

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana (Constitution) (Temporary Provisions) Orders in Council, 1953 and 1956).

Friday, 22nd January, 1960.

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT:

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. D. M. Hedges

Attorney-General, Hon. A. M. I. Austin, Q.C.

Financial Secretary, Hon. F. W. Essex, C.M.G.

} *ex officio*

The Honourable Dr. C. B. Jagan	—Member for <i>Eastern Berbice</i> (Minister of Trade and Industry)
„ „ B. H. Eenn	—Member for <i>Essequibo River</i> (Minister of Natural Resources)
„ „ Janet Jagan	—Member for <i>Western Essequibo</i> (Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)
„ „ Ram Karran	—Member for <i>Demerara-Essequibo</i> (Minister of Communications and Works)
„ „ B. S. Rai	—Member for <i>Central Demerara</i> (Minister of Community Development and Education).
Mr. R. B. Gajraj	—Nominated Member
„ W. O. R. Kendall	—Member for <i>New Amsterdam</i>
„ R. C. Tello	—Nominated Member
„ F. Bowman	—Member for <i>Demerara River</i>
„ L. F. S. Burnham	—Member for <i>Georgetown Central</i>
„ S. Campbell	—Member for <i>North Western District</i>
„ A. L. Jackson	—Member for <i>Georgetown North</i>
„ S. M. Saffee	—Member for <i>Western Berbice</i>
„ Ajodha Singh	—Member for <i>Berbice River</i>
„ Jai Narine Singh	—Member for <i>Georgetown South</i>
„ R. E. Davis	—Nominated Member
„ A. M. Fredericks	—Nominated Member
„ H. J. M. Hubbard	—Nominated Member.

Mr. I. Crum Ewing—Clerk of the Legislature

Mr. E. V. Viapree—Assistant Clerk of the Legislature.

ABSENT:

Mr. E. B. Beharry—Member for Eastern Demerara

Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.—Nominated Member.

MINUTES

Mr. Speaker: Before the Minutes of the meeting held yesterday are confirmed, I think there is one correction we ought to make. On page 3, the words "Appropriation Bill, 1960" should read "Appropriation Ordinance, 1960". I think with that correction the Minutes should be adopted.

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 21st January, 1960, with the Amendment, were taken as read and confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL

BUDGET DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: We will now resume consideration of the Appropriation Bill.

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex): I beg to move that Council now resolve itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Bill intituled

"An Ordinance to appropriate the Supplies granted in the current session of the Legislative Council",
clause by clause.

Question put, and agreed to.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

The Chairman: Last night when the adjournment was taken we were considering a Motion for the reduction of sub-head 1 (14)—"Assistant Director of Agriculture (Veterinary and Animal Husbandry)"—\$7,200, by \$1, moved by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central.

Mr. Burnham: Before the adjournment was taken we had heard from the hon. Minister of Natural Resources that the matter had been referred to the Public Service Commission some time ago and was receiving consideration. But I ask another question: When had the matter been referred to the Public Ser-

vice Commission? I wonder whether it is possible for us to have an answer from the hon. Minister or from the hon. Chief Secretary?

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Hedges): Sir, the matter was referred to the Public Service Commission on 12th December, 1959.

Mr. Jackson: We are very grateful to the hon. the Chief Secretary for having given us information with respect to one—the vacancy which exists in the Department; but in view of what the hon. the Financial Secretary has said, of the possibility of Government not filling some of these posts in order to meet some of the expenses which are involved in paying higher wage rates, we, on this side of the Table, must seek information as to why there are still almost 16 posts vacant in the Department of Agriculture, and whether it is the intention of Government to withhold the filling of those appointments?

This information which we have is information which came from the head of the Department himself, in Finance Committee; and one is now left very doubtful as to whether it is the policy of the Government to fill these posts when they are vacant. If the Government intends to withhold the filling of these posts when the occasion arises, then it is unfair to ask us to pass any vote in excess of that amount without these posts being filled. I am asking Government whether it is their intention to fill these posts? If it is not so, then we shall move a reduction in the vote of the whole Department.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn): Government intends to fill all the vacancies which appear in the Estimates. In many cases, one or two persons have applied. That is my understanding. In other cases, Guianese are out on training, and it is expected that when they return this year or early next year, they will take up these posts.

Mr. Jackson: Mr. Speaker, there are 16 posts vacant. According to the hon. the Chief Secretary, one post has been referred to the Public Service Commission, so that we can assume that there are 15 vacancies. But the Minister of Natural Resources just told us people are in training. He does not say whether the intention is, by 1961 to have all these vacancies filled. We want exact information and not just generalizations.

Mr. Burnham: I, therefore, understand from the Minister of Natural Resources that he has no information to the effect. May I ask whether he is aware of the fact that an eminent Guianese had to leave the Department of Agriculture during the past year because he was not being paid the rate of salary commensurate with his qualification, and has gone to Venezuela?

The Chairman: I was thinking about putting the Amendment.

Mr. Burnham: I raised another question which I thought the hon. Minister would have answered, but in this case I shall assume that silence connotes ignorance of the facts, and I withdraw my Amendment.

WAGES OF OTHER EMPLOYEES

Mr. Jackson: I beg to move that sub-head 1 (33) — “Wages of other employees” — \$7,942, be reduced by \$1. I move this reduction because of the fact that it is the same amount as was provided last year. That is an indication that in spite of what the Financial Secretary has said, an obvious error has not been corrected, and no statement has been made to this Council that it will be corrected. In view of the fact that the Financial Secretary says that Government intends to honour the agreement which it has signed with an organization of which I have very good knowledge, one would have thought that that would have been followed up with a statement that those figures were put on the estimate

either in error or before the agreement was signed, and that the intention is not to remove from employment any person who is at present employed.

The Financial Secretary has said that there is suspicion on this side of the Table with respect to his Budget Speech. Suspicion in itself is not a cause; it is the result of a cause, and the cause is that Government has failed to do what it ought to have done when the Budget Statement was presented. While I have a very high regard for the Financial Secretary and I accept his statement from time to time, I think the Council is entitled to have a better explanation of the circumstances to which I refer. Since Government has agreed to increase the wages of certain employees this figure provided in the estimate cannot be right. We ought to be told that it is an error, or that it was put there before the agreement was signed, and that steps will be taken to correct it. I move the reduction in order to hear what is the explanation.

The Financial Secretary: I had hoped that I had made the position perfectly clear, but, as so often happens, my hopes are not borne out. I said that no provision has been made, in all cases, in these estimates, to take account of changes in the wage rates. I said that in certain cases, notably maintenance of roads, the figures had been increased. I also said that in view of the accusation which had been made about a breach of faith, the facts were that, if necessary, supplementary provision would be sought under the various sub-heads. We hope to economize in various ways in order to make the supplementary provision as little as possible. The item to which the hon. Member has referred involves the sum of \$7,942 in a sub-head which totals \$440,000. It is very likely that it will be possible, because of delay in filling certain posts, deliberately or otherwise, to save \$7,000 odd out of \$440,000. So I think that even if the hon. Member had a case he has chosen a bad peg on which to hang it.

[THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY]

On a matter of principle I would like to say that there is no obligation on this Government, or any other Government, to fill all the posts on the Estimate. It is fair enough for the "Opposition" to comment on the fact as to whether money is spent or not, but the prerogative of spending money is in principle, law, theory and fact the prerogative of Government. If the Government chooses—I am not saying it has chosen—not to spend money under a particular sub-head, it has a perfect right not to do so.

Mr. Burnham: We now see that Government proposes to be a little short of contumacious by saying that it has the prerogative to spend what it wants. That has come from the Financial Secretary who last night referred to our accusations and suspicions. These have now been justified. He even went so far as to refer to the refusal or failure to fill posts deliberately or otherwise, therefore it all comes back to this: that Government hopes to make economies by not filling certain posts, and keeping Guianese officers acting for a long time, and by retrenchment. That is what it amounts to, and we recognize it. We are not so illiterate as not to be able to read the Instruments, or to have to question what the prerogative of the Government is, but for Government to remind us of that is, I think, an attempt on its part to be rude, in which case we need not come here at all.

The Financial Secretary: The second part of what I said just now was on a matter of principle. I was not applying that principle to any particular case, but merely beginning to say that as this Committee stage is going we are going to keep talking on Motions by the "Opposition" aimed at getting Government to spend more money on the Estimates, which is absolutely pointless. It will not get us anywhere. The question of the direct or indirect cause for not filling vacancies is quite irrelevant. It

so happens that posts are not always filled at the beginning of a year, and why the hon. Member should assume from that that it is a deliberate policy not to fill a large number of posts, I do not know, except that that is the way this debate is going. I am not being contumacious, rude or insulting; I am merely stating a fact. It is quite evident, from the way the hon. Member is speaking, that whether he knew it was the prerogative of the Government to spend up to the limit of what is allowed by this Council, or not to spend it, he was taking the opportunity to try to make the Government vote more money.

Mr. Burnham: It was not I who introduced the word "deliberate". The Financial Secretary is a person of some skill of language and he chooses his language correctly, so that when he speaks of "failure to fill a post, deliberately or otherwise", I am led to believe that there is a grave probability of posts being deliberately left unfilled. There was no necessity to remind us of the principle; our illiteracy does not go that far. We know that it is for the Government to decide how much it will spend or will not spend. I see nothing wrong in asking the Government for a statement as to whether or not it proposes at some time in the future to fill certain posts. It is quite another matter to introduce what I consider an inaccurate statement about filling posts at the beginning of the year, because earlier we had reference made to posts which have not been filled for months. It is not that the post became vacant on the 1st of January, but in the middle of 1959. We are not referring to vacancies that have arisen since the Budget debate, and it is therefore not for the Financial Secretary to tell us where this debate is going to get us. We are exercising our democratic right to criticize, but the Financial Secretary graciously gets up and says that it is not going to get us anywhere. Between the two of them where are we — Scylla and Charybdis?

Mr. Hubbard: I beg to move that the question be put.

