to put the school in Kitty or in Subryanville, or for instance alongside Government House or the Park Hotel. I never said they should be segregated or not allowed to mix. I never hinted that. I only ask for the assurance that this school will not be put in the heart of the residential section of Georgetown. I do not say it should not be put in Georgetown or anywhere in it. I agree with my hon. friend that they should not be segregated. My only point is that I want an undertaking that this Home will not be put in the centre of a residential section. I do not think my friend was fair to me when he said I suggested segregation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I rise to say a few words on the question of the Belfield School for Girls. Many of the Members of the Council have spoken as if it is the intention that the Belfield Girls' School should be restricted to delinquent girls. That is to say, girls who have committed some crime. That is not so. It is the intention that the Belfield Girls' School should house girls who are in need of care and attention, girls who have no parents or whose parents are not willing or able to look after them. I would like to make that perfectly clear. I would also like to remind hon. Members of Council that even where boys and girls have committed an offence you do not say they have been convicted.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I would agree with the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, and I desire to say that if that is the object of this vote I am going to ask that it be deleted. To hear from the hon. the Attorney-General that this school will be at the same time an orphanage as well as a home for delinquents, is startling and alarming. We need Reform Schools. We need institutions for reform generally, but certainly not to put the good with the bad. You can spoil a whole barrel of herrings with one bad herring, but a whole barrel of good herrings cannot turn a bad herring good. Parents have cause for alarm and complaint when they see their children linked with delinquents. I happen to know the type of delinquents sent to that Home. After that young girl has become an incorrigible is the time when she is taken away from her parents and sent to the Home. That child is versed in the use of profane language, and placed with other children is that a desirable state of things? I think we have a big programme for social services work, and there are social services of so many kinds to take care of boys and girls without having them mixed with delinquents. I certainly draw the line there and, if that is the intention, I ask for a reconsideration of the vote.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the item has been well ventilated. I would just like to say a few words with regard to procedure. I am talking to two legal brothers of the same profession as myself. The hon. Member for Essequiibo River

referred to the procedure adopted by Sir Gordon Lethem. In those days the Rules and Regulations of the Council, as you are fully aware, were not enacted. If you peruse your Rules and Regulations which cover debate in this Council you would find that they were enacted on the 3rd October, 1947. You will see from Rule 44 that the Finance Committee is part and parcel of those Rules and part and parcel of the Constitution of this Council. The hon. Member has stated definitely that he will ask hon. Members to throw it aside as he desires. I ask the hon. Member, being a lawyer, to consider that the procedure he will have to adopt is to ask that an amendment be made to the Rules, that they be either thrown out or abrogated and new Rules enacted. We are governed now by Rule 44, and the Standing Rules and Orders of this Legislative Council were made by the Governor with the advice of the Legislative Council. They were enacted on the 3rd October, 1947. So I pass on.

Apparently, if one looks at Rule 17 of these Rules one would see that the proper procedure in my opinion would be to put the motion that the amendment be negatived and, if that is negatived, then that the substantive motion be put and passed. Apparently, as the hon. Member suggested and stated last night, the motion for the deletion was put and the hon. the Colonial Treasurer who was the mover of the original motion suggested that he had no objection if the motion for the amendment by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara was put, if that is the proper procedure. I will put the question "That item 55 of Head XXVI be deleted."

Mr. DEBIDIN: That is not the tenor of my motion. My motion is that this item be suspended until the debate. In other words, I am not against the actual expenditure. The hon. the Seventh Nominated Member referred, I think and I am glad to hear him say that, to the remarks made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara. He thinks he was putting the cart before the horse. Before I started to talk on this item, I referred to this thing. I think it is premature.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Permit me to speak now. I think I can meet the hon. Member's point. It is not prac-

and I do hope that something would be done to ameliorate their condition. In my constituency there are many villages and local authorities, and I feel sure I am voicing their feelings when I say that they are finding it extremely difficult in view of the high drainage and sea defence rates to meet the burden cast upon them.

