

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ANNOUNCEMENT

THURSDAY, 20TH JUNE, 1946.

HOSPITAL FEES REGULATIONS

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Parkinson) communicated the following message:—

MESSAGE No. 3

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

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

PRESENT

The Council is invited to approve the amending of the Hospital Fees Regulations so as to give effect to the decisions of the Whitley Council with regard to Public Officers and Government Employees on the Permanent Salary Establishment of the Colony paying fees on admission to hospital.

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

2. The question was raised by the Civil Service Association in 1937 and again in 1939, when concessions covering a wider field were sought entailing, *inter alia*, free treatment for certain classes of employees.

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

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

3. The matter was however left in abeyance until 1943 when the Association requested that if Government was not prepared to grant the concessions, the matter be referred to the Whitley Council which, as Members are aware, comprises an Official and Staff Side; the Official Side consisting of Heads of Departments appointed by the Governor and the Staff Side of representatives of the Civil Service Association.

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

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

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

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

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

4. It should be explained that the Association's request had originally been a very sweeping one indeed, asking for example, free treatment for all Public Officers and Government Employees receiving less than \$40 a month. In Whitley Council however the Staff Side modified their requests by asking for agreement on the concession of reduced fees only as a number of Public Officers and Government Employees were already in receipt either of free treatment or of treatment at reduced rates. Agreement between the Official and Staff Sides was reached and the question is now before this Council to give effect to the Whitley Council's decisions.

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

The Clerk read prayers.

5. The implementation of these decisions will mean that Public Officers and Government Employees receiving in-patient treatment in certain wards of any Government hospital in the Colony will be charged for such treatment at reduced rates as follows:—

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 14th June, 1946, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

\$2.00 per diem Ward . . .	\$1.20 per diem
\$1.50 ,,	.96 ,,
\$.50 ,,32 ,,

No reduction in the rate is proposed in the case of the Lady Thompson Ward as it is considered that that Ward provides luxury treatment and any Officer or Employee desiring accommodation there should pay the full rate.

6. It was also a decision of the Whitley Council that these concessions should not be extended to the wives and families of Officers or Employees and that where such concessions are already in force they should be discontinued.

7. These changes, if approved by this Council will affect the rights of Officers and Employees already in the Service and provision for the preservation of these rights has been made in the amending Regulations.

W. L. HEAPE,

Officer Administering the
Government.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

British Guiana,
12th June, 1946.

PAPER LAID

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. Fraser) laid on the table the following:—

The Schedule of Additional Provision for May-June, 1946.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

HOSPITAL FEES REGULATIONS

The COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motion:—

“That, with reference to the Officer Administering the Government's Message No. 3 dated the 12th of June, 1946, this Council approves of the Hospital Fees (Amendment) Regulations, 1946.”

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
MAY—JUNE, 1946.

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motion:—

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

ORDER OF THE DAY

QUARANTINE BILL

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In moving the second reading of this Bill intituled

“An Ordinance relating to quarantine and similar matters.”

I desire to point out for the information of hon. Members that the objects are to carry into effect, (a) the International Sanitary Convention signed at Paris on the 21st June, 1926, (as amended by the International Sanitary Convention, 1944), to which this Colony acceded on the 20th December, 1929. The Bill is also intended to carry into effect, (b) the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation signed at The Hague on the 12th April, 1933, (as amended by the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation, 1944), to which this Colony acceded on the 1st August, 1935.

Further, it will carry into effect, (c) the Report of the British West Indian Quarantine Conference held in Trinidad in November, 1943, in which the adoption of uniform legislation, on the basis of a draft Quarantine Bill and Regulations contained in the Report, in the British West Indies and British Guiana was recommended; (d) the Report of the West Indian Conference held in Barbados in March in 1944 in which there was recommended the adoption by all the British administrations in the Caribbean area of uniform legislation based on the model prepared by the Quarantine Convention subject however, to the recommendation that, with reference to the definition of “immune” in the First and Second Schedules (the Quarantine (Maritime) Regulations and the Quarantine (Air) Regulations respectively) to the model Quarantine Bill, the period of validity of a yellow fever inoculation certificate should be four, instead of three, years.

The existing Quarantine Ordinance, Chapter 99, was enacted in 1928, that is to say, before the Colony acceded to either of the Conventions to which I have already referred. I should also inform hon. Members that the Ordinances to implement the recommendations of the Conferences to which I have referred have been passed in Trinidad and Tobago, the Leeward Islands and Dominica. If hon. Members will turn to the Bill itself they will see that it consists of 12 clauses. In clause 1 it is provided that the Ordin-

ance "shall come into force on such a date as the Governor may by proclamation appoint." Under clause 3 (1) the Quarantine Authority in the Colony will be the Director of Medical Services who will control and direct the Health Officers and the Visiting Officers who are to enforce the provisions of the Quarantine laws. Under clause 4 Regulations will be made by the Governor in Council, but I would emphasize that they are subject to amendment and confirmation by the Legislative Council. Clause 4 (3) reads :—

"(3) Regulations made under subsection (1) of this section shall not have any force or effect until confirmed by resolution of the Legislative Council. In confirming any Regulations, the Legislative Council may make any amendments thereto which it may deem desirable."

Then, Clause 4 (4) states :—

"(4) The Regulations contained in the First and Second Schedules hereto shall be deemed to have been made and confirmed under the provisions of this section."

Clause 5 empowers the Quarantine Authority—the Director of Medical Services—to make Rules which will have to be approved by the Governor in Council before they take effect. As will be seen, these Rules will implement the Regulations made under clause 4 and must not be in conflict with them.

Clause 6 provides for the making of emergency Orders by the Quarantine Authority. Clause 6 (1) reads :—

"(1) When in the opinion of the Quarantine Authority an emergency exists, the Quarantine Authority may by Order direct special measures to be taken during the continuance of that emergency for any of the purposes specified in sections four and five of this Ordinance, and any such Order shall have effect notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any Regulations or Rules in force by virtue of those sections."

It will be appreciated that such a power is very necessary in view of the fact that unforeseen circumstances might suddenly arise and might require immediate attention and action. It is also provided, under clause 6 (2), that the Governor

will have power to vary or rescind any such emergency Order.

In clause 7, provision is made for punishment for offences against the Ordinance or the Regulations made thereunder, while under clause 8 provision is made for the payment of rewards to informers. Clause 9 deals with the duty and power of the Police, and clause 10 deals with the disposal and recovery of charges and expenses incurred by the Quarantine Authority for ships and so on. That is so far as the Bill itself is concerned; then follow certain schedules.

The First Schedule, as hon. Members will see, has been made under clause 4 which states in subclause (1) that :

"(1) The Governor in Council may make Regulations, in respect of the whole or any part of the Colony, including the ports and coastal waters thereof, for preventing—

(a) danger to public health from ships or aircraft or persons or things therein, arriving at any place; and

(b) the spread of infection by means of any ship or aircraft about to leave any place, or by means of any person or thing about to leave any place in any ship or aircraft."

Sub-clause (4) reads :—

"(4) The Regulations contained in the First and Second Schedules hereto shall be deemed to have been made and confirmed under the provisions of this section."

The First Schedule relates to the Quarantine (Maritime) Regulations which will cover the question of shipping, and is divided into 11 parts. Part I, which is introductory, deals with the interpretation of definitions in the Regulations, while Part II deals with "Ships arriving from Foreign Ports." A "foreign port" is a port or place situated elsewhere than in this Colony.

Part III deals with provisions as to ships in quarantine and the procedure to be adopted by the Quarantine Authority in such cases. In this respect, Regulation 13 states :—

"13. In relation to specified infectious diseases, the measures which may be taken and the circumstances

in which they may be taken shall be such as are specified in Articles 24 to 27 (both inclusive) and Articles 29 to 42 (both inclusive) of the Convention, and for that purpose these Regulations shall have effect as though those Articles were part of these Regulations: Provided that references in those Articles to the port sanitary authority or the port authorities or the sanitary authority of the port or the Government, and so forth, shall be construed as though they were references to the Quarantine Authority, the Health Officers or an authorised officer."