Mr. Jackson: I beg to withdraw my Amendment.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 3 — Agriculture — be carried out at \$1,952,468.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

ANALYST

The Chairman: The question is that Head 4 — Analyst — be carried out at \$69,120.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

AUDIT

SENIOR AUDITOR

Mr. Jackson: I move a reduction by \$1 of sub-head 1 (3) — “Senior Auditor” — \$6,720, so as to be able to make some observations on this Department. I speak because of my experience as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, and anyone who has read the Report of the Director of Audit must be concerned about the situation as it exists in the Public Service today — the frequency with which losses of public funds occur in one way or another — a situation which forces one to the conclusion that something ought to be done to bring these things to light much earlier than they are revealed at the moment.

It is my impression that the staff of the Audit Department is not as adequate as it should be, and if we believe that the Audit Department should fulfil its functions promptly then we would come to the conclusion that there is need for an increase of its staff.

The Financial Secretary: In this Department increases of staff were made between 1958 and 1959 as follows: one Auditor, one Senior Examiner of Accounts, one Examiner of Accounts (Grade 1), one Examiner of Accounts (Grade 2), and five Clerical Officers. I do not think that this Department has any need to be bigger than it is at the moment. I agree that the training of auditors is desirable, but I do not think that making the Department any bigger would solve the problem to which the hon. Member has justifiably drawn attention.

What is really required is a greater supervision in the other Departments — supervision of the primary work, the accounts themselves, and in some Departments an internal audit system. We are addressing our minds to the idea of having internal audits in certain Departments, but I do not think there would be any point, or any necessity really, to make this Department bigger. Even if it were made bigger, we would have the same problem — which is current throughout the whole Public Service. As I said in the Budget Speech, we are very short of people with an aptitude and a desire for accounting work. This Department has been deprived of people who have been trained in accounting work, but because of this dilution the Accountant-General’s Department has suffered especially heavily. I cannot say how many persons on his Staff have under three years’ experience, but it must be quite a lot.

To increase the Audit Staff with inexperienced people would not immediately help. The importance of the audit in any business or Government Department is secondary to that of a proper handling of the basic accounts and an on-the-spot, current, supervision of the work.

Mr. Jackson: That is the view of the Government. It is my impression that the Audit Department cannot and does not cover the entire field which it

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ought to cover, and while I admit that the Accountant-General's Department is being bereft of its senior Staff, I also know that the Audit Department has so suffered, when officers left there to take over in another Department. Well, then, if all that is happening — and Government admits it — must we wait for the Director of Audit to make recommendations some time in the future — I do not know if I will be alive then.

The Financial Secretary: I should mention that we have this year introduced the post of Administrative Cadet, which increases the senior echelon of the Department.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion negatived.

Head 5 — Audit — put and passed as printed, at \$153,888.

CENTRAL HOUSING AND PLANNING AUTHORITY

Mr. Speaker: The question is, that Head 6 — Central Housing and Planning Authority — be carried out at \$50,761.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

CHIEF SECRETARY'S OFFICE

PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Mr. Jackson: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 1 (3) — "Principal Assistant Secretary" — \$7,200, by \$1 in order to make an observation. About four or five years ago, if not later, the Government was asked to appoint someone to serve in this Department as Industrial Relations Officer. I referred to this request in the last Budget debate and stressed the importance of creating such a post or branch because of the fact that Govern-

ment had become a large employer of people and had to deal with representations from several organizations representing its employees. The fact has also been referred to previously that a long time is taken by the Chief Secretary's Office to deal with representations from such organizations, which delay results in frustration among the workers, and in conflicts which could be avoided.

The time has come once again to ask Government to think and act in this matter, so that someone would in the future deal directly with representational matters, rather than have the Chief Secretary's Office in general burdened with them.

The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Rai): I think that matters which relate to employers and employees are among the duties of the Staff of the Labour Department, including several highly paid officers, like the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, and Inspectors of Labour — all of whom are well known to my good friend.

Mr. Jackson: My good Friend means well, but he does not understand. The Labour Department has been established for one particular purpose, and its functions are maintained for that purpose, except there is a conflict between Government and its employees. In the case of a strike, Government leaves the poor labour inspector to act as a go-between and he is automatically given the right to negotiate between the employer and the employee.

I think that Government should take this advice and appoint very shortly such an officer as I have suggested.

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Chairman, last night we were very tolerant with the Chief Secretary, but today we expect an answer from him. If he finds he is not seized of the facts, he can have his Deputy sitting behind him, as I see other Ministers have their Permanent Secre-

taries and Administrative Assistants sitting behind them.

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Hedges): I have heard this request, and I think it is worth considering.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you, sir. I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 7 — Chief Secretary's Office — be carried out at \$71,888.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

ESTABLISHMENT

PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHMENT OFFICERS

Mr. Jackson: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 1 (2) — "Principal Establishment Officers" — \$14,400, by \$1, in order to make some comments. I agree that in this Department there is need for enough senior Staff to cope with all the problems of Establishment, and that is why I feel very strongly that there should be more officers at the top than there is at the bottom. We who represent the workers take cognizance of the situation, and we know that these officers are almost over-worked. If one goes into the Establishment Department, one can see stacks of files on officers' desks, and one wonders how they manage to get through with their work. If one passes this building at 12 midnight, one can see lights on in their offices. It is unfair, in spite of the patriotism one hears of nowadays, and the Chief Secretary should give some consideration to it.

The Chief Secretary: I have heard these observations, and I would like to say that great care is given by the Establishment Department in the replies to

that issue. The number of communications issuing daily from this Department is about 60. I have taken note of the hon. Member's remarks.

CIVIL AVIATION

FIRE PROTECTION, ETC.

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 8 — "Fire Protection and Ambulance services maintenance and operating costs" — \$49,000, by \$1.

Sometime last year, very soon after the hon. the Chief Secretary had come to this country, I asked the question about the publication and/or adoption of the Sheat Report. I was given the assurance by the hon. the Chief Secretary and his Colleague, the Minister of Communications and Works, that it was being studied. Is this Report still being studied? Does it take all this time for this Government to study a simple report? When will a decision be made? In this Report there are several recommendations with respect to improvements or changes relating to the Fire Service at Atkinson Field which are urgently needed. For the moment I shall not make more caustic observations because, perchance, there will be some logical explanation.

While on this question of "Fire Protection", there is another question which arises. The firemen at Atkinson Field, from the time that the Americans left British Guiana, have been carrying out duties of telephone operators which duties lasted until last year when the new automatic system was put in, a period of over 10 years. Representations have been made by and on behalf of these workers and all that has been forthcoming is a paltry pittance offered by the Government.

When these men were asked to undertake these duties they were told by the Engineer-in-Charge at Atkinson that they would be paid. Last year the hon. the Chief Secretary said there was no such

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undertaking, but an *ex gratia* payment was made. Let us not worry whether payment was made or not. When you imagine that these men had been offered \$24 after working for 10 years, doing work which would have cost Government thousands of dollars, it seems as if it is an insult — and there can be no justification for it.

The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran): It appears to me as if the hon. Member has seen the Sheat Report and the recommendations thereon. The Sheat Report has been received by Government. Part of it has already been implemented and another part is still being considered by Government. But what interests me is the charge or, rather, claim on behalf of the firemen that they were working for 10 years at Atkinson Field as telephone operators. This Government is not in a position, and I, personally, am not in a position to say when these people were recruited by Government to work as telephone operators. But what bothers me is why the "Opposition" and other Members, who represent workers at Atkinson, are accusing this Government? What had they been doing for 10 years? When I saw the conditions under which the men were working I told them I would make representation to the hon. the Chief Secretary for an *ex gratia* payment. Representation was made. What were these Members doing all these years?

Mr. Jackson : Such absurdity one has never heard in this Council. The workers at Atkinson were never always organized in a movement of the kind to which reference has been made. Whether the claim was made now or yesterday or 10 years from now, the fact remains that these workers had been employed as telephonists, and Government would have been spending far more money if they had employed other people. It is not a question whether these people were represented or otherwise. It seems that certain people cannot stand up to

questions by others. It may be the last straw that breaks the camel's back which caused the workers to go to other people.

Mr. Ram Karran: It is inaccurate to say that the workers at Atkinson Field were not represented by a union. Ever since the Americans were there they were represented. But where is the Government going to levy taxation to pay for 10 years' back? I would like the hon. Member to tell us. Wouldn't he consider an *ex gratia* payment as reasonable?

Mr. Burnham : We are tired of this Eve-like behaviour — it is not Eve, it is Adam. We are not interested in whether or not previous Governments were wrong or right. The point is, at this moment, this Government is in office — and hear this ex-trade unionist saying that the workers should have made their representation before! Representations were made before. All he has done, in spite of the advice he has been getting from his Colleague, is to hide the issue. These men, apart from doing their work as firemen, worked as telephonists and had to leave their work as telephonists and return to their shifts as firemen. Had not they been robbed long enough? Is it not time that this working class Government, self-styled, do something to help the workers? One telephonist doing the work of one of these men would have been paid a minimum of \$80 per month. What I am saying is that \$24 is unreasonable; what I am saying further is, admitting that these men cannot get full payment for 10 years, cannot a reasonable compromise be reached?

As I am on my legs let me talk about the Sheat Report. Part of it has been implemented, part is being considered. What parts? The next question is: Why is it not published?

The Attorney-General (Mr. Austin): If these men have a clear case the Government will look into it; but the fact that the Government has not looked into it in the past 10 years, is not the Government's fault but the fault of the

workers. Why store up all these pathetic stories for the Budget debate? They should have been brought to the notice of the Government earlier. The fact that these men did not get their claim considered before is because the "Opposition" did not bring the matter up at the proper time.

Mr. Burnham: I am amused. As a matter of history let me explain to the hon. the Attorney-General that the "Opposition" was not here before 1957. The hon. the Attorney-General must get his history straight. The "Opposition" was not here before 1957, therefore Members could not have raised it before 1957. The answer given by the hon. the Attorney-General would have made sense, coming from a lawyer, if his facts and history were straight. He is not a student of history and I forgive him. Now, I appeal to his legal training to give these men payment equivalent to one year's salary of a telephonist and they will be satisfied.