Dr. JAGAN: I desire to draw attention to item 50—Grant in aid to Local Forces Rifle Club, \$480; item 52—Grant to West India Committee, \$51; and item 54—Contribution towards British Society, Haiti, \$24. I agree that these items are small, but from the point of view of principle I would like to object to them because I am taking up the cause of persons who are receiving very small salaries in this Colony. In going through the Estimates I notice that persons like messengers, janitors and others are only receiving between \$24 and \$28 per month. Yesterday I had to take up the case of the Collecting Officers under the heading of Magistrates and —

The CHAIRMAN: Is that relevant?

Dr. JAGAN: Yes, Sir, because we cannot afford to make these contributions if we cannot afford to pay better salaries. I move that items 50, 52, and 54 be deleted.

Motion put and lost.

Head passed.

OFFICIAL RECEIVER

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that this head be carried out at \$13,142.

Mr. LEE: I would like to know from Government when the appointment to the post of Official Receiver will be made.

Mr. FARNUM: I would like to know what is Government's intention with respect to the report of the Committee which was appointed to consider the question of the amalgamation of the offices of Crown Solicitor, Official Receiver and Public Trustee. I see that one of the recommendations of that Committee reads:—

“The majority of the Committee felt that the officer should not receive

any fees for work performed in respect of any of his offices but considered that the salary of the office should be fixed at £1,200 per annum.

“The Committee accordingly recommend that the offices of Crown Solicitor, Official Receiver and Public Trustee should continue to be performed by one officer.”

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not know if the hon. Member who has just spoken has noticed that in the report of the Finance Committee sub-item 1d. under this head has been deleted. This point came up in Finance Committee and it was fully argued with the result that this sub-item (providing fees for the Crown Solicitor in Revenue cases) was deleted. As regards the question of appointment I think it was only recently that Mr. P. W. King retired, and I cannot say when the appointment would be made.

Head passed.

PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that this head be carried out at \$615,960.

Capt. COGHLAN: Up to the year 1944 pensioners received no cost of living allowance, but in that year they got an allowance as follows:—15% of the first \$240; 10% on the next \$240 and 5% on the next \$240, with a maximum of \$6 per month.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: If the hon. Member is going to initiate a discussion on the cost of living allowance and the Message I would suggest that we defer it until we come to another item in another place. I take it that the hon. Member is going to initiate a discussion on the cost of living allowance to pensioners and I suggest that we leave it until we reach another place.

Capt. COGHLAN: I would like to deal with the question of pensions and cost of living allowance now. In December last, a Message was communicated to this Council stating that the cost of living rate would be raised from 15 to 20 per cent on the first \$720, with a minimum pension of \$7 per month. The cost of living allowance formerly paid to pen-

sioners amounted to \$77,000 per annum, and there was an increase of \$35,000 but that \$35,000 to my mind was distributed in the wrong way. Those pensioners who were getting up to \$10 per month had their rate increased from 15 to 20 per cent., and a 5 per cent. increase on \$10 is only 50 cents per month, whereas an increase of \$12 per month has been given to those persons in receipt of pensions of \$600 or more per annum. My point is this: Of what use is 50 cents to a man who is drawing a pension of \$7 per month, and why should \$12 per month more be given to a man who is drawing a pension of \$2,240 per annum. I say the distribution is wrong. I went to the trouble of computing a list of pensions being paid by this Colony, and I found that among the persons drawing an average pension of only \$7 per month, there are 30 public officers, 71 police, 20 teachers, 9 widows and orphans, 64 specials and 28 police rewards — a total of 222. Among those drawing an average pension of \$14 per month, there are 50 public officers, 151 police, 110 teachers, 15 widows and orphans, 18 specials and 10 police rewards — a total of 354. Among those drawing an average pension of \$25 per month, there are 51 public officers, 43 police, 30 teachers, 17 widows and orphans, 8 specials and 6 police rewards — a total of 155.