As regards the meaning of "Convention", if hon. Members refer to the Interpretation Regulation 2, they will see that it means "the International Sanitary Convention signed at Paris on the 21st of June, 1926, (as amended by the International Sanitary Convention, 1944) of which relevant extracts are set forth in the Appendix hereto."

Part IV deals with the provisions relating to ships departing from the Colony, while Part V deals with "Miscellaneous provisions as to ships arriving and in port." Part VI deals with the "deratisation of ships", and Part VII with "merchandise and baggage" carried by ships. Part VIII refers to "observation and surveillance" and if hon. Members look once again at the Interpretation regulation they will see that "observation" means "the detention under medical supervision of persons in such places and for such periods as may be directed by a Health Officer," while "surveillance" means "that persons are not detained, that they may move about freely, but that they are required to report for medical examination at such intervals and during such period and to such persons as may be directed by a Health Officer."

Part IX deals with the Duties of the Quarantine Authority, while Part X deals with Charges for sanitary measures applied and also makes "further provisions as to expenses and charges." Part XI deals with miscellaneous matters, including a "general duty to comply with orders, instructions and conditions," as well as "certificates as to sanitary measures taken". At page 24 hon. Members will see the appendix to which I have already

referred, while on page 18 there is Schedule "A, setting out the form of a Maritime Declaration of Health, under Regulation 4. Schedule B which appears on page 20 gives what is provided for under Regulation 5 and deals with "Wireless Messages—Item of Information." Schedule C deals with the "Use of Flags and Signals", while Schedule D deals with "Bill of Health" under Regulation 18, showing the purpose and the form of the certificate

Then follows the Appendix on page 24 which is an "extract from the International Sanitary Convention signed at Paris on the 21st June, 1926, as amended by the International Sanitary Convention, 1944." Section IV deals with the measures to be taken in relation to various plagues, and while Section IV (A) deals with Plague, Article 29 deals with Cholera. On page 28 Yellow Fever is dealt with under Article 35 and there are relevant Articles dealing with advice in such cases. Then there is Article 42 dealing with Smallpox, followed by the Second Schedule which sets out the Quarantine (Air) Regulations, 1946 This Schedule is sub-divided into various parts and Regulation 2 deals with definitions and the interpretations which have to be applied to them so far as the Quarantine (Air) Regulations are concerned. Part II deals with the Movements of Aircraft, and Part III with General Sanitary Provisions, setting out the Duties of the Commander in Regulation 7 and dealing with "Details of specified infectious diseases to be recorded" in Regulation 8. This Regulation (8) states:—

"8. When any specified infectious disease makes its appearance in any part of the Colony, the Health Officer or an authorised officer shall enter all necessary details in the papers of all aircraft leaving the aerodrome during the period of fifteen days from the date on which information of such specified infectious disease was received."

Part IV deals with "Special sanitary measures in the case of plague, cholera, typhus and smallpox," while Part V relates to "Special sanitary measures in the case of yellow fever." Part VI sets out the duties of the Quarantine Authority who, as I have already pointed out, is the Director of Medical Services. The question of charges for sanitary measures applied

is dealt with under Part VII, while Part VIII deals with "Miscellaneous." Then there is a schedule on page 41 relating to the "Measures to be carried out in respect of an infected aircraft or an aircraft coming from an infected Area." Part A of the Schedule deals with plague, Part B with cholera, Part C with typhus fever, and Part D with Smallpox. Then there is an Appendix which contains Articles 8, 18, and 36. Hon. Members have before them a typed copy of an amendment which I propose to move as regards Article 36. It is a long one and it was taken from the terms of the Convention. Then, at the end, I wish to make an amendment which will include three matters which refer to the Regulations made by this Colony under the terms of the Convention.

I have tried to explain the points relating to this Bill and I am sure hon. Members will realise that such legislation is necessary in order to bring our local legislation into line with modern quarantine practice. Under the existing Quarantine Ordinance, Chapter 99, no wireless communication with respect to air traffic is provided for as it was intended for sea traffic. I may mention that Trinidad has passed an Ordinance based on the model approved by the Conference Colonies in that year, and that before the U. N. N. R. A. Rehabilitation Committee had reported Trinidad had passed their Ordinance. As I have already stated, the Conventions referred to in the Bill were submitted to the West Indian Colonies and British Guiana and we acceded to them. Now, we are seeking to carry into effect our adherence to the Conventions, subject to what appears to me to be a reservation made by this Colony in connection with the Conventions. I have endeavoured to give hon. Members a longer survey of this matter than is usual, because I think it is desirable that they should be in a position to follow the Bill—those who have read it—and understand the various Regulations and the various Schedules, as well as any annexures to the Bill.

As I have stated, the Bill contains only 12 clauses, but there are all these other provisions added to them for the

purpose of carrying into effect all that has been agreed to, so as to bring our practice into line with modern practice relating to quarantine matters. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

The PRESIDENT: Before I ask Members to speak on the principle of the Bill, I would be grateful for some further information from the Attorney-General. This Bill is unusual in that we are being asked to approve of what appears to be Conventions signed by Metropolitan Governments and I should like to know, Mr. Attorney-General, whether in taking this Bill through this Council I should ask the Council to approve of the Appendix which appears from page 24 to the end. In other words, what should we do about it? It contains extracts from a Convention signed by Metropolitan Governments—they have been put in this Bill for convenience and guidance—but it seems to me unusual that the Legislative Council of British Guiana should be asked to approve of them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That should be done, Your Excellency. After all, hon. Members have the right to express fully their views on the various aspects of the Bill.

The PRESIDENT: Granted; but I do not see how we can very well go beyond the Conventions.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We are not amending them; the Bill is really to carry them into effect.

The PRESIDENT: You are asking the Legislative Council, for instance, to consent to the insertion of Article 36.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: But we are not amending anything; we are inserting the Article for a purpose. Hon. Members, I think, have a right to say in relation to these two Conventions: "We are not amending anything, but we are putting in something because this Government has said that it is making certain reservations in relation to these two particular Conventions." In other words, this Government in acceding to the Conventions says: "We are acceding to

these Conventions, but with a particular reservation so far as one aspect of them is concerned. Therefore, you must alter your Conventions in order to show what we have reserved."

The PRESIDENT: I do not want to argue with the hon. the Attorney-General. This Council approved of the incorporation in the Bill of the Conventions. We cannot argue about that.

Mr. de AGUIAR: On a point of principle! I must say that I agree with the hon. the Attorney-General. This Council has the right to accept or reject, despite the fact that the matter has been threshed out and certain agreements made. If this Council wants—

The PRESIDENT: We have to decide whether we would incorporate these things in our legislation. However, we must be guided by the advice of the Attorney-General. Hon. Members have now, after a very full explanation, an opportunity to speak on the principle of the Bill.

Mr. EDUN: Sir, in my experience in this Council I have found that ratification of these international conventions does appear harmless at first until one butts up against it when travelling in other parts of the world. I can remember citizens of this country complaining against being inoculated when they wanted to travel to the American Air Base, and it was afterwards told to them that it was the result of an international convention. In like manner many other such conventions were ratified by this Council, and a continuation of such ratifications proceeded until this country found itself within the vortex of giving away extra-territorial rights to a foreign nation. It appears we are helpless in these international affairs, but I do not think it should go along like this in all the years to come. We ought to know beforehand what we are being asked to commit ourselves to. In this case I have found in Article 36, paragraph 3 which reads thus:

"For the purpose of quarantine control, UNRRA in consultation with the Governments concerned and, as regards the Western Hemisphere, with the combined American Sanitary

Bureau, shall define the boundaries of Endemic Yellow Fever areas."