The Financial Secretary: This question went to Finance Committee in June last year and Finance Committee agreed to vote \$1,600. The basis of the payment was \$10 a year up to the maximum of \$100. That was in Finance Committee. Again, later in the year it was accepted in the Schedule by this Council. I really do not wish to go into all that again, as the amount was accepted by Council.

Mr. Burnham: I heard a cackle from the other side. It is still immoral — the fact that Government rushed it through Finance Committee and the Council does not absolve it from the charge of being rude to those workers by offering \$10 per year up to \$100, when a single Telephone Exchange girl would have cost \$80 per month. And this working class Government is amused.

Mr. Ram Karran: I would like to set the record straight. The hon. Member speaks as though these people are running a telephone system as large or

larger than that in Georgetown. It is a very small exchange at Atkinson Field, and at the time when Atkinson Field was vacated by the Americans we took it over on the condition that the firemen, who had very little work to do as such because the planes calling at Atkinson Field were very few indeed, should as part of their duties answer telephone calls and operate the switchboard which was not far from the fire station. As the number of planes increased, the firemen continued to operate the telephone system as part of their duties.

No representation was made to Government in the matter, and that is why I am wondering whether the union has been asleep all these years. Mr. Sheat was not appointed by this Government, or by anybody, to investigate anything, but shortly before he arrived here representations were made by the firemen (after I had spoken to them) who said that it was not part of their duties to operate the telephone system. Government was considering the matter at the time when Mr. Sheat, the Fire Adviser from the Colonial Office, arrived on a routine visit and made certain recommendations to Government. Those recommendations were secret; not that we have any reason to hide them. The hon. Member has described it as a commission of inquiry.

Mr. Burnham: To a point of correction. I never said anything about a commission of inquiry.

Mr. Ram Karran: I know that the hon. Member did not say that.

Mr. Burnham: If I did not say it then don't say I did.

Mr. Ram Karran: The way the hon. Member said it suggested that something was being hidden. Government has implemented some of the recommendations. The status of the airport has been changed to what it is, and it is for this reason that Government is giving consideration to it, and that is why the

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matter has not been put to the Council before. More than that, Mr. Sheat has made certain recommendations which are being considered, but because of the fact that we had to set up a new telephone exchange at Atkinson Field the firemen are no longer carrying out those duties. I think the amount given is reasonable, as the men have been drawing their salaries as firemen all the time.

Mr. Burnham: It is extraordinary to hear an ex-trade unionist saying that firemen have not sufficient work. Firemen are supposed to stand-by in case of a fire, and when a worker is standing by he is employed. Fires do not occur every minute but firemen have to stand-by in case of a fire. Therefore the point I made earlier is still valid—that these men had to stand-by as firemen and in addition did shifts at the telephone exchange at Atkinson Field. It is interesting to note that at one time the Minister said he did not know, but now he knows the background. It is only now that we are hearing that the Sheat report is a secret document, but in answer to my question last year the Minister promised to consider having it published. I ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment withdrawn.

MAINTENANCE OF INTERIOR AIRFIELDS

Mr. Campbell: I move the deletion of item 10 — “Maintenance of Interior Airfields” — \$21,000, in order to ask one or two questions. I would like to ask the Minister of Communications and Works what is the number of airfields in the interior to be maintained with this vote? Does Government intend to construct new airfields in the interior, if so, how many? Is it Government’s policy to change from amphibian planes to land planes? Does Government intend to build an airfield in the North West District, or to continue the Grumman service? If it is proposed to con-

tinue the Grumman service I would like to bring to the notice of the Government the rotten and dangerous state of the landing stage there. I suggest that steps be taken to make the landing stage safe for passengers.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am not sure I heard everything the hon. Member said, but I think I would need notice of one or two of the questions he has asked. He wants to know the policy of the Government with regard to the construction of new airfields. That, of course, is dependent upon the type of aircraft we decide to use. I think I have already indicated to the Council that Government has been and is still considering the very complicated requirement of our aircraft. We are advised that it would be far more economical to use short take-off and landing planes because of the fact that they are able to carry a greater pay-load than the water alighting ones. If it is decided to make the change-over it means that Government will have to build a large number of airstrips, because they are land planes. That aspect is under consideration.

The last question is that of a platform or landing stage. As far as the Grumman Goose aircraft is concerned, I think it is highly dangerous to have any rigid structure near to it. It is like a weather-cock, like some of my friends on the other side of the Table. It is necessary to keep such aircraft away from any rigid structure, and that is why the existing system has been adopted. In Georgetown the ramp has been abandoned because of the erection of the structure for the bulk loading of sugar near to the ramp. I would like time to study the replies to the other questions which have been raised.

Mr. Campbell: I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Mr. Tello: I merely desire to place on record my criticism of the contemplated experiment by Government in the matter of interior flying in British Gui-

ana. The hon. Minister has just mentioned the suggestion of substituting other planes for the Grumman, and in Finance Committee, we were informed that Government contemplated using the single-engined type of aircraft. But it must be regarded, in the interest of safety, as obsolete, and the acquisition of such a single-engined aircraft by the B.G. Airways is a retrograde step. Next I am informed through our discussions in Finance Committee that this Government proposes to experiment with another type of aircraft that has never been tried out in the tropics and, more recently, I have been hearing of a more powerful type of aircraft with four engines failing with loss of life and limb.

Speaking as a layman, I do not see the wisdom of our trying out such an aircraft, much more to try it out over our interior, when there are so many other types of aircraft which have been found efficient and could have been bought instead, or even DC3s reconditioned. It is interesting to note that Pan American World Airways, one of the most experienced airlines, recently reconditioned some 60 aircraft of the DC3 type, at a cost of \$27,000 on the average. I am merely thinking of people's safety and the reputation of B.G. Airways.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am most grateful to the hon. Nominated Member for his observations. Government has made no decision, but is giving consideration to the possibility — after careful examination. This is a technical matter and no one in the Government, or in or around here knows about the technical side of things —

The Chairman: I am not hearing all of what the hon. Minister is saying.

Mr. Ram Karran: Government is giving consideration to the change-over from the existing aircraft to another type because it is necessary to do so. The hon. Nominated Member advised us that PAA has recently renovated DC3s. As

far as we are concerned, we have no quarrel with the DC3s. They are good aircraft, but to retain them it is necessary to build very long runways, and the cost in this respect is also being very carefully considered. The Grumman, on the other hand, is now out of production, and one simply cannot run an aircraft unless one can get spare parts for maintenance.

While, as I have said, Government has made no decision in respect of the aircraft we are looking at, I am informed that they operate with the same kind of engine as the DC3s. However, that is a technical matter which I prefer to leave to the technical people. Here again, I am in no position to advise, but I am told that it does not matter. One most likely would prefer to have more than one engine on an aircraft — but what kind of engines? There are some aircraft with two engines, one of which cannot keep you in the air if the other goes. An examination in this respect was carried out with an aircraft in the Kona-waruk valleys. With half the load on, the pilot took off one of his engines, and down the plane went. It does appear, therefore, that it is not in every case that a double-engined aircraft is better than a single-engined one.

In fact, I have been informed that single-engined aircraft operate in most of the Asian countries like Burma and Borneo, which have trunk lines. So that when this Government makes a decision to buy aircraft, we will see to it that we do not have aircraft that do not operate properly. Consideration has to be given to questions of load, length of runways and matters of that sort.

Mr. Tello: It is either that I misunderstood the information which was given in Finance Committee or Government is inconsistent. I understood that a decision had been reached to buy twin-engined aircraft which had never operated in these parts before. I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 8—Civil Aviation—be carried out at \$203,765.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

CO-OPERATIVE

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 9—Co-operative—be carried out at \$171,353.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 10—Customs and Excise—be carried out at \$697,951.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 11—Drainage and Irrigation—be carried out at \$581,575.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION— ANNUALLY RECURRENT

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 11A—Drainage and Irrigation—Annually Recurrent—be carried out at \$337,844.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

EDUCATION.

MAINTENANCE AND EQUIPMENT OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 3 — “Maintenance and Equipment of Government Schools”—\$20,000, by \$1. Mr. Chairman, I made my observation during the course of my contribution to the debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill that Government did not build any new school during 1959. I did not have the opportunity of being present when the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education was giving the facts, but I was shown them by him. I want to say that my statement remains.

For it seems to me that the number of schools which it is claimed were replaced were additions to a certain number of schools. When I say that no new school was built, it means that no school was built where there was previously no other school.

Now the uninformed or unwashed will forgive me, but those who are accustomed to thinking clearly and closely will see what I am contending. Though he insists that new schools are being built, he sees my reasoning — no new blade of grass grows where before none grew. You have replaced schools which were either dilapidated or falling to pieces. I say no new schools were built during 1959.

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex): Has the hon. Member never bought a new car?

Mr. Burnham: Yes, but not a replacement of a car I had before. Of course, the Financial Secretary is venturing into a field that is not his. I would like to hear from the Minister of Community Development for two reasons. First of all, he is a lawyer and will follow my reasoning, and secondly, he is the Minister concerned.

Mr. Rai: Government does not build old schools, but new schools. The schools I referred to were not replacement of Government schools. New schools were put up which were not previously owned by Government. With this clarification, I am sure the hon. Member's position will be made clear.

Mr. Burnham: I can always understand the Minister of Education.

The Chairman: I take it you are both speaking from different universes of discourse.

Mr. Burnham: I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

TEACHING STAFF (GOVERNMENT TRAINING COLLEGE)

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 23 (2)—“Teaching Staff” (Government Training College)—\$25,000, by \$1, to make a certain observation. A Master at the Government Training College is on the salary scale A5, which, I understand, takes him to a maximum of \$480 per month.