Summarising the situation, I would say that there are 576 persons drawing an average pension of less than \$14 per month and 731 drawing less than \$25 per month. Among those drawing an average of \$35 per month, there are 25 public officers, 8 police, 14 teachers, 19 widows and orphans, 3 specials and 4 police rewards — a total of 73. Among those drawing an average of \$45 per month, there are 26 public officers, 1 police, 2 teachers, and 21 widows and orphans, — a total of 50. Therefore, there are 854 pensioners drawing less than \$45 per month. Among those drawing an average of \$55 per month, there are 22 public officers, 2 police and 12 widows and orphans — a total of 36; while there are 38 public officers, 11 widows and orphans and 1 special — a total of 50 persons — drawing an average of \$70 per month. There are 24 public officers and 4 widows and orphans — a total of 28 persons — drawing an average of \$92 per month, and there are 20 public officers and 1

widow and orphan — a total of 21 — drawing an average of \$112 per month. Among those drawing an average of \$140 per month, there are 14 public officers and 2 widows and orphans; while 10 public officers are drawing an average of \$180 per month and six an average of \$220 per month. I suggest that instead of the existing rates as conveyed in His Excellency's Message the following rates be adopted with the approval of the Government:—

“40 per cent. on the first \$360 per annum,
20 per cent. on the next \$360 per annum, and
a flat rate of \$144 per annum on pensions exceeding \$720 per annum and not exceeding \$1440 per annum, provided that no pensioner should receive less than \$10 per month including Increase Cost of Living Allowance”.

I will now give the rates as exist in Trinidad and Barbados: Temporary war bonus payable in Trinidad is 45 per cent. on the first \$20 per annum, 20 per cent. on the next \$60 and 15 per cent. on the next \$40. In Barbados it is 50 per cent. on the first £100 or \$480, 40 per cent. on the next £100. It will be seen that those rates in no way compare favourably with what has been paid in British Guiana and what is now proposed to be paid.—20 per cent. up to \$720 per annum in this Colony as against 45 per cent. in Trinidad and 50 per cent. in Barbados. I would also like to deal with the rates on salaries which also do not compare very favourably with those I have quoted—30 per cent. on salaries up to \$60 per month, 10 per cent. on the next \$60, and a flat rate of \$288 per annum on all salaries above \$720 per annum. I fail to see that it is difficult for a man who is getting £1600 per annum as salary to live and so much get \$288 per annum added to that salary, whereas the pensioner who gets only \$7 per month must get 50c. added to that pension.

The next point is this: Policemen, school teachers and others in the Public Service who formerly had salaries of \$20 and \$30 per month, could not be expected to maintain their wives and families and at the same time put something into insurance, so that when they retire from the Public Service after giving 30 years

of their life in the Service all they can do is to go into the Almshouse. It leaves an indelible stain on the reputation of this Government. I have known that many of these people from time to time after they retired from the Public Service of the Colony, after having given all their years in the Service, have to look for jobs as night-watchmen or something else. It has been said before that pension is not a living wage. No one has ever said that it is, but it is a retiring allowance to a man after he has given his life in the service of the Colony. A man gives his life just as well in a badly paid office as he does in a highly paid one. The only difference is that a man who is working for \$30 or \$40 a month, as school teachers and policemen had to do, when the time comes to retire can only be relegated to the Alms House of the Colony. There are school teachers here who will be able to elaborate on the point in respect of school teachers. I am not asking for any favours for those pensioners who find it so difficult to live.