I do not know whether that definition of the boundaries includes British Guiana, whether or not British Guiana is a Yellow Fever area, but to my mind I now find it is so, as whoever has to travel abroad on a plane will have to be inoculated. I thought we were immuned from Yellow Fever, so much work in that direction having been done in this Colony, but that is not so. I am speaking on the principle of this measure, but I am not against it. It has to be revised in any case, and this Bill is, perhaps, before us for so doing. But I want to make this point. We ought to know beforehand what we will be committed to. The time has come when we should not buy pork in the bag anymore. We must know beforehand what we have to do in order to protect the interests of the people in this Colony. With these few observations I must support the Bill as it is.

The PRESIDENT: Does any other hon. Member wish to speak on the principle of the Bill? Otherwise I will ask the hon. the Attorney-General to move that the Council go into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Clause 4—*Power to make Regulations.*

The CHAIRMAN: It is interesting. This particular clause is slightly different from any I have seen. It provides that the Regulations shall not come into force until this Council confirms them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We are getting ratification by the Council now, but any amendments will have to come before this Council.

SCHEDULES

The CHAIRMAN: In taking these Schedules which are very long I think it

would be convenient if I take them page by page. I would do so if that suits Members.

First Schedule.

The CHAIRMAN: What does "foyer", mentioned in the Interpretation clause mean?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think it refers to the focal point so far as the fever is concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: Let us amend it to "fever". I think you should give the definition of "foyer".

Mr. JACOB: I see "foyer" appears in two places.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it really means "foyer" in paragraph (b), but in (c) it clearly means fever.

Mr. JACOB: I do not know about (b).

The CHAIRMAN: Should it not be fever all through?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. the Attorney-General is of the opinion that in the case of "yellow fever" it should be fever, but where it appears elsewhere it means "foyer".

The word "fever" was substituted for the word "foyer" in Regulation 2 paragraph (c).

Schedule D—Bill of Health.

The CHAIRMAN: This is an important schedule. There is no Member present who is engaged in shipping.

Schedule E—Deratisation Certificate.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the word "poison" in column 8 be amended to read "poisons". It is a typographical error.

Question put, and agreed to.

The word "of" between the words "case" and "any" in Foot Note (b) was also deleted.

APPENDIX

The CHAIRMAN: I assume from what the hon. the Attorney-General has said, we have to include this in the Bill.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, sir.

Part IV—*SPECIAL SANITARY MEASURES*

Regulation 19—*Schedule aircraft departing from infected areas.*

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Hon. Members have before them a list of amendments. I move that the word "on" in the first line of sub-paragraph (f) be substituted for the word "no".

Question put, and agreed to.

Part V—*SPECIAL SANITARY MEASURES IN THE CASE OF YELLOW FEVER*

Regulation 24—*Measures on arrival of aircraft from an aerodrome situated in an endemic area.*

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move the insertion of the following words between the words "sub-regulation (1)" and "the" in the first line:—

"the expression "endemic area" includes any area which is from time to time declared by the Quarantine Authority, by notice published in the Gazette, to have been defined as an endemic area in accordance with paragraph (2) of Article 36 of the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation 1933 as substituted by Article 11 of the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation 1944, and the Quarantine Authority may, by a like notice, cancel or vary any such declaration. Until a declaration is published under this sub-regulation."

The object of this amendment is to give a certain amount of elasticity to the Quarantine Authority with the Medical Service, if not as conditions in a place change so far as control of these areas is concerned, a difficulty may arise. The object of this amendment is to give the Medical Service the power to make any necessary change as enacted by U.N.N.R.A. as a result of experience and communication.

Question put, and agreed to.

Article 36.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is desirable to insert Article 36 which appears among the list of amendments circulated to hon. Members. As Your Excellency has declared, the Article is a relevant extract and is taken from UNNRA communication to us. I beg to move that Article 36 as printed be now inserted after Article 18.

Question put, and agreed to.

Article 47.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move the insertion of Article 47 after Article 38. That is taken from the International Sanitary Convention. It has been circulated to Members.

Question put, and agreed to.

Notes.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There are three Notes in relation to these Conventions and those are reservations made by this Colony. They have to be inserted in some part of the law. Note 1. reads:

"The requirements of Article 38 of the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation, 1933, as amended by the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation, 1944, will be complied with by this Colony only so far as may be possible."

The reservation is that we will comply with Article 38 only so far as we can do so in this Colony. In other words, the conditions prevailing preclude us from saying we are going all out in support of this particular Article, and it is proper that we should make a reservation such as this. Therefore this Note is being inserted for the purpose. Note 2 reads:

"Article 40 of the International Sanitary Convention, 1926, as amended by the International Sanitary Convention, 1944, has effect, in relation to this Colony, as if the words "as far as possible" were inserted between the words "render and maintain" and the words "free from Stegomyia (Aedes

aegypti)" in the second paragraph of the said Article."

In other words, we will do our best, as far as lies in our power, to exercise control and compliance with the Convention. Note 3 reads:

"Article 47 of the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation, 1933, as amended by the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation, 1944, has effect, in relation to this Colony, as if there were inserted therein a provision that aerodromes in the non-endemic areas of the Colony shall not necessarily comply with the requirements of the said Article."

That is in regard to screening. We have so far as this Colony is concerned made that reservation. Those are three reservations, and I ask that these three Notes be inserted.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that Regulations 1 to 12, as explained by the Attorney-General, be included in the Bill.

Motion put and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the Attorney-General wants to leave the Bill in Committee.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will ask hon. Members to leave the Bill in Committee so that it can be sent to the Secretary of State, having regard to its functions and to the International Conventions concerned because they are always changed. We are adopting them so far as we know, but it is just possible that there may be a desire to effect a change as regards certain other matters. If there are no comments, when we come back we can agree to the Bill as already approved.

The CHAIRMAN: My inclination is to finish the Bill now, but the Attorney General advises that we postpone it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not think there will be a long delay.

Council resumed.

HOSPITAL FEES (AMENDMENT)
REGULATIONS

The PRESIDENT: With the permission of Members, I would like to proceed with the next item on the Order Paper. The Colonial Secretary has already given notice of this motion and if hon. Members would agree to suspend the Standing Rules and Orders—it is 3 o'clock now—I would like to take it this afternoon. Are hon. Members in favour of this motion being taken this afternoon? I will also ask for permission to suspend the Standing Rules and Orders to enable the Commissioner of Local Government, Mr. Laing, to intervene in the debate. I should explain that Mr. Laing is the Chairman of the Whitley Council and that he has a more intimate knowledge of the Hospital Fees Regulations and of the deliberations which have resulted in those Regulations coming before this Council, than any other Government officer. As hon. Members may wish to debate this matter, Government, with your permission, would like to have Mr. Laing here to answer any question that might be raised. What I propose is that the Colonial Secretary should formally introduce the motion and, with your permission, I would ask Mr. Laing to continue the explanation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I rise to move the following motion standing in my name, but before doing so formally I would like Mr. Laing to address the Council:—

“That, with reference to the Officer Administering the Government’s Message No. 3 dated the 12th of June, 1946, this Council approves of the Hospital Fees (Amendment) Regulations, 1946.”

The PRESIDENT: With the permission of the Council, I would invite Mr. Laing to inform hon. Members of the object and meaning of these Regulations.

Mr. M. B. LAING, C.M.G., O.B.E. (Commissioner of Local Government): Your Excellency, and Members; the proposal before the Legislative Council is fully set out in Your Excellency’s Message to Council—No. 3, of the 12th June, 1946. Perhaps, I might usefully add some in-

formation as to how this motion came to be placed before this Council. Having regard to the relationship between employers and employees, Government thought it wise to stress the need for the provision of medical facilities by employers for their employees. Government has also stressed the urgency for setting up machinery for conciliation and for collective bargaining, and for the adjustment of grievances that may arise between an employer and his employees. Government does not want to lag behind in these matters, since Government is one of the largest employers in the Colony. In 1932, Government placed before this Council some Regulations which gave to certain employees of Government the right to free outdoor treatment at hospitals and certain special rights in connection with indoor treatment. Government’s machinery for conciliation and collective bargaining has been set up, but there is another form of machinery which corresponds very closely to that machinery which is now working very successfully in the adjustment of grievances between Government and its employees.