An Assistant Master is on scale 12A which takes him to a maximum of \$320 per month. A Master at Queen's College is on a scale which takes him to \$560 per month. A graduate Master—a Senior Master—is on one of these super-scales which gives him a maximum of \$560 per month without any scaling. The Principal of the Government Training College gets \$6,960 per annum; the Principal of the Technical Institute gets \$7,688 per annum. I make this comparison to show that so far as salaries are concerned, obviously, in the scheme of things, the Government considers the Government Training College a little lower than the angels, which I consider as bad.

My observation that Government was neglecting education was very hotly replied to; but if you are stimulating your education, that stimulation must consist of not only the building of new schools or new school buildings. It must also consist of the training of a larger number of teachers, and the efficient training of a larger number of teachers. The teachers are trained at the Government Training College, but I submit that there are many headmasters at schools who will earn more per month than the Assistant Master at the Government Training College. There are headteachers earning \$360 to \$390 per month as against \$320. It means, therefore, if you have a very good schoolmaster whose energies and ability you will like to use at the Government Training College, he may well be disposed to refuse the offer in view of the lower scale he will have to go at. And there is only one post of Master and, therefore, he must go as an Assistant Master.

Elsewhere, an Honours graduate gets two increments on any scale on which he finds himself. At the Government Training College an Honours graduate does not get that. Therefore, the teaching staff at the Government Training College is unattractive either to leading schoolmasters or to graduates. The result of this may well be that persons well qualified to assist in staffing the Government Training College will be attracted to industry or Queen's College or some secondary school. If there is need for a good staff here, and I contend there is, I feel that, operating on a reasonable principle, the scales should be up-graded to be on par with those of Queen's College.

I am interested in the results because persons are likely to leave. This, to my mind, is not a controversial subject; and I wish to recommend to Government, whether or not, at the moment, it is considering a general regrading throughout the Service or any implementation of the Gorsuch Report, to regrade

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the College to put it on par with Queen's College or Bishops' High School.

Mr. Raj: I appreciate the points the hon. Member has made. I think the whole question of salary scales is being gone into by Government; still, in the meantime, I wish to assure this Council that the present holder of the post is a Master. I also wish to assure this Council that the quality of teaching is not likely to be impaired. The whole question of salary structures is being gone into.

Mr. Burnham: I am saying this a matter of urgency, and I am suggesting that you bring this section up to the comparable section I referred to; and when you come to the general regrading, then regrade all. I am thinking, also, of an incentive. I know there is an Assistant Master who is an Honours graduate and who is getting \$320 per month. I happen to have heard murmurings of persons going to other places, though their vocation is teaching. They have wives and children and other responsibilities.

I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is, that Heads 12 and 12A—Education — be carried out at \$6,832,345.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

ESSEQUIBO BOYS' SCHOOL.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 13 — Essequibo Boys' School — be carried out at \$111,954.

Agreed to

Head passed.

FINANCE SECRETARIAT

ACCOMMODATION

Mr. Jackson: I beg to move the reduction of the total of Head 14 — Finance Secretariat — \$46,975, by \$1. I do so because I want to repeat the views I had expressed last year with respect to the accommodation in the entire Finance Secretariat. I said last year that the members of the staff of the Treasury work under difficult conditions. I said that this building offers the possibility of an extension to the south, barring the views of the experts, and the time has come when something should be done to improve the conditions under which the people of this Department work. If the experts said that this building should not be extended, Government's policy should be to take over other buildings so that the workers could have better accommodation.

It was agreed last year that my comments were quite accurate, sound and justifiable. Still I see that nothing has been done to improve the conditions under which these people work. I referred to the fact that there is no place for the people who live in the country and work in the Treasury to take their lunch. I hope what had been agreed upon last year would be put into effect and positive steps would be taken to remove these awkward circumstances.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Member has said that he has seen nothing done since his complaint was made last year. I can assure him that the offers made by people to the Government are being pursued, and whilst it is not the policy of this Government, (I know the hon. Member has been always asking for a memorandum to be supplied to him) we are not in a position to present a memorandum informing him at what stage the investigation has reached. But, I do assure him that Government is actively considering the expansion of certain premises and the acquisition of premises.

Mr. Jackson: This is not one of the cases for which I need a memorandum; for if I needed one, I would have asked for it. Anyway, I am glad to hear the Minister say that steps are being taken to improve the conditions.

I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is that Head 14 — Finance Secretariat — be carried out at \$46,975.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

FINANCE — STATISTICAL BUREAU

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 14A — Finance — Statistical Bureau — be carried out at \$24,711.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

FINANCE — ACCOUNTANT GENERAL

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 15 — Finance — Accountant General — be carried out at \$141,779.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

FINANCE — CENTRAL REGISTRY

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 15A — Finance — Central Registry — be carried out at \$26,407.

Agreed to.

Head passed

FINANCE — LICENCE REVENUE

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 16 — Finance — Licence Revenue — be carried out at \$69,041.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

FINANCE — INLAND REVENUE

ASSISTANT INSPECTORS

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 1 (6) — “Assistant Inspectors” — \$13,488, by \$1. This is the third year I have had to make these observations. Estate duty collection has been passed over to the Inland Revenue — Finance Department. The work being done is of the greatest responsibility, and it is work that cannot be done by any civil servant without previous experience and/or training. That has been admitted by those Members of the Council who have to do with matters concerning estate duty, and looking at the Law Reports of the cases with respect to various estates, I can say that the person responsible has been doing his work very well. But the person responsible is at a very low scale in the office, and whoever he is I am sure he would be interested in promotion to another Department where he can enjoy higher remuneration.

For three years it has been admitted by Government that my point is valid; for two years it has been admitted in Finance Committee by the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, but for the third year I do not see any provision made for re-grading that post to make it at least that of an Assistant Commissioner of Inland Revenue. It is a very important aspect of the work of the Department, a section through which a lot of income can be obtained by Government, and a section in which the greatest temptation exists. I say this without fear of the slightest contradiction. The officer responsible

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should be given a higher post in which he would be less likely to succumb to temptation, and in which he would be less likely to be interested in promotion out of the Department. I would like to know what has been done about the matter.

The Financial Secretary: The simple answer is that nothing has been done. The officer is still an Inspector of Taxes.

Mr. Burnham: This is the third year this matter has been raised, and on two previous occasions this particular Financial Secretary promised to have it adjusted.

The Financial Secretary: I did not say I would have it adjusted.

Mr. Burnham: What else did the Financial Secretary say? The Commissioner of Inland Revenue admitted in Finance Committee that the officer concerned was deserving of a higher status, and the present Minister of Education (Mr. Rai), before he became a Member of the Executive Council, agreed with my point of view and supported it very strongly. I do not blame him for remaining silent now. After all there is joint responsibility, but at least we must get the impression that Government is doing something. The point is that nothing has been done. I ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

The Chairman: The question is that Head 17 — Finance — Inland Revenue — be carried out at \$153,638.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

FIRE PROTECTION

The Chairman: The question is that Head 18 — Fire Protection — be carried out at \$492,645.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

FOREST

The Chairman: The question is that Head 19 — Forest — be carried out at \$638,730.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

INTERIOR

The Chairman: The question is that Head 20 — Interior — be carried out at \$209,416.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

LABOUR

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF LABOUR

Mr. Tello: I move the reduction of subhead I (2) — “Deputy Commissioner of Labour” — \$7,200, by \$1. I do so in order to comment on certain matters in connection with the Department of Labour, its administration and its relation to the Trade Union Movement. For some years we have had a Committee set up for the administration of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. In common with the practice in the Caribbean we have always had this Committee representative of employers, Government officers and trade unions. Among those nominated to represent Government officers was the Commissioner of Labour, and I believe in other places the Commissioner of Labour or his Deputy.

Recently this structure has been altered. I can assure this Council that the Trade Union Movement has always considered that set-up as a very valuable one, in that Government was represented on the Committee and both sides of the sugar industry were represented — em-

ployer and employee — and the Department most closely associated with Labour also had a voice in the administration of the Fund.

As far as I know, and I think most people will agree, the Committee has rendered invaluable service to the community, and especially the working class community. Its record is a very good one. This opinion is shared by employers and workers, and if there is any doubt as to the valuable service rendered by the Committee one can travel to any part of the coast and see evidence of the work it has done. On sugar estates new institutions have been set up by the workers who have shown faith and confidence in the Committee and its work, and although in the early stage of the Committee and the administration of the Fund several members of the P.P.P. and others opposed the functioning of the Committee, and especially the housing scheme — I was then associated with the union concerned — a considerable amount of union funds was expended in explaining the purpose of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund and the benefits which would accrue to the workers if they participated in the scheme.

Today thousands of houses and very valuable communities have been set up. The work of the Committee was not restricted to the building of houses but included the establishment of welfare centres. When workers were in trouble individually, or when a union had a knotty problem or a deadlock with employers, they turned to the Labour Department, the Commissioner of Labour or one of his officers, for advice and, in many cases, for conciliation. There is provision in industrial agreements for conciliation, in cases of deadlock, by the Commissioner of Labour. For years in the economic sector the workers have built up confidence in the Labour Department and its officers, and I wish to place on record the workers' alarm at this sudden decision to remove from this Committee the representation of the Labour Department which is the closest

Government Department to the working class movement. I mention it because it appears to be one of the steps carefully designed to separate us from the Government Department that interests us and is closely connected with labour.

In case Members feel that I am magnifying the issue, let me add that the officer appointed, I have no doubt, is doing a fine job in his own Department but, without fear of contradiction, has not got the experience necessary to occupy the Chairmanship of this Fund. Someone with the experience of a Commissioner of Labour can better hold this position because the matter of conciliating between employers and workers demands techniques that are acquired through personal psychology. This experience is available right now, but Government went out of its way to turn its back on such experience.

If for some reason or other either the Commissioner or the Deputy Commissioner of Labour did not satisfy the Government, then there were other officers in the same field to choose from, like the Senior Inspector of Labour, who is qualified to sit there and inspire the confidence that is necessary for this Fund to work smoothly. But no, we see a complete departure.