A pension, as I have previously said, is deferred pay. No one can challenge or question that. I will give you an example as to why Government has even thought so. The salary of the Director of Public Works of this Colony formerly was £1,000 a year. But a man was appointed to the Public Service of this Colony at £1,200 a year as Director of Public Works for the simple reason that that man was past the age to qualify for pension as he was over fifty years of age when he joined the Service. The Government of this Colony gave that gentleman £200 per annum in lieu of pension that he could not get from the Colony. The Government therefore considered the rates of pension to the rates of salary in the proportion of £1,000 to £200, a ratio of one-fifth or 20 per cent. That gentleman had contracted for three years and his contract was renewed for another three years and again for a third term of three years, and he drew this £200 per annum for the whole of that period. Although he drew £1,800 in lieu of pension when he retired from the Public Service of this Colony the Government made an *ad miserere cordum* plea for him that he was in poor circumstances and was retiring on account of ill health. ~~His Excellency the Governor~~

asked the Legislative Council to vote that gentleman £1,800 for the pension that he could not draw, and this Legislative Council voted that amount. But that gentleman died within six months after he got that money. He died in England leaving assets in the United Kingdom of over \$70,000. When it is for somebody with power and influence it is extraordinary how excessive one can be, but when anyone who has no godfather and no one to look after him it is extraordinary how cheese-paring one can be over a few cents.

As I have pointed out what is the use of 50 cents per month to a man with a pension of \$10 per month, but we have people receiving a pension of \$32 a year, \$29 a year. On the same basis I think it seems very inequitable that a person drawing only \$5 to \$7 per month as pension should receive such a small allowance. The bulk of this \$35,000 extra that is put on pensions by Government goes to those pensioners who receive very good pensions from the Government already. One of these gentlemen receives a pension of \$2,627 a year and is also receiving a pension from the Barbados Government; he is also the holder of an office at the moment and is drawing a further sum of over £100 a year. Surely you cannot tell me that people in that position find it as hard to live as the unfortunate people in this Colony—and there are nearly 1100 of them—for whom I am speaking at this moment. I am not speaking for a handful of 30 or 40. The number of pensioners in this Colony totals something like 1025. Of that number, as I have pointed out, there are 844 who draw pensions of between \$7 per month and \$45 per month. Gentlemen, I am not going to take up any more of your time. I am not asking you for any favours for those men. I am asking you to do them justice. That is all I am asking you.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I just intervene at this stage. I am in great sympathy with the feelings of the hon. Member who has spoken on this matter. I know he is entirely sincere in his generosity and wishes that the smaller paid pensioners should receive a better cost of living allowance. The only point I wish to make at this stage is that we are now at the head "Pensions and

Gratuities" which consists of a number of items including pensions payable under Regulations and Law. It is perfectly true that included under the head is an allocation of an amount for possible cost of living allowances for pensioners. But the point I am making is this: There will be a formal motion before this Council in regard to the rates of Cost of Living Allowance to Civil Servants, Government Employees and Pensioners at another time, and this is not the occasion at all for introducing a discussion on Cost of Living Allowance. In other words, the hon. Member will have an opportunity to make his representation and I am afraid he will have to repeat then his speech in favour of his proposals. Nothing can be done in connection with this particular head, and there is nothing we can do about it now. The proper time is when that motion comes up and the hon. Member would be quite in order if he moves an amendment and it is accepted by Government. Really I am suggesting to the Council to get on with this head. I need not have put the head at all, except for a few items, as the services are provided for by law and call for no discussion. If we are going to discuss seriously the question of Cost of Living Allowance to Pensioners, let us await the proper time.

Dr. JAGAN: I want to make one observation under this head of Pensions and Gratuities. I see you are going to spend \$615,960 under this head, and if we are going to accept the motion of the hon. Member for Demerara River —

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member can only make a suggestion!