This machinery is what is known as the Whitley Council which consists on the one side of senior officials chosen by the Governor to represent the Government and, on the other side, the Established Service is represented by the Civil Service Association—an association whose aims are devoted to the improvement of conditions and terms of appointment in the Service. The subordinate employees are represented by their Trade Unions. Government has, perhaps, lagged somewhat behind in this question of medical facilities for its employees and although in 1932 Government provided medical facilities for certain employees, these facilities did not embrace all the employees of Government.

The reason why Government has lagged somewhat behind is mainly because the Civil Service Association placed before Government a request for free treatment for themselves and families—a request which Government felt it could not approve. The matter was referred to the Whitley Council and after a very free discussion by that Council the Official and

the Staff sides agreed that reduced fees might be payable by Government officers as a whole and that these medical facilities should not be restricted to certain employees only. There is one difference between the machinery of the Whitley Council set up for the Civil Service and the machinery set up in private industry and that is, in the Civil Service we do not have the independence of the private employer, therefore any agreement reached by the Official and the Staff sides must come before the Governor and this Legislative Assembly, and both the Governor and this Council have the right of veto where money is involved.

The PRESIDENT: It is not only where money is involved.

Mr. LAING: Yes. The Governor has not exercised his right to veto the request that is now before this Council—for approval of the agreement reached in the Whitley Council. I think it is also fitting to say that employers of the bigger class have been asked to provide medical facilities for employees, in order that they would have a more efficient body of workers—people who would attend more regularly to their duties. Similarly, it is felt that the Regulations in this amendment would make for increased efficiency in the Service and reduce irregular attendance. Civil Servants will not of course be given priority in regard to hospital treatment and they will take their place with citizens as a whole. I have said that this Council has a right to veto this motion, but I would appeal to hon. Members not to do so. Veto of the motion would, I feel, shake the foundation of the confidence that has been established in the Government and in the Whitley Council. I therefore commend the motion to the favourable consideration of this Council.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I now beg to move the motion standing in my name.

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

The PRESIDENT: The motion has been formally moved and it has been seconded by the hon. Nominated Member,

Mr. Critchlow. It is now open for discussion.

Mr. ROTH: I should like to congratulate Government for bringing forward this very timely motion. I can say that during the 28 years I spent in the Civil Service, one of my greatest grievances was that certain officers got free medical attention while I did not. The amount of money I paid for medical attention would have endowed several annuities. I most heartily endorse this motion.

Mr. JACKSON: I think this motion is one that should be supported, but I should like to have an explanation as regards paragraph 5 of the Regulations. I want to hear the definition of "Public Officers" as against that of "Government employees", and I would like to know whether teachers are included in the latter term. As a matter of fact, I will always take up this position until I am told definitely that teachers are Government employees. Every cent of the money that is paid to them comes from Government and while it is true that there is dual control—a very good thing indeed—I do not think that Government can neglect its duty to a body of men and women who are serving faithfully in the interest of Government and the Colony as a whole. Therefore, I should like to know whether they are included in the term "Public Officers" or in the term "Government employees."

Mr. EDUN: I am really at a loss to know why there should be this hurry to bring forward this very important measure in which, somehow, we would be deviating from a principle. As it goes, Government feels that with the return of a new Council—perhaps early next year—there would be no chance for a measure of this kind, and therefore it has taken the lead at this juncture. There is no doubt about it that I, in my capacity as a Trade Union leader, cannot oppose this motion because I expect that employees—ordinary employees of Government—would receive the same benefits. When the Commissioner of Local Government made reference to employees receiving medical attention from employers, perhaps he forgot to tell this Council that those

facilities are now being re-examined by the employers themselves and that the tendency on the part of the employers—especially on the sugar plantations—is to do away with the hospitals there.

These employers have reached the stage where they feel that the sugar estate hospitals ought to be taken over by Government, in order to relieve the estates of the responsibility of providing medical facilities for their employees. If that is so, it would not be correct to say that they are expected to continue that service. As a matter of fact, it would be found on the sugar estates that one kind of medical facility is being provided for members of the staff and another kind for the ordinary workers. Whenever a member of the staff is ill he gets medical attention at St. Joseph's Hospital or perhaps at the Seamen's Ward, P.H.G., but in the case of the ordinary worker he receives attention in the estate hospital, an untenable kind of medical attention to my mind.

The whole system of hospitalisation on the estates has deteriorated to such an extent that sugar workers think it best not to go to these hospitals any longer and take quinine in the morning, for that is all they get whenever they go. The reason for that is that the estate proprietors want to be relieved of the expense relating to these hospitals. It is certainly a very excellent principle for employers to give medical facilities to their employees, but in the case of the sugar estates it is now the reverse. An agreement has been, however, reached between the estate proprietors and certain organisations representing the employees whereby the estate hospitals should conform to a certain standard and that Government should take them over. I mention that in order that hon. Members should know the position fully.

I would be the last man to deny medical facilities to Public Officers and Government employees, but I want to ask the Colonial Secretary to tell us what would be the financial implications—how much money it would involve. Those are things we should know before we commit ourselves. Just recently, we gave Govern-

ment Officers all sorts of monetary facilities—leave passages and things like that—and we would like to know how much it would be worth to them if we reduce their hospital charges from \$2 to \$1.50 per day. As a matter of fact, I would have expected Government to say "give them free medical facilities". That would have been going 100 per cent. in the matter and perhaps the sugar estate proprietors would have said "we do not think Government would take over our hospitals any longer, so we ought to provide better medical facilities for our employees". Knowing the situation as I do, it would be irksome for me to vote for this measure because the time has come when this question of medical facilities for the residents in the villages ought to be the responsibility of Government.

I do not know when this matter would be taken up by Government. I have pleaded with the Director of Medical Services more than a thousand times to come to a decision, but I am always being told that it is a question of money—that the estates have money and that the Medical Department could not hope to run the hospitals as cheaply as the estates could run them. I do not agree with him, but in this case I am willing to support the measure being put forward; since it is going to be a condition of employment as a trade unionist I cannot oppose it. I regret, however, that I have to support it at this juncture.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I rise to congratulate Government for tabling this motion and I hope the time is not far distant when we will have a National Health Insurance Scheme, because the health of the worker is a very important thing for the progress of a country. If we get such a scheme I believe that every worker would give the best possible result to his employer.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. Mr. Edun is not serious in asking Government for the cost of this scheme. I cannot possibly give him that today.

Mr. EDUN: I am not pressing for it, sir.

Mr. JACOB: I intended to speak on this motion, but I was hoping to have the privilege of listening to one of the chief employers of labour in this Colony on it before I spoke. Unfortunately, however, the representative of the Chamber of Commerce in this Council and all the other Elected Members have refused to say anything.

Mr. de AGUIAR: To a point of order; the debate is not yet completed and therefore the hon. Member cannot say they have refused to say anything.

Mr. JACOB: I took it that their silence meant approval of the motion. I am a little surprised that this motion has found some opposition in certain quarters. Perhaps the second Nominated Member (Mr. Jackson) is not opposed to the motion, but he wants to find out whether certain teachers in certain schools are included in the scheme. One can understand, however, why teachers in denominational schools are not termed "Public Officers" in the strict sense of the term. I fully agree with that method of reasoning, but these people are paid wholly from Government funds and should be termed "Government employees". If that distinction is not drawn against those teachers in non-denominational schools, I do not see why it should be drawn against those in Government-aided schools which are being controlled by the Education Department. I feel that this motion has been delayed far too long, for I have always felt that if it is desired that employees should give really good service, they should be properly paid and they should also be given certain facilities including medical attention, free, and I think some of the larger firms have been doing this for quite a long time. Ever since I was connected in one form or another with commercial concerns, I know that certain employees had all their hospital expenses paid, and sometimes when they were convalescing also their expenses were paid—providing they were good employees.