We are not exaggerating our qualms about this matter, because it is not the first complete departure from what one would reasonably expect to be done, but this is the first time we seek to place it on record. The first time we had cause to set up a Wages Council in British Guiana this Government appointed a legislator as a member and as Chairman — a precedent in the Commonwealth. We do not have the experience in this sort of thing to allow for such experiments, and I feel that Government is trifling with industrial peace.

The things which the Majority Party used to press for when it was out of office are the things whose importance they seem to minimize today. We find

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only four persons appointed to investigate and enforce awards of Wages Councils, from Crabwood Creek to the Esse-qui-bo Coast, and possibly up the Rivers, Legislative provisions make awards of the wages enforceable only by the Labour Department, which is inadequately staffed.

To under-staff the Labour Department is another way of trifling with industrial peace. Last year we pleaded for the creation of a new post and pointed out that an officer was holding a certain post without receiving the proper remuneration or designation. We asked that this be remedied and in the Finance Committee we were told that the Minister of Labour was not impressed. My answer to that is that she is not sufficiently familiar with the functions of one of her own Departments and she would not interest herself in the responsibilities of her officers. I am still hoping that something be done to remedy this situation. I feel that in the haste to make changes Government has forgotten that there are people in the Labour Department upon whose services it may call and who have always willingly responded to such calls.

Mr. Hubbard: I did not expect to speak at this point, but I find that I am forced to do so. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, dragged me into it when he mentioned that I was made Chairman of the Wages Council. I have some little claim to knowledge of labour matters, and I should like to point out that my first act as Chairman of a Wages Council was to use that little knowledge to protect the worker.

When I was appointed, I was asked by the Commissioner of Labour to consult him on the question of procedure relating to a Wages Council. He pointed out that the Council of which I was Chairman would be the first one to sit in British Guiana, and it was therefore important that a proper procedure should be established. He prepared a list of

things which this Wages Council could do, and how matters came before it, and other relevant things. Among the points he listed was that a motion could only come before a Wages Council if it was moved by one or other of the representative sides. In other words, the independent member could not introduce for discussion on the Wages Council any motion affecting the conditions within an industry which was relevant to work of a Wages Council.

Of course, I did not accept that, and I pointed out to the Commissioner, who might have made a genuine error, that our Ordinances and Regulations did not prevent an independent member from moving a motion. I think that in doing so, I had really done a service.

From looking at the pages of the weekly newspaper, the "Labour Advocate", the official organ of the M.P.C.A., I have always gathered that there must be a great deal of collaboration between labour and management, considering the advertisements appearing in that paper by sugar companies. In the circumstances, it would have meant this, that if I had accepted the proposition that an independent member of a Wages Council could not bring any matter before that Council, then the Wages Council could have been reduced to impotence by the simple expedient of employers and trade union representatives agreeing not to raise any matter on the Wages Council. That was part one of what became a very great debate.

The next point was that I understood that the B.G. Trades Union Council had taken objection to legislators being members of the Wages Council, and it later reached the stage where the Trades Union Council was insisting that the personnel of the independent membership should be acceptable to both the workers' side and employers' side. A very simple expedient indeed: the workers or the employers decide not to accept any personnel proposed by the Governor in Council, and then you have no Wages Council at all.

So that the simple error of the Commissioner of Labour relating to the procedure of the Wages Council would have had the same effect if it were accepted, as would the T.U.C.'s proposal that personnel on the independent side should be agreed to by the employers as well as by the workers before a Wages Council could be appointed.

I mention that just in passing, and would add this, that the personnel of this Wages Council was indeed agreed upon between the Minister and the Unions before the Council was appointed, and it is a little difficult to understand what the quarrel of the B.G.T.U.C. is in this matter.

Mr. Burnham: When it was questioned whether or not a legislator should be appointed Chairman of a Wages Council, I did not attempt to offer an opinion, but what I rise to object to is the preposterous irrelevancy referred to by the hon. Member. What the "Labour Advocate", the official organ of the M.P.C.A., has to do with the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union? It is so easy, when one does not have a sense of public responsibility, to slander an organisation with impunity. It is unfair to suggest that the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union is a tool of the employers when it is, in no way, associated with the employers.

Mr. Hubbard: I wish to say, very forcibly, now, that the hon. Member who has just taken his seat has always imputed things to Members. I made no such imputation against the Union. I was very careful to state that the Union had issued a statement which was in conflict with that written by the Trades Union Council.

Mr. Burnham: As I was saying before I was wrongly interrupted: It is a fact that the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union accepted the hon. Member as Chairman. I did not impute that. I am saying that it is spurious to impute collaboration between the Union and the em-

ployers by the advertisements of the sugar companies in the "Labour Advocate".

Mr. Tello: I just want to point out to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, that in spite of his knowledge of the trade union movement, he seemed to have lost sight of the fundamentals of a wage-fixing machinery. He said if the employer and the worker have agreed on a particular matter, then the independent members should intervene. The fundamental of a wage-fixing machinery is an agreement between the employer and employee. If the employer and the employee agree on "X" cents per hour, that is accepted. No other persons should come into it because it is an arrangement between the employer and employee; and that is why tradition has permitted either side to make the first move with regard to wages and conditions of employment. Where the question of wages is involved, it is desirable that the employer and employee are the persons to decide; and if the two disagree on what is just and fair, then the independent members move in for conciliation. If it is that you go in to superimpose your desire, you are going to make a mockery of it. The appointment of legislators is a mockery. No one who has committed himself, politically, in this Legislature can go into a body and say "I am truly independent". I simply mentioned that because we are worried. Things that have been going well are now being reorganized to the detriment of the workers.

I had made reference, especially, to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee. I said it has a good record and that we are worried that the Labour Department is entirely removed from it when that Department was closest to the labourers' interests. And I simply mentioned that we must speak about it now because, on a previous occasion, the Government moved to disregard traditional practices when they were in the infancy of this new Wages Council, and they are beginning to make experiments. We are

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beginning to have records of these changes. We had sought the advice of the Commissioner of Labour and he pointed out the spirit of a Wages Council. The Commissioner of Labour simply pointed out what people of experience and knowledge have been doing for years. The preference is to have these things done voluntary, but because there is the possibility of disagreement, this employer-employee independent machinery has been set up. This is only a substitute.

We have the greatest respect for the legislator who has been appointed Chairman of the Wages Council. We have nothing against him, but the principle is wrong. You cannot say that a legislator is a really independent and impartial representative on this Committee. He is committed, politically, whether he knows it or not; and I say today, and we have it on record, that the very first Chairman has refused to follow the pattern experienced people have set.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am a little confused. Fortunately, I have left the trade union movement to my friend for a little while. However, he mentioned two words quite closely to each other — 'traditional' and 'infancy'. "We have broken tradition," he declared, "by not following a pattern". He mentioned 'infancy', I assume, indicating that this machinery is still in its infancy. I do not see, and I am a bit confused, how they come together. However, the representative of the T.U.C., here, indicated that the T.U.C. objects because tradition has been broken and because "X" or "Y" has been appointed to this machinery. Objection was also raised on the question of advertisements and other matters, and the statement was made by the last speaker that this Council wishes to throw into the gutter the achievements of this, that and the other. Let me assure him once more; but before I assure him, let me remind him that the T.U.C. is the most irresponsible organisation you can find in this Colony at the moment.

Let me refer to an incident. I, as Minister of Communications and Works, had wished to appoint a Committee and had written the T.U.C. requesting them to submit a panel of names. The T.U.C. replied that we appoint "Mr. So-and-So". I wrote back to them and pointed out that their nominee was unsuitable and again requested a panel of names, and the reply came from the Secretary of the T.U.C.: "we submit the name of Mr. So-and-So, you appoint him". That is the attitude that is being adopted by an organization which can best be described as the 'beer-guzzling' T.U.C. My friend, Mr. Jackson agrees.

Mr. Jackson: I am not closely allied to the industry and organisation to which reference was made by my friend, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello. I have, however, listened to the comments and observations made by all the speakers, and I am indeed surprised to hear the first Chairman of one of the Wages Councils express the view that an independent member of a Committee would have the right to take action of one kind or another. His knowledge of the movement is not disputed, for at one time he was the Secretary of the T.U.C., but he has long been deprived of the privilege of serving the movement for one reason or another and, perhaps, that is the reason for his not keeping abreast of what happens in the world today.

Wherever there is a dispute which has to be referred to an impartial body, it is only the persons concerned with the dispute who move one way or the other. That is a pattern, not tradition. When you appoint a Committee to break a deadlock, the Committee sits as an impartial body of men prepared to assess and judge and to arrive at decisions which are perfect and which would meet the satisfaction of both sides. It happens in every part of the world and in British Guiana where a dispute has arisen between employer and employee. It is for that reason that Government has set up an Arbitration Committee so that the breach between the two points can be

narrowed down to the satisfaction of both sides. I believe the advice given to the hon. Member, who is Chairman of the Committee, is quite desirable and sound, and I wish that in spite of the views which have been expressed he will reconsider his own attitude in that respect.

I do not propose to deal with the reference to advertisements in the newspapers, because I agree with my colleague, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, that the two things bear no relation whatsoever, and I agree with him that it should not be brought into this matter. To introduce that aspect into a Committee appointed in connection with the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union shows that the Member concerned is not dealing directly with the matter before him. I am sure that by now he realizes that that point ought not to have been brought into this debate. Government perhaps has the right to appoint to a Committee those whom it wishes, but when it attempts to ask an organization to submit a panel of names I think it is robbing the organization of the right to choose the person who it thinks should sit on the particular Committee. If the Trades Union Council is irresponsible then I belong to an organization which behaves irresponsibly.

Mr. Ram Karran: In the case I referred to, it was a Committee appointed by the Government to investigate a certain matter.

Mr. Jackson: Whether it is investigating Y or Z it does not alter the principle to which I am referring. I belong to an organization which has refused to submit more than one name to serve on any Committee.

It is not for an employer or the Government to say "You have sent me six names and I consider Mr. X is better suited than Mr. Z." It is a matter of expert knowledge, and I disagree with the Minister of Communications and Works in that respect.