Dr. JAGAN: If we are going to accept the suggestion, which I think is a very admirable one, I know it is going to cost us much more money. But I am not here to say we should not spend it. The point I want to make is this: Out of this sum we are going to vote now, a large percentage is going to officers who had been employed in this country and who are not now residing in this country and, therefore, we will not get the benefit of the expenditure of that money. If they were residing in this country the spending of that money would help towards enhancing the National Income of

British Guiana. Why I mention this point, is that in future I hope this Government will take it into consideration and wherever possible to appoint people of local origin to positions which become vacant from time to time, so that we will not be faced with this annual drain which we have to face year by year. I do not object to money being given to pensioners, an adequate sum being given them. When the money is going out of the Colony we do not get any value for it as it is not spent in this country. That is the drain I am objecting to. As I see it, however, it is tied up with the policy of appointments. I have been trying to make the point here time and time again that whenever vacancies occur priority should be given to people of local origin. With these few remarks I will not say anything further until the suggestion formally comes up in the form of a motion.

Head passed, as recommended by the Finance Committee, at \$615 960.

ADJOURNMENT OF COUNCIL.

The CHAIRMAN: There is the question as to what day we should adjourn. I do not know if hon. Members have any suggestion to make, whether we carry on from Monday or Tuesday, or Wednesday.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: His Excellency has intimated that he will be quite prepared to sit on Monday evening if it is the wish and pleasure of the Council to do so. He is very anxious that these Estimates should be completed as soon as possible, because after that there is the introduction of taxation measures and also the debate on the Closer Association motion. He is very anxious to have the Estimates completed. This afternoon he told me he would be willing to sit on Monday evening if the Members of Council agree. It is merely in order to get these Estimates through.

Dr. NICHOLSON: I think we should continue on Monday.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I feel an opportunity should be given us to perform our own duties and to prepare the various motions which have been put up, so that when we meet over the week-end commencing from Wednesday we will be quite pre-

pared to go on. That will give us an opportunity to prepare matters in the interval. I feel that the subject to be taken after the Estimates dealing with Federation is one we should be given full opportunity to prepare for. I am certainly in favour of an adjournment until Wednesday.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I must say that on Wednesday we will not take anything but the Estimates. The idea of sitting on Monday is to continue consideration of the Estimates. No other business will come before the Council. No other business will come up until the Estimates are completed.

The CHAIRMAN: I may point out to the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara that if we carry on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday we can get breathing space to prepare for the motions. Therefore the breathing space will come at the end of the Estimates instead of in the middle of the Committee.

Mr. FARNUM: I suggest that you take the vote as to when we should sit.

Mr. FERNANDES: May I ask, does it mean that we will go on sitting every night until the Estimates are finished or just on Monday evening only? I would like to be very clear on that. If we are going right through in the evenings I am going to suggest that we start tomorrow night.

The CHAIRMAN: The suggestion is, we should go right through from Monday night until the Estimates are finished.

Dr. SINGH: These night sessions have been only introduced on account of the cricket, otherwise we will meet in the ordinary course of our meetings.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is perfectly true. The idea of a night session only arose on account of the cricket tournament. On Tuesday there

will not be cricket, but unfortunately the Executive Council meets that afternoon, and I do not think His Excellency expects Members would like to meet on Tuesday evening. Nevertheless I am quite sure if the general feeling is to go right through Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday he would be only too glad. The idea is to meet on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

Mr. THOMPSON: We can continue on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights and finish off the Estimates, and then we could have breathing-space. Those of us who are away from home, although we are given an allowance, have our own business at home which calls for more than the allowance given us. Being away from home we have to get back tomorrow morning, and we may be given an opportunity to look after our own interest until Tuesday. Personally I do not promise to be back before Tuesday morning. I must be at home from tomorrow. It is very awkward for us, even riding in the train is harassing. I promise to be back on Tuesday morning, and any time after the arrival of the train I will be available.

The CHAIRMAN: I take it that the general feeling is to adjourn until Monday. I suggest that I put the question whether we adjourn to Monday and consecutive evenings or to Wednesday and consecutive evenings.

Question to adjourn to Monday evening put, and nine voted in favour.

Question to adjourn to Wednesday evening put and nine voted in favour.

The CHAIRMAN: Personally I like Wednesday too, and therefore I shall adjourn to Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock.

The Council resumed and adjourned to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, 25th February, 1948.