It has been stated by the Commissioner of Local Government that Government does not want to lag behind other employers in this respect, but I think it

has already done so for quite a long time. Perhaps Government does not like 100 per cent. efficiency, but I strongly commend it for revising its proposals so that better medical facilities would be afforded to Civil Servants, particularly those in responsible positions. It might not be possible to pay all the medical fees for Government employees at the present time, but I shall be willing to support such a proposition at any time. If private employers are doing it, Government should certainly do likewise. It is also true that Government does not pay as much as private firms in regard to salaries and wages—except for the men at the head—and I take this opportunity of repeating that Government should pay its employees far better salaries and wages if it desires to get better service from them.

Mr. LAING: Your Excellency, I would first like to say how very grateful I am for the support this motion has received from Members of this Council. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, questioned whether teachers were Government employees. I think the reply to that, Sir, must be "No". He may be visualizing an extension of this motion to include those persons, but at the present time teachers are not included in Your Excellency's Message or Regulations attached. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, expressed the need of coming to some decision in regard to hospital treatment in the Sugar industry. That, of course, is not strictly connected with this motion, and I have no doubt that he and other Labour leaders are quite capable of seeing that matter through themselves. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Critchlow, referred to National Health Insurance. I only hope that one day we in British Guiana will be financially able to adopt a measure of that kind.

The PRESIDENT: I will put the question formally.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion adopted.

The PRESIDENT: With Members' permission, as there is still plenty of time I would like to suspend the Standing Rules

and Orders and ask the Colonial Treasurer to move his motion "That the Schedule of Additional Provision for May-June, 1946, as circulated to Members, be approved." If Members would like, however, further time to consider the Schedule, we would meet to-morrow and apart from one question which I am talking over with the Attorney-General—a legal point—I have no other business. If Members take this Schedule now I would be able to adjourn *sine die*. It is up to hon. Members.

On a motion by Mr. de AGUIAR seconded by Mr. WOOLFORD the Standing Rules and Orders were suspended.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Schedule of Additional Provision for May-June, 1946, which had been laid on the table.

GOVERNOR

Item 3—*Transport on official visits, \$1,500.*

Mr. EDUN: I want some clarification of this item. The Remarks attached state: "Vote inadequate. It has also been necessary to pay the Transport and Harbours Department for all services rendered this year." I think Members of this Council had particularly laid stress on the provision of seasonal tickets for themselves in respect of the Transport Services of this Colony. It was a very convenient privilege for Members to receive from the Department a Card which was used from 1st January to the 31st December. That convenience was very much appreciated. In my own case it was used in the interest of my public duties. I wonder whether Government can reconsider this decision and instruct or advise that Department to issue those tickets again? It is a very big question and also that of remuneration of Members of this Council. The last time, I think, certain Members said they were willing to serve but not to pay to serve. The matter in respect of the Transport and Harbours Department is a question of convenience. If I want to go to Vergenoe-

gen to visit the Land Settlement Scheme there, I can do so by purchasing a railway ticket and on returning ask Government to reimburse me. But that is so cumbersome. I consider that process is somewhat on the cheap side. I do not like it. I wonder whether Government can see eye to eye with me on this question?

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member raised this question quite recently when the question of the payment of travelling expenses of Members was discussed. It was really the opinion of Elected Members of the Executive Council that the intention was that Members be only paid their fares when travelling on certain specified duties—meetings of this Council, meetings of Committees of which they are members and various other specific duties. If you give Members a seasonal ticket then they can travel on all occasions. The Transport and Harbours Department has to get its revenue out of the expenditure in that direction, and if Government has to pay the Department it seems a good principle that we should carry on as agreed at the last meeting when it was discussed. I think I am interpreting Members' rights and may be corrected, but it was definitely decided that free service be abolished and Members be paid for their journeys for specific purposes. Perhaps that is a question which can be given some elasticity.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I never thought of expressing an opinion on this matter until it was raised by certain Nominated Members. I have always drawn a distinction between Nominated Members and Elected Members, and the distinction is quite legal and clear. If a man offers himself for election to this Council, he does so on his own volition and incurs all responsibilities attaching to the position, one of which is, if he lives in the country and has to attend the Council meetings *prima facie* he intends that he should do so at his own expense. Many years ago it had become and has remained the custom for Elected Members to be provided with these Passes, a small ticket, which afforded them all the facilities of transport. That went on for very many years until some period between one or two years ago when a Committee sat and came to a

decision. I sat on that Committee, but I do not think the view is right that we came to the decision that the facility should be limited to the attendance of Members at meetings of this Council and at Committee meetings. I, personally, having come to that decision would prefer to let it remain at that, because the object of the Transport and Harbours Department, whatever its policy may have been in the past, is to see that all possible revenue is collected especially from those who look forward to its successful working and who can pay. *Prima facie* it must be assumed that Members of this Council are in a position to pay far more than those on whom this new burden is imposed—if you put an egg in a basket or in your pocket and it is discovered you have to pay freight. I believe some difficulties have arisen in that way. As Vice-chairman of the Board I am denied a certain privilege. That is only what I have been told, and I do not believe it is true. I have hesitated to ask for it in view of the situation that has arisen. We have not got many months to go before we are either unseated or not re-elected or renominated, and I do not think that many of us will get that concession. I am not making an absolute hazard about that, because from what I have heard the General Election may be a very long time off indeed.

The CHAIRMAN: Not on account of any delay by Government!

Mr. WOOLFORD: This question of political activity and privileges, I am afraid, is quite out of order, but I have taken this opportunity of saying to Members today what has been brought to my notice. I do not know who the prospective member is, but there is one who is canvassing and has applied for 12,000 registration forms. I hesitate to apply unworthy motives to such a person, but if it be that Registering Officers will give a large number of forms out like that then, I think, direction should be given that some limitation be placed on that. It may be that that is occurring in Georgetown and the habit may spread to the country, and some people may not be able to get forms. Maybe this person is distributing them all over the place. We do not want people to do that and prevent the registration hoped for.

Mr. JACOB: May I rise to a point of order! Are we discussing the registration of voters?

Mr. WOOLFORD: I ask for latitude because I am speaking of the attitude of Members and prospective members. I know I am very much out of order, but I must be allowed certain privileges as I have been invited by the Chair to speak. I think most of you have some idea as to how this privilege in question can be sustained. I do not know what the present Manager of the Transport and Harbours Department has to say about it. I agree with the hon. Member who has spoken. It may occur that a Member is suddenly called upon to perform a public duty and has no time to get a pass; he therefore pays the fare and like myself would hesitate to ask for a refund. I think the idea of supplying Members with vouchers to be filled in when used is one that is in practice elsewhere. I do not know there is any other way in which it can be done. I think the greatest latitude should be given Members in facilities for free travelling.

Mr. THOMPSON: I rise to support the principle that it should be made possible for Members to travel during the year so as to gain information for the benefit of this Council. I think it has been accepted that Members can travel from one part of the Colony to another, not for their own personal benefit but to get information necessary for this Council. You will agree with me that theoretical experience is not half as good as practical experience. With due respect I say that if His Excellency the Governor had not the privilege to go around the country as freely as he has done, I am satisfied he would not have been able to handle the various problems in the way he has done during the short time he has been here. Members are not expected to come here to say what they think. They must go around the country and see conditions for themselves, and as a result this Government will be better placed in obtaining information along progressive lines. Members of this Council are honourable men, and I do not believe for one moment they will abuse the privilege if they are given passes to go around the country for the benefit of this

Council. I think it should be made possible for any Member, who desires to go around the country and see any works in connection with the country, to do so in order that he would be able to supply authoritative information to this Council. He should not be denied that privilege. It is very awkward for one to have to pay the fares and wait for a long time in order to get the money back. I think we are entitled to something better than that. It should be made possible for Members of this Council to get around the remote parts of the country as much as they can.