With regard to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee I am not *au fait* with the situation, but I say that the person who has been appointed in the place of the Commissioner of Labour has not the foggiest idea of the welfare of anybody. I make that statement publicly. I concede that he has knowledge of finance as he has been working in the Treasury for a long time, and that he knows about collecting rents and how to overcome difficulties of a financial nature, but I challenge anyone to prove that he can look after the welfare of "Mr. X" or "Mr. Y"—not even a child of mine. Welfare problems are human problems with which we are not all capable to deal. Some people reach high positions but they lack human feeling. I have no quarrel with the Government about changing any member, but if the Committee is to attend to the welfare of workers then the gentleman who has been appointed in the place of the Commissioner of Labour cannot serve the purpose. If the purpose of the Committee is to look after the welfare of workers then for Heaven's sake put people on the Committee who have the ability to deal with human problems.

Mr. Ram Karran: It is true that the Committee is called the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee, but I have been sufficiently long in the Trade Union Movement to know what are the functions of the Committee. To say that it is a welfare organization is as inaccurate as most of the things which have been said this afternoon. The functions of the Committee, which comprises a Chairman appointed by Government, and representatives of the sugar industry and the workers' union, are to build houses for sugar workers, mainly in the extra nuclear areas, and to assist workers in the villages who are engaged in the sugar industry. In addition the Committee has expended a considerable amount of money in the establishment of welfare and community centres.

As far as I know — and I frequent the countryside more often than either

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the hon. Member who has spoken for the T.U.C., or the hon. Member for Georgetown North — I can assure them that those community centres seem to scare away the workers more than anything else. It is not a welfare organization how — the name got into it I do not know.

I understand that the new Chairman of the Committee is knowledgeable in financial matters. He has one short-coming, unfortunately, in that he does not know anything about Italian marble.

Mr. Ajodha Singh: The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, said that all members of the P.P.P. were opposed to the setting up of the nuclear housing scheme.

Mr. Tello: I said "some members".

Mr. Ajodha Singh: Some members were opposed to the nuclear housing scheme. I would like to point out to the hon. Member that what we really said in those days was not that we were opposed to the scheme, but that the lease which the workers had to enter into did not permit a worker to allow even his brother to occupy a part of his house. The lease also did not permit a worker to keep sheep and goats on the land, or build a stable for his donkey.

Apart from that I wish to point out that a worker is asked to pay too much for his lot of land which is rented from Government at 20 cents per acre by the Committee who charged the workers \$2.88 for one-eighth of an acre. It is not true to say that we were opposed to the establishment of the housing scheme, and to say that the sugar workers are proud of the work done by the Committee is not true. I live about a mile from a sugar estate and I know of people who could not pay their instalments and were turned out of their houses. Many of them wanted money to make additions to their houses but could not get it. The people are not at all satisfied, as stated by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello.

Mr. Burnham: It is perhaps mere coincidence that immediately after the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Ajodha Singh) has spoken I should get up, not to enter into the controversy as to the usefulness or otherwise of the extra nuclear housing scheme, or as to whether the P.P.P. is opposed to that scheme or not, but to make a comment on what I consider a most unfortunate remark by the Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran) who referred to the Trades Union Council as the "beer-guzzling T.U.C.". I would like to observe this, Sir, that in this Council I, for my part, have no objection to any such epithets or descriptions of me or the Party which I am in, but I think it is both wrong and unfair, and an abuse of position, to refer to an organization like the Trades Union Council as "beer-guzzling". The fact may be that T.U.C. members there are who guzzle beer, but from the mere fact that P.P.P. members guzzle beer is no reason for me to call the P.P.P. "beer-guzzling". But the T.U.C. is not represented here.

I am a bit surprised that the hon. Minister should have allowed his enthusiasm to run away with him so obviously. As I said before with respect to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, I am not going into philosophies. I feel we should not attack an Organization not represented here.

Mr. Ram Karran: I merely rise to congratulate the hon. Member and to ask that his advice be taken into consideration when he speaks. I am sure the hon. Member for Georgetown North—I see him smiling—would agree.

Mr. Burnham: The hon. Minister need not seek to have me take my own advice—it would be carrying coals to Newcastle.

Mr. Jackson: I would not be agreeing with the Minister for speaking that way of the T.U.C. He referred to me particularly because he knows of the differ-

ences existing between the Post Office workers and the T.U.C.

I do not know what is all the talk about Italian marble. It is true that I have been to Italy and spent some time there. Perhaps he will give me some information. The fact that the Committee is called a Welfare Committee, and the fact that it erects community centres in various places for the social development of the people, suggests that it deals with welfare of the people, but the person now appointed to be Chairman has no idea at all of the welfare of the human being.

The Chairman: You have said that many times. I was just about to put the Motion.

Mr. Tello: I propose to withdraw my Motion. But I would first like to say that I should have thought that the hon. Minister was more well-informed. The Labour Welfare Fund answered an urgent need for people's housing. It started with housing, then looked after recreation, and subsequently it will go into the field of welfare. Concerning health matters, what was written in the Agreement was written on the authority of the people who could best speak on health matters. I simply introduced this matter in order to place on record our feelings.

Finally, in answer to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, I would inform him that the recommendation that an independent member of a Wages Council should be acceptable to both sides comes from the I.L.O.

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan): I prefer to listen to all that Members have to say rather than bob up and down. I have heard the remarks of the hon. Member for Georgetown North on the ability of the present Chairman of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee. I cannot agree with his views. I have had long association with the gentleman, and I feel

he will be able to do the job properly, and that the work of the Fund will perhaps be improved.

It cannot be denied that the Committee handles millions of dollars; therefore its schemes must be carefully examined, expenditure and control of funds watched and its affairs administered by persons who have an idea of the world and the use of money. It is a highly financial operation to deal with millions of dollars. Loans have to be given out and care taken to see that buildings are put up properly and that money is not wasted on them.

This same gentleman has done first-class work in cleaning up one of the Government Departments in this country. It is true that he has no degrees in sociology or had courses in social welfare, but the pattern of the Labour Welfare Fund is to remove sugar workers from mud huts to decent homes — to places where they can live and raise their families in a better health pattern. Housing schemes must have running water, roads and all that. Community centres and other amenities must be present. The Fund has established a pattern. Its job now is to bring housing schemes up to date, improve water supply, drainage and roads, continue giving loans to those who need them and additional loans to those who wish to repair or extend their houses. It has reached a stage where careful expenditure is necessary — spending money at the disposal of the Fund on first things first and not on a \$100,000 office building, which I disagree with wholeheartedly. We hope that the money will be well spent and that the persons sitting on the Committee will be ever watchful of the welfare of the workers.

Hon. Members have got into a stew pot on this question of Wages Councils. It is a pot which has been boiling for sometime. The B.G.T.U.C. out of a clear blue sky, after the Wages Council had been established for eight months, got it into their heads that Government had forced the Wages Council down the

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throats of the workers, and that it was wrong for legislators to be sitting on the Council. Those very persons had been sitting on the Council and functioning well before the T.U.C. got the bright idea that here was something to shoot the present Government with.

So they went about it in their usual manner — I do not like to use the word 'irresponsible' — and the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing had to publish a correction stating that the information issued by the T.U.C. on the Wages Council matter, particularly to their international affiliate, on the recent strike was wrong. They advised their affiliate that this Government forced the Wages Council on the trade unions, and when the facts were revealed this Government had to write to the international body quoting chapter and verse how the T.U.C. not only requested the establishment of Wages Councils, but insisted in two or three letters that Government must establish them. The unions affiliated to the T.U.C. must have been quite astounded to hear it said on their behalf that Government had forced them into Wages Councils—

Mr. Tello: The T.U.C. never informed any international body that the Wages Council was forced on the Unions, neither did it inform anybody else that this was so. It reported to the international body that for the first time in the British Commonwealth legislators were appointed to Wages Council.

Mrs. Jagan: Well, I am so glad that the T.U.C. did not inform the I.C.F.T.U., but anyway the Minister and the Ministry had to defend themselves. Even the T.U.C. felt a bit embarrassed that these individuals should have issued such a statement. But we were all aware that the hon. Member was in Brazil. Perhaps he did not advise the I.C.F.T.U. I am not accusing the I.C.F.T.U.

I recall the hon. Member saying that the Government did not use the Whitley Council. Was it not yesterday that one

hon. Member on this side of the Table referred to the fact that the T.U.C. had accepted substantial sums from an employers' organisation in British Guiana, to wit, \$1,000 from Bookers and \$1,000 from the Demerara Bauxite Company? One hon. Member on that side of the Table said that there is nothing wrong with that, for even in England the T.U.C. received such things. We know that is not true. I have had the information from someone who has said it is quite reprehensible; that no responsible or decent trade union in England would ever accept money from the organization with which they had to negotiate. And I must thank one of the hon. Members on the other side of the Table because we would not have known of the \$2,000, as there was no list published of donations made for this trip. We have to thank the hon. Member for exposing to the public of British Guiana that \$1,000 was given by Bookers and \$1,000 by the Demerara Bauxite Company.

Mr. Tello : I said that it was public.

The Chairman: I think we have gone past the time. Perhaps the hon. Minister may continue tonight.

Mrs. Jagan: Sir, I think I have said enough.

Mr. Tello: If you are not going to allow another speaker, I will, with your permission Mr. Chairman, withdraw the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 21—Labour—be carried out at \$181,084.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

LANDS AND MINES

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 22—Lands and Mines—be carried out at \$432,760.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

Council resumed.

The Speaker: I shall suspend the sitting until eight o'clock tonight, and I shall be glad if we shall have a quorum at eight o'clock and not later.

The sitting was suspended at 5.08 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Council resumed at 8 p.m., and resolved itself into Committee.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman: We had, when the sitting was suspended, completed Head 22 — Lands and Mines. The next item is Head 23 — Land Development. The question is, that Head 23 — Land Development — be carried out at \$680,283.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

LAW OFFICERS

The Chairman: The question is, that 24 — Law Officers — be carried out at \$105,408.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 25 — Local Government — be carried out at \$334,905.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT—SOCIAL WELFARE

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 25A — Local Government — Social Welfare — be carried out at \$105,493.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — PROBATION SERVICE

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 25B — Local Government — Probation Service — be carried out at \$59,032.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MAGISTRATES

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 26 — Magistrates — be carried out at \$333,937.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MEDICAL

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 27 — Medical — be carried out at \$1,256,285.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MEDICAL—BACTERIOLOGICAL

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 27A — Medical — Bacteriological — be carried out at \$196,964.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MEDICAL—X-RAY

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 27B — Medical — X-Ray — be carried out at \$101,559.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MEDICAL — HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 27C — Hospitals and Dispensaries—be carried out at \$4,443,915.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 28—Ministry of Communications and Works — be carried out at \$48,750.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR, HEALTH AND HOUSING

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 29 — Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing—be carried out at \$41,897.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 30 — Ministry of Natural Resources—be carried out at \$55,312.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 31 — Ministry of Trade and Industry — be carried out at \$106,834.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 32 — Miscellaneous — be carried out at \$2,043,108.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

MISCELLANEOUS — SUBVENTIONS, ETC., MUNICIPAL

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 33—Miscellaneous—Subventions, etc., Municipal—be carried out at \$423,225.

MISCELLANEOUS— SUBVENTIONS OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 34—Miscellaneous—Subventions other than Municipal—be carried out at \$1,323,145.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

OFFICIAL RECEIVER

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 35—Official Receiver — be carried out at \$25,342.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 36—Pensions and Gratuities—be carried out at \$508,929.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

POLICE

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 37—Police—be carried out at \$3,473,833.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

POST OFFICE

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 38—Post Office—be carried out at \$1,322,817.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

POST OFFICE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS' BRANCH

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 39—Post Office Telecommunications and Electrical Inspectors' Branch—be carried out at \$931,713.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 40—Post Office Savings Bank—be carried out at \$60,431.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PRISONS

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 41—Prisons—be carried out at \$496,276.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PUBLIC DEBT

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 42—Public Debt—be carried out at \$2,849,778.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 43—Public Service Commission—be carried out at \$38,572.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 44—Public Works Department—be carried out at \$1,203,483.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT — ANNUALLY RECURRENT

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 44A—Public Works Department—Annually Recurrent—be carried out at \$3,601,350.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

REGISTRATION—BIRTHS, ETC.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 45—Registration—Births, etc.—be carried out at \$64,417.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

REGISTRATION—BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 45A—Registration, Births, Deaths and Marriages—be carried out at \$28,670.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 46—Social Assistance—be carried out at \$1,860,426.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

SUPREME COURT AND DEEDS REGISTRY

Mr. Burnham: I move a reduction of Head 47 by \$1 in order to make two observations, the first of which is routine. As far as I understand from Chapter 7, the Supreme Court Ordinance, a Puisne Judge earns \$9,600 per annum, but when I divide the total provision in the Estimate I cannot get the sum of \$9,600. I think the total provision should be \$57,600 instead of \$56,000, unless it is proposed to employ another Judge some time later in the year.

My second observation is that six Puisne Judges seem to be insufficient to get rid of the accumulation of work which has to be dealt with by the Judges of the Supreme Court. There is an impression abroad that when you divide the number of inhabitants in the United Kingdom by the number of Judges in that country you get a higher proportion than when you carry out the same exercise in British Guiana. That is so, but in British Guiana, as many people who are familiar with the Courts will know, the Judges carry out duties not merely as Judges but as Recorders, County Court Judges, Registrars,

Masters in Chambers, and even the duties of Quarter Session Justices when one considers the type of cases they have to try, and they also carry out the duties of Commissioners of Divorce. Therefore it is not a valid comparison between the number of Judges in the United Kingdom *per capita*, and the number of Judges in British Guiana *per capita*.

I am rather inclined to the view that an additional two instead of an additional one Judge would have been able to take care of the arrears and the amount of work to be dealt with in the Supreme Court. From my observation it is not that the Judges do not work; I think they work too hard as individuals, especially as Judges, because when Judges have to work from Monday to Saturday one can see how much extra work they must have if they are to give proper decisions and do a certain amount of research. I was wondering whether it is not possible to prevail upon Government to appoint seven Puisne Judges instead of six. I know that a Judge's stipend is rather high, but we should not quibble over an extra \$9,600 per annum in a budget of \$50 million.

May I *en passant* make another observation — that I do not doubt that the hon. Attorney-General will be bringing forward an amendment of Ordinance No. 23 of 1955 which limits the number of Judges to five.

The Attorney-General: The Government is concerned at the arrears of work in the Supreme Court, and indeed there are arrears of work in the Magistrate's Courts as well. Everyone knows that justice delayed is justice denied, and so far as the lower Courts are concerned, unless the list of cases can be dealt with sufficiently quickly, or there is a reasonably early hearing, there is something wrong. I have been concerned for a long time that some cases take months to be heard.

So far as the Supreme Court is concerned I think everyone is aware that

the Judges work very hard indeed and take great pains to do their best to stem the tide of arrears. The Government acknowledges this position by proposing an increase in the Judiciary by one Judge this year. I think that this increase must be considered not just an increase of one-fifth of the strength of the Judiciary, but something of the order of 30 per cent., because the existing Judges will no longer have to undertake the considerable amount of appellate work which has hitherto fallen to them, because in future this will be undertaken by the Federal Supreme Court which, within the last few weeks, has been granted jurisdiction to hear appeals in criminal cases from the Supreme Court. This function was carried out by the Court of Criminal Appeal which was composed of three Judges who sat once a fortnight to deal with cases. So that the time that those Judges have up to now consumed in dealing with those criminal cases will now be free to them to deal with cases at first instance.

That is not the whole of the problem, and I think the matter must be seen from the viewpoint of the current state of affairs and indeed the current value of money. The jurisdiction of the Magistrates gets smaller and smaller with the decreasing value of money, for so far as their civil jurisdiction is concerned it is ordinarily \$250. When that figure was fixed it was quite a lot of money, obviously worth twice as much as now, but with the passage of time it has got less and less, and anything outside that limit has had to go to the Supreme Court. I think it is generally recognised that there is a need for the jurisdiction of Magistrates to be increased, which will have the effect, so far as civil matters are concerned, of creaming off a certain amount of work that now finds its way to the Supreme Court, and which in point of fact does not justify the lengthy procedure that the Supreme Court demands for the type of case that is intended to go there.

There is also possibly a case for increasing the jurisdiction of Magistrates

in their criminal jurisdiction. I feel — and I know I am not alone in this — that a number of the more superficial cases that now go to the Supreme Court, such as escape from lawful custody, uttering of counterfeit money, and simple break and enter cases can well be dealt with in a Court of summary jurisdiction, provided it is presided over by an experienced Magistrate. While the retiring Chief Justice was here I discussed the matter with him and he agreed that it would be of advantage to examine and review the jurisdiction of the Courts with a view to bringing them more into line with current requirements. The effect would be that the strain put on the Judges of the Supreme Court by having to hear, as they do at present, the large number of cases which get there without real justification would be relieved.

This question is much in the mind of the Government and I hope that it will not be too long before an examination of this problem will be undertaken with profitable results. The effect, therefore, will be that these six Judges will represent a much larger increase in the Judge power of the Supreme Court than just the cold figures suggest. They will be saved work in the criminal and appellate jurisdiction, and they will, we hope, be saved doing work on cases which really do not justify being taken to the Supreme Court.

Therefore, Sir, I say that the Government recognizes, indeed welcomes, the observations made by the hon. Member for Georgetown North, takes a note of it, and hopes that by this time next year Government will be able to show a substantial increase in the effective strength of the Judiciary.

As far as the first point he made is concerned, the vote for six judges, the figure of \$56,000 would be inadequate if the sixth judge is appointed on the 1st of January.

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Chairman, as much as I appreciate many of the

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answers given by the Attorney-General, I am greatly concerned at the fact that he is looking at the future as far as we can see. We are looking at the present. We hear him adumbrate plans for the civil and criminal jurisdiction and the Magistracy, and we have no idea when they are to be effective. From my experience of this Government I am positive that these things will happen towards the end of the life of the next Legislature. So unless he can give us the firm undertaking — I am not asking for days and hours — when this new legislation will be ready, his answers become unsatisfactory, because last year over 1,200 civil cases were filed and there is no reason to believe that there will be a smaller number filed this year; and right now there are four judges sitting in the Assizes.

Then the Chief Justice has a great deal of administrative work to do. The consequence is that when Saturday morning is fixed for Chamber matters the judges are really a number of tired human beings, who within a few hours have to dispose of several summonses, and as a result summonses involving nice points of law cannot be dealt with on a Saturday morning. And during the week they cannot do them. So this is a case of where the horse is starving while the grass is growing. Unless we can be told that it will be done in the next month or two — the backlog is there — it is bound to affect the quality of judgments.

The Attorney-General raised the interesting question — “Well, they may not be appointed for some time”. We have had a marathon acting period of five years remedied 21 days ago. Now we have another marathon — a Judge acting for four years. If I know this Government, when the Attorney-General says, “Well, maybe some time,” that can be another four or five years before a permanent appointment is made. I think there is the material for the immediate appointment of a judge.

And as I am on my legs, I want to refer to the iniquitous system of judges acting for such long periods, which does no good to the individual and does no good to their dispensing of justice. I have no doubt that it will be said that judicial patronage is in the hands of Her Majesty the Queen — it is Her Majesty’s Judiciary — and in answer to that I will say this: patronage is a mere formality, and I will not be persuaded that if the proper authorities in British Guiana take steps to see that this anomalous system comes to an end, it would come to an end.

The Attorney-General: Sir, the hon. Member always seeks to impute that this Government’s basic characteristic is to try to evade a good cause. When the hon. Member —

Mr. Burnham: May I make a personal explanation. I am not imputing basic characteristics: I am imputing the sloth of the mills of the gods.