The CHAIRMAN: We are straying a bit. I can only reply to the last speaker. It is up to Members to table a motion and introduce something. I do not think we can deal with it this afternoon.

Mr. JACOB: May I say a word or two on this matter? It is a little embarrassing to Members representing rural constituencies to speak on a matter of this kind. It may have been possible for the privileges extended to Members in the past to have been abused by certain Members, I do not know, but it seems strange that such Members of this Council are designated with some official rank. Some interpretation has been put on some decision taken by this Council that even Members visiting their constituencies should not continue to have the privilege of free passage. I am a bit surprised to hear of that decision. That is not quite right. It is true that a Member while on a visit to his constituency is on an official mission, yet he can use it for two or three purposes. Take the hon. Member for New Amsterdam. If he wants to visit his constituency he has to pay now when he was once given the privilege of travelling free on a Government operated service.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I can assure the hon. Member that is not my position.

Mr. JACOB: I am afraid the hon. Member did not hear me. Let us take the hon. Member for Berbice River or the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice.

The CHAIRMAN: Don't you think the answer of the Deputy President is correct, that an Elected Member joins this Council

of his own volition and should not expect to be paid his expenses?

Mr. JACOB: I am not disputing that. I only raise it now that a decision has been taken precluding such a privilege. So far as I am concerned it does not matter. Hon. Members will remember that when a plane was placed at my disposal to visit my constituency, which would have cost this Government \$300, I refused the offer. I was told when I booked the plane that I would have to pay for its use and I said "Very well." From the remarks of other hon. Members it would be seen that a hardship has been created.

The CHAIRMAN: I must say to hon. Members who have raised the point that I cannot answer for Government without going into it carefully. If the views expressed are the views of the majority of Members, then it is better they discuss it between themselves and bring it up again in Council.

EDUCATION—QUEEN'S COLLEGE

Item 1m—*Part-time Teacher of Engineering Drawing, \$180.*

Mr. EDUN: I see it is intended to pay an Engineer the sum of \$3.50 per hour to teach engineering drawing to the boys in the senior forms—an increase of \$1.50 per hour to Mr. Grace. I want to take serious objection to this expenditure, and I am going to move its entire deletion. This officer receives a salary of about \$230 per month, which works out at \$1.10 per hour—28 days per month—and because he is giving some part-time service to Queen's College he is expected to get \$3.50 per hour. This said officer happens to have received education from the public funds of this Colony. When we expect these young men will give something in kind for value received, in every instance we meet up with this kind of money criteria—you must pay me to give service—although he is a Guiana Scholar. I hate to think that there is no kind of patriotism on the part of these Guiana Scholars, who use public funds to get their certificates and diplomas, return here and do not expect to give a little part-time service to teach other youths. One would have expected that this young man would go to Queen's

College and teach the boys to know something about engineering, but that is not so. We must pay him and pay him to the hilt; although he is getting \$1.10 per hour in his substantive post we must pay him \$3.50 per hour for such extra service. I do not know how Government can view with equanimity an arrangement of this kind. Is he going to be a teacher, or is he going to be an engineer working for the Public Works Department?

Just a few days ago one of the most cultured leaders in the Caribbean communities issued the clarion call to duty to every man receiving education through public funds by way of Scholarship to qualify and return and help his people. This officer should have returned here to serve the people. I do not like this at all. The time has come when we have to take up a different psychology—the psychology to serve without expecting to receive reward all the time. It gives no example to the common man at all. I want to move the deletion of this item and to ask that proper arrangements be made. If it is a question of having a teacher in the interest of the class, then get a proper teacher but do not make this part-time arrangement.

The CHAIRMAN: There was much discussion over this matter. The officer does a full day's work as an officer of his Department and in his own time he teaches seven individual pupils. He does not teach them all together. He has to teach each one separately and set separate papers for them. If he had four pupils and the class has grown to eight pupils it would be literally doubling his work because it is individual instruction. It is not class instruction, although they do attend a class.

I would like Members to realise that what the hon. Member has said is definitely true—that a man who gets a free education from this Colony should be willing to give something in return—but, at the same time, we must keep a sense of proportion. We discussed this matter in Executive Council a short time ago and the fact is that Government cannot compel Mr. Grace to do that work. He is not bound to do it and if he does not do it the position is that we would have no one else to do it.

Mr. THOMPSON: Is this class being conducted outside his official hours?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes; he does it outside his official hours.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I wanted to ask whether it is the intention of the Board of Governors of Queen's College to perpetuate this class for teaching engineering.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the answer is "Yes".

Mr. de AGUIAR: If the answer is "yes" it seems to me that the proposal is one that calls for further examination. If engineering is going to form part of the curriculum at Queen's College, it seems to me that it should be known so that a greater number of boys could take it up if they so desire, and if there is going to be a greater number of boys Government should make proper arrangements for teaching them. Another point that arises is that it seems to me that engineering is a specialist subject and therefore the question of additional fees should arise. Am I to understand that the subject is to be taught at Queen's College for the same scale of fees as that charged for other subjects?

The CHAIRMAN: The answer is "yes". We asked Queen's College to charge extra fees and they said they are going to continue it as part of their curriculum.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I think it is but fair that Government should ask hon. Members what are their views on the subject. I am aware of the fact that the hon. Mr. Edun has raised an important point which I had not considered, but I have risen to mention a few more points which I regard as important and it seems to me that hon. Members of this Council should have an opportunity to consider every aspect of the situation. I am one of those who question the decision of the Board of Governors of Queen's College that engineering as a subject should form part of the curriculum of the College. I maintain—and I think I am right—that it is a specialist subject for which special training is required, and I think that where there are specialist subjects in a secondary

school special arrangements should be made and special fees charged for teaching them.

The next thing is that we might have medical classes and no one knows where it would end. It is not merely a matter of the \$180 involved in this vote, but I would ask hon. Members to consider seriously how far this proposal is going to lead. I invite the consideration of hon. Members to the point I have made so that we might have a decision on it and not leave it entirely to the Board of Governors of Queen's College to decide whether the subject of engineering should form part of the curriculum.

The CHAIRMAN: I would not like hon. Members to do that today, because you might be leaving this matter void and if we take the item out we would lose the instructions.

Mr. JACOB: I do not know whether the Chairman of the Education Advisory Committee could enlighten us on the point. I remember that the question came up before the Committee and I think it was decided to pay a fee of \$2.50 per hour for the instructions, but now it is to be increased to \$3.50.

The CHAIRMAN: Owing to an increase in the number of boys.

Mr. JACOB: But \$3.50 per hour seems to be quite a lot of money. Here is an officer who is asked to do something extra; he is a Guiana Scholar in receipt of a substantial salary, he receives \$2.50 per hour for doing that extra work and now he wants \$3.50 per hour. A rate of \$2.50 per hour for an 8-hour day works out at \$400 per month, and at \$3.50 per hour it works out at \$700 per month. I think the gentleman concerned should be satisfied with the \$2.50. I support the deletion of the item.

Dr. SINGH: This matter was discussed by the Education Committee and the reason why the rate is being increased is because there are additional students to be taught and Mr. Grace has to give individual attention to each student. The matter was well considered before the increase was suggested.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is the answer, sir. The increase is due to the fact that the officer is required to give individual attention to the students. At first there were only students from Queen's College attending the class, but now the Public Works apprentices have come in and the amount has been increased from \$2.50 to \$3.50 per hour. In answer to the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) I would state that Queen's College prepares candidates for the higher examinations and also prepares them for the First Medical and other examinations.

Mr. ROTH: I am afraid I cannot follow the argument that because individual attention is being given and because the number of students has increased, the remuneration per hour should be increased also. If individual attention was being given to four students and the officer in question spent four hours a week with them, if the number of students is increased to eight he should spend 8 hours per week with them and then his pay would be double. I do not see the sense in increasing the rate of pay. If the officer gets more students he would have to give them more time and if he is being paid by the hour his pay would be automatically increased.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not only a question of individual attention in the classroom; the officer has to do a certain amount of preparation beforehand. He has to prepare the work that the students, individually, are going to do and he has to correct the work they do in the nature of home-work, and all that sort of thing.

Mr. THOMPSON: We seem to be in somewhat of a mess. Am I to understand that the class is to be limited to seven or eight students? If so, I think we should make proper arrangements so that all the boys who want to take up the subject could come in. I do not see why the time of the officer should be limited either to a certain number of hours per week.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the position is that he would give so many hours per week, for which he would have to be paid \$3.50 instead of \$2.50 per hour. The reason for the increase is that there are more

students and he has to prepare work for them apart from teaching in the classroom. If he has to take 12 students, he would have to spend more hours per week in his preparation apart from the time spent in the classroom.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Is this amount for the half year, or for the whole year? The sum of \$280 has already been paid to this officer and I would like to know whether this \$180 is to carry us to the end of the year.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is for the whole year, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I think all the points raised are good ones, but if we delete this item we would not get Mr. Grace to do the work. I suggest that we pass the item now and Government would give the assurance that something would be done later on to see whether we could get an Engineering Instructor for Queen's College. I have listened to all that has been said and I appreciate the force of the various points raised.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I am willing to accept your assurance, sir, and as Your Excellency has promised to consider the matter, I would ask Government to consider also the point whether it is desirable to give special training to engineering apprentices at Queen's College and if so, whether these apprentices should be trained at Queen's College or somewhere else. I know there are firms like Sprostons and others which train engineering apprentices, but I do not know whether fees have to be paid for the training.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: So far as these apprentices are concerned, they are getting practical training from the Public Works Department.

The CHAIRMAN: That is instruction in things like drawing.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: That is what I am saying for the benefit of the hon. Member for Central Demerara. The apprentices get practical training from the Public Works Department, but they have to get technical training otherwise.

Mr. EDUN: In view of the assurance which Your Excellency has given I would not press for the deletion of the item, but I would ask you to go into the question carefully, sir. It involves many questions like how many hours per day does this officer work and whether an 8-hour day is applicable to him. I think we would be creating a precedent of a very serious nature if we continue this kind of vote. I agree, however, that someone should be engaged to teach these engineering apprentices. With the assurance that you have given, I would not press for the deletion of the item but would withdraw my motion.

The CHAIRMAN: What I will do is to get in touch with the Director of Public Works and the Principal of Queen's College, Capt. Nobbs, and discuss the matter with them in Executive Council.

Item passed.

ESSEQUEBO BOYS' SCHOOL

Mr. EDUN: This is a considerable sum; I would like to know what revenue is derived from this school.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall endeavour to find out and let the hon. Member know.

Item passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(*Extraordinary Expenditure*)

Item—*Purchase of a Station Wagon \$3,000.*

Mr. de AGUIAR: I think the explanation given here is rather vague. We are not quite sure as to who is going to use this station waggon. It is going to be used by the Social Welfare Officer and his staff, or is it intended that he should go to work in it? I am not unmindful of the Regulations which relate to this matter. I know that if a Public Officer requires a car for the purpose of his duties, Government would give it to him or would give him a travelling allowance. I think I am right in saying that Government always prefers that an officer should have a car of his own, and I do not think there has been

a reversal of that policy. It seems to me, however, that an attempt is being made here to reverse that policy—whereby an officer should provide himself with a car and receive travelling allowance. Frankly, I do not like this explanation. I do not know whether hon. Members prefer Government to purchase vehicles in this form and give them to officers to use in the performance of their duties, or whether they prefer the other order of things whereby an officer is made to purchase a car and then given travelling allowance. The next thing we are going to find is that the Council is going to be asked to provide funds for the payment of a driver or mechanic, and also for the maintenance of the vehicle. In other words, this vote is not going to stop here—with the purchase of a station waggon—and I think we are going in the wrong direction. If the officer has to go about in the performance of his duties let him get a car, but do not let us buy a vehicle for that purpose.

The CHAIRMAN: I thought the hon. Member was familiar with the circumstances, because I think the Commissioner of Local Government discussed the matter elsewhere and agreed that it would be better to secure this station waggon as proposed. With the permission of hon. Members I would like the Commissioner of Local Government to answer the point raised, but I do not know whether other hon. Members would prefer to speak first.

Mr. EDUN: I do not like the idea of a big waggon running about the villages with placards and all that sort of thing. It would probably look like some gypsy affair.

Mr. de AGUIAR: That is something additional to the point I have raised.

The CHAIRMAN: I will call upon the Commissioner of Local Government to explain the matter.

Mr. LAING: The position in regard to the application for funds for the purchase of a station waggon is in the interest of efficiency. I know that Members of this Council stand for efficiency and for economy also, and I think that this vote

would provide both of these things. At the present moment, sir, as hon. Members are probably aware, the Social Welfare branch of my Department is divided mainly into two sections. There are District Officers who reside in the districts, and there is an Executive Staff of Welfare Officers at headquarters. There are also specialist officers in 4-H Club work and co-operative methods, and they are also stationed at headquarters. It is essential if Social Welfare work is to progress that the Executive Officers and the specialist officers, should have some means of conveyance to enable them to visit the districts and keep in touch with the District Welfare Officers.

At present we have to hire vehicles for their use at very great cost and I regard that as unnecessary expenditure. Although this expenditure is being borne by Colonial Development and Welfare funds, I feel that it is improper that money given to us for the development of the social life of these people should be spent on such unnecessary things as motor car hire and waiting time in the districts. If I get this station waggon the Specialist Officers and the Social Welfare Officers would be able to go very frequently into the districts and take their equipment with them, and they would be able to guide and help the district officers in their work as they are expected to do.

At the present time I cannot afford to send the Executive Officers regularly into the districts and that is the reason for this request. It would help me to put things on a proper footing and enable officers to travel and do their duty properly—without the extravagance of having to spend money unnecessarily for the hire of motor cars and other vehicles. I know it would be said that they can travel by train, or by bicycle or 'bus, but that would not do. One hon. Member says "Let the officer purchase a car", but I should like to remind him that a car costs £500 while the salary of the officer would be £200 per annum if he is a junior officer. Would it be reasonable or fair to ask a junior officer to put his hand into his pocket and pay £500 for a motor car?

I say it would not be fair—it would not be reasonable—to ask an officer in the lower income group to do anything of that

kind. If the officers are to do their duty properly, they must have assistance from Government to travel. As regards the question of the maintenance of this vehicle, this can be met from the Social Welfare grant. What I am asking for is the cost of the vehicle. If this Council says "You must not have this vehicle and you must send officers into the country districts without my aid", let it be put on record so that there may be no complaint from this Council that the progress of the rural districts has been retarded. The responsibility must rest with you—the hon. Members of this Council.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I am afraid I am not convinced by the explanation given by the head of the Social Welfare Department. It appears to me that the responsibility is one which concerns the officers unless we are going to depart from the procedure whereby Government officers are assisted in acquiring cars for the proper performance of their duties.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member must have heard Mr. Laing ask whether we can expect a junior officer earning £200 per annum to buy a car.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: If you do not assist a junior officer to buy a car, it might be unreasonable to expect him to do so. I do not see where the argument supports the case, when Mr. Laing says that the grant cannot afford him to pay the necessary travelling expenses for the Officers in the outlying districts.

Mr. LAING: To a point of correction! That is not what I said.

The CHAIRMAN: Just say what you said?

Mr. LAING: What I cannot afford to do is to pay the necessary waiting expenses to chauffeurs, who take the officers from headquarters to the rural districts and have to wait for them. We cannot afford to pay the high rates charged. In the districts the District Officers use their bicycles and other means to get about. I do not wish the hon. Member to misquote me.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: There may be necessary waiting expenses. Are we going to separate the travelling expenses from the waiting expenses which are included in the travelling expenses? Dividing the vote into two does not reduce the running expenses of the Department, whether it be met by a grant or a vote from Colonial revenue. I would be very reluctant to do anything that might hamper or delay the progress of any welfare work in the outlying districts, but still I cannot see that the acquisition of a station waggon, maintaining it and doing all that is necessary to keep that van in running condition, will be anything less in cost than the hire of a car from a garage. I think this Council would be well advised to pay the hiring expenses when it is necessary for these officers to get out into the rural districts rather than to acquire a van and maybe in the near future erect a garage and supply it with mechanics and spare parts, etc. I would rather that the expenses for hiring cars for travelling continue than to make this outlay which at the moment is \$3,000. We may as well add another nought and make the amount \$30,000 and be done.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I have had the privilege and pleasure of listening to the Commissioner of Local Government making speeches in this Council, and, for that matter, answering questions, but I must confess I have never heard him before championing a cause so nobly as he did today. Knowing him as well as I do, I realized that when he spoke he did so feelingly on the subject and with a desire to see Social Welfare work in this country carried out in the best way possible. But like the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) I still remained unconvinced of the necessity to pass this vote. In the course of his remarks reference was made to the fact that these District Officers use bicycles, buses and other forms of conveyance in order to carry out their duties. I do not think the Government wishes me to quote this instance, but to make the point that officers of the lower income tax group cannot afford to buy a car is begging the question. The point I make, is this: It would be more economical to carry out these duties as at the present until this

country formulates its plans completely for social welfare work, when we can embark on extraordinary expenditure of this kind. We are at present operating under a grant vote and, as a Member of this Council, I strongly deprecate the attempts that are made from time to time for the inclusion of expenditure in the Estimates of this Colony and under ordinary expenditure for work that is being carried out under a special grant for Colonial Development and Welfare. Unless there is specific reason and unless it is in order to complete the particular object in view, I do not think we should embark on this expenditure now. Supposing when the work is completed next year or whenever it is, it is found that we have no more use for this waggon, what is going to be Government's attitude—sell it?

The CHAIRMAN: If there is no use for it, sell it.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I hope it will not be said "We bought it last year for \$7,500 and it has to be sold this year for \$4,000." That is what happens when we rush into things too quickly. My suggestion is to defer this item and not pass it in Council today. I am not against Social Welfare work at all, and I would like to assure the Commissioner about that. I wish to encourage the work. I would be the last person to make any suggestion to retard the work. Does it mean that furnishing a station waggon is going to improve the work that is being done, and if it is not had would it impede progress? I am not satisfied about that.

Mr. JACKSON: I rise to support the vote asked for, because I am satisfied that it will be money well spent and it will be of service to Social Welfare work. The Social Welfare Organization in this Colony is young and needs the guidance and help of those who are at the head of affairs. I know how difficult it is to travel in the rural districts, and if the officers who are supposed to see that this Social Welfare work is carried on properly are to visit, and there is need for them to visit the various centres periodically, and if they are to perform their duties satisfactorily, then travelling should be made easy

for them. It is well and good for those who reside in Georgetown to speak of travelling by 'bus and bicycle, but you cannot expect the Officers, who are to go into the rural districts to guide and assist the people, to use bicycles. They will not be able to move about as freely and frequently as necessary. I am also satisfied that providing a station waggon is an economical move. I am positive that the expenses for travelling by those who have to visit these organizations in the rural areas would be far less if they have a station waggon than if they are to hire cars and pay for the waiting hours. A Social Welfare officer from headquarters will be able to visit several organizations scattered over a district in a day, if he has a waggon at his disposal. There will be no need to hire a car and pay for waiting hours. I am quite sure that this method of travelling for those who are at headquarters and have to pay necessary visits to the out-stations is an economical one and quite necessary. I support the vote with all my heart, because I am satisfied that the vote will serve a useful purpose and will tend to keep down expenses.

Mr. THOMPSON: I must admit that the last speaker has stolen my thunder completely. I heartily congratulate the Commissioner of Local Government on the defence he has put up. I am supporting that item because I am satisfied that it will be of an economical value to the Department. The Social Welfare Department has been under fire, rigidly too, for some time. If now is the opportunity to improve conditions why should this Council stand in the way of the Officer who has asked that much? If we were to think of the distance to be covered in the rural districts, we would realize that starting out in the morning you can cover a far greater distance by car. A number of officers can be taken up and dropped here and there on the route. They can cover the whole of the East Coast Demerara and the West Coast Berbice in a day with one car and return to headquarters. But taking them by car is a bigger item of expenditure. I do agree that a station waggon given to the Social Welfare Department will be of immense value economically and otherwise, and I am supporting the item with all my heart.

Mr. JACOB: I am not disappointed at the last two speeches; in fact I would expect them to support passionately the part of the Social Welfare Officers. I still maintain after listening to the Commissioner of Local Government that it will be uneconomical to purchase a station waggon, provide it with gasolene, provide it with a chauffeur and a garage and things like those. I am not too sure that the gasolene and other things will be properly accounted for.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. Member is right!

Mr. JACOB: I say, I am not too sure.

The CHAIRMAN: Never look on the worst side of things!

Mr. JACOB: No, sir. I do not think Social Welfare work should be undertaken as an economic problem in all the Caribbean Colonies, and particularly in British Guiana. Nevertheless I am watching with considerable interest the progress of Social Welfare work in this Colony. I hope it will not share the same fate as the Agricultural Bias and things like those which have failed completely. I am not opposed to granting some amount from our funds for the hire of a car so as to see that this work is carried on economically. That is the point I wish to stress. It is being stressed by the Commissioner of Local Government and the two Members connected with Local Government that this thing will be economical. It will not be. It will be far more economical to hire a vehicle when wanted and pay for the hire than to purchase a vehicle when it is not known whether the work will be continued after the vote has been exhausted. If the work would be continued for a longer time than five years is another matter. I do not think Government is wise in spending \$3,000 now and a great more later in the running of this waggon.

Mr. EDUN: Having listened to the very impassioned appeal of the Commissioner of Local Government—I have never found him so very sentimental as today—I am going to be practical. I am not going to be sentimental like him, having regard to all that I have heard about Social Welfare

work in going around the districts and all the very many bad opinions expressed. It has been said, sir, that the salaries given to the Officers connected with this Department eat up the whole substance of the Social Welfare fund. It is not only being said in this Colony but it is a current affair throughout the Caribbean, that whatever funds come here for Colonial Development and Welfare will be wasted in the salaries to Officers connected with the Department. For that reason I am going to be practical and I am going to take the Commissioner at his word and allow him to spend \$3,000 for a station waggon in order to give him a chance to retrieve the bad name the Social Welfare Department has got in this Colony. I think that is the wisest course to adopt in this case. I would ask the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) and the other Members who spoke against the item to give Mr. Laing a chance.

I visit the districts very often and I hear, perhaps, more than Mr. Laing does. It is said, the elephant has large ears but cannot hear what is being said of him. Perhaps the Head of the Social Welfare Department does not hear these things. I think a Station Waggon would be convenient in this sense—beating up enthusiasm about Social Welfare, holding meetings in the districts so that the Officers could go there in numbers to talk about those things. To educate the people you must have mobility. In my own case my association must get transportation in order to beat up enthusiasm, and if the Head of this Department wants \$3,000 let us give him, but let us scrap the other loud speaker project. I want to be practical. I do not want to be sentimental. Knowing Mr. Laing as I do from my contact with him, he will not mislead this Council. He knows what he is about. Let him get this waggon and show us what his officers will do.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we have ventilated the subject sufficiently. I shall put it to the vote.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item passed.

The Council resumed and adjourned until the following day at 2 p.m.