The Attorney-General: When on rare occasions the hon. Member makes a good point, I am not afraid to acknowledge to it or to admit a mistake. If you are wrong, you are wrong, and if you try to get out of a situation where it is transparent that you have no case, it will only make matters worse in the end. The Government is aware of the undesirability of long acting appointments. Recent cases are not a matter about which anybody should be proud, and we hope that the experience which has been sadly gained will not be repeated. But I suppose the hon. Member will at such length and with such eloquence deal with this matter in this Chamber because he feels that those who sent him here expect him to say this sort of thing. It is best, however, to make these points in the appropriate forum.

The Law Revision Committee appointed just a year ago was set up for this very reason, among others: that any matter which it was felt should be referred to the authorities should be re-

ferred to it as the most appropriate authority. It is important to realize that the dispensing of justice should take into account not only the laws themselves but the machinery of justice, and these matters should be referred to those who are most concerned — the Chief Justice, the Law Officers and senior Practitioners who comprise the Law Reform Committee. They can advise the Government.

Now the hon. Member is a distinguished member of the Bar, and he should realize that it is the duty of the Bar Association to bring these matters to the attention of the most appropriate authority. I willingly take note of what the hon. Member has said, but I suggest that he remembers that if the right barrel fails to kill the bird, the left may serve the desired end. These representations could well be made also to the forum prescribed for them.

Mr. Burnham: I have always appreciated the hon. the Attorney-General's willingness to admit when he is wrong, when he thinks he is wrong— but it is not often. But I cannot see how the Law Revision Committee can be the proper forum for a matter like this.

His colleague, the hon. Minister of Education would agree with me, were it not for the question of joint responsibility, that that is not the place for it.

We would argue that no longer. I am just saying that they will go very slowly. I asked the Attorney-General when he will introduce the legislation that will relieve the Supreme Court of a lot of work. He spoke, charmingly, and "answer came there none." I asked when Ordinance No. 23 of 1955 will be amended, but "answer came there none". I tried to get from him when this sixth Judge will be appointed; "answer came there none". I am reminded of the trial of Our Lord Jesus Christ — "and He openeth not his mouth."

The Attorney-General: I hope that the Acting Chief Justice will be able to start a more appropriate procedure in dealing with this matter, besides presiding over the Working Party. It is of course primarily a matter for the Chief Justice, and not for the Attorney-General. Some attention had been given to it by the previous Chief Justice. He was favourably disposed towards the whole idea, but towards the end of his tour he was not able to give his time to preside over this Working Party; I hope the Acting Chief Justice will be able to see his way to do so.

The hon. Member knows as well as I do that those matters take time, and they have to be carefully studied because if you increase the jurisdiction of magistrates from \$250 to \$500 or \$750, there are usually consequential amendments to be made as well. A Bill will have to be drafted, and so on. I personally have this matter very much at heart, and I will try to get the legislation through as early as possible.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I do wish to say a few words in this matter. We do need an extra Judge. Six Judges are not enough. We want a Judge to sit permanently in Chambers; we want a Judge for short causes. Maybe if an additional Judge is appointed to assist in clearing this backlog in the Registry, perhaps in a year or two it might be got rid of. I feel we should make an effort to have an additional Judge. Of course, the question of space will have to be considered. The removal of the Lands and Mines Department from the Supreme Court building was a matter which has been under consideration for a long time. There have been cases six, seven, eight, nine and ten years old — I see the hon. the Attorney-General taken back on this — and I feel that those concerned will be well advised to do something about the matter.

Mr. Burnham: I ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is, that head 47— Supreme Court and Deeds Registry — be carried out at \$318,491.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Burnham: I move the reduction of this Head by \$1. Last year when these estimates were being considered — estimates for the Transport and Harbours Department—I asked the question about the young Guianese who, I understand, is the best qualified man in British Guiana so far as transport traffic is concerned. He has got the highest credentials — the highest certificates — and yet this young man is punishing down the line when a person less qualified than he is holding the post of Traffic Manager. If we are going to have young Guianese taking the trouble to qualify, with the very best results, and have them just to see people going on board at Vreed-en-Hoop or Georgetown, where are we getting? I shall like to hear from the Government how much longer they will allow these things to continue to happen?

Mr. Ram Karran: I think I know the officer referred to by the hon. Member, but I think, too, that he returned to British Guiana at a time when the substantive post of Traffic Manager was already filled. I would like to ask the hon. Member if he would like us to appoint two Traffic Managers, and next year he will tell us: 'You have two Traffic Managers'. I think the hon. Member, who keeps on talking about Guianization, must first try to convince his colleagues.

Mr. Burnham: It is a sad thing when one gets so much less sense or so much more nonsense from the official side of the Government as time goes on. Here we are discussing a serious matter and I am being asked to proselytize at this stage. The hon. Minister of Communications and Works, whom I have described as 'the hon. Member of Wit and Humour', has told us that this young man returned here when the substantive post of Traffic Manager was already filled. There are two points: In the first place, Government was aware of the fact that this young man was undergoing training.

I do not know if it is this Government or the previous Government. This Government or the previous Government, whichever Government was responsible for the appointment of the present Traffic Manager, ought to have known and did, in fact, know that there was a Guianese away being trained — a Guianese who showed great promise. That is half of the picture. When the General Manager of the Transport and Harbours Department was on leave, the substantive holder of the post acted as General Manager and also carried out the duties of Traffic Manager. In other words, this Guianese was treated so shabbily. It is all right for some to be facetious.

Mr. Jackson: My friend, the hon. Minister of Communications and Works, had been trying to get this point over now for the past 24 hours. Since last night he tried and failed, and he thought this is one of the chances he could have. Since he has introduced this point, I can say that several of his colleagues have been going around the country with ideas against Guianization in practice and principle. If there was a statement which does not carry any truth, that is one.

I have said both here and elsewhere that Guianization is something which I have long accepted — long before he and his colleagues ever thought about Guianization either in principle or in

practice. But I am one who believes that mere Guianization is not enough, and until I am satisfied it is so, I shall say 'where all things are equal, a Guianese, yes, but where all things are not equal, I shall say, no'; so what he has said does not affect me — unless he is playing to the gallery. I have repeated that wherever there is to be an appointment, if a Guianese is there and he is fit for the post, I shall support him. If he is not, I shall not support him.

Mr. Ram Karran: I shall not want to remind my friend of past issues on the question of Guianization. I have, fortunately or unfortunately, been associated with him for some time and the question of Guianization is one which has cropped up over the past year; but, so far as playing to the gallery is concerned, I shall ask him to refer to the records and see who had been playing to the gallery.

Mr. Burnham: Now the Minister is going to indulge in the chit-chat about 'playing to the gallery'. Why not appoint this man? Let not the Minister worry about his 'fortunate' or 'unfortunate' association with the Member. Answer the question.

Mr. Ram Karran: Does not the hon. Member know that Ministers do not have anything to do with appointments and that it is a question for the Public Service Commission?

Mr. Burnham: I know that, but the Minister knows, as well as I do, that if an Elected Minister makes his points of view relating to principle, those views cannot be lightly ignored; so that is why I said: 'Let us get away from this division of power' which gives the opportunity for irresponsibility, because when a Guianese is appointed to a post you hear it was under our regime that so-and-so was appointed, but when there is a slip-up you hear it is not a matter for us, it is for the Public Service Commission. If it is that you have made your points of view and they were

ignored, say so. Do not keep hiding your faces.

Mr. Jackson: The question which was asked was: 'Why was the Traffic Manager allowed to act as General Manager and, at the same time, carry on his substantive duties as Traffic Manager when there was some other person to fill the post ?

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I think I made it clear last night that it is the Chief Secretary and not an elected Minister who should be called to book on the question of Guianization.

The Chief Secretary: On this question of Guianization, the hon. Member has just mentioned the Director of Agriculture. Perhaps I should mention now that your new Commissioner of Police will be a Guianese. (**Members:** "Hear, hear").

Mr. Burnham: The Chief Secretary is telling us what we heard on the radio at 4.15 p.m. today. Let's hear about the Manager of the Traffic Department.

Mr. Davis: I rise to support the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, and in doing so I would like to pay tribute to another young Guianese, whom I did not know before, but who had been away for training and has come back as a mechanical engineer. There was an engine derailed on the East Coast railway at Pln. Carlton Hall and I saw that young man at work on the job. I think he worked about two days continuously, trying to get the engine back on the rails. He did an excellent piece of work, and if that is typical of the standard to which Guianese can attain then I am all the more happy to support the stand taken by the hon. Member.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am grateful for the points made by the hon. Nominated Member, but I was hoping that he would not make the mistake of suggesting that in view of the competence displayed by the officer, which I fully appreciate, he should be immediately appointed

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

Chief Mechanical Engineer and the present holder of the post thrown overboard.

Mr. Tello: I am tired of the evasion myself. I really thought that when the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) reminded the Minister of the acting appointment he would have said that it was an oversight in having one officer carrying the burden of two important offices. In the absence of such an explanation one must come to the conclusion that so long as the present Government remains in office competent Guianese officers will be side-stepped when important acting appointments are to be made. I must come to that conclusion because we cannot get a reply either from the Elected or the Official side of the Government. I am very much interested in an answer to the question: why was that Guianese officer not appointed to act as Traffic Manager when the Traffic Manager had the responsibility of acting as General Manager?

Mr. Campbell: There is a figure which puzzles me in the details of the expenditure of the Transport and Harbours Department. On page 18 of the Estimate there is an item—Cost to the Colony, \$17,810,034.

The Financial Secretary: It does not affect the Appropriation Bill; it is the revised estimate for 1959. One nought should not be there.

Mr. Burnham: I wonder whether the relevant Minister can tell us whether Government has pursued any further the question of converting the annuities paid for the purchase of the Demerara Railway Company.

The Financial Secretary: Yes, Sir. We have been into it very carefully. It was considered by the Crown Agents and myself last year and it was found that it would not be advantageous so to do at present.

Mr. Burnham: I ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

Agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 48—Transport and Harbours Department — be carried out at \$1,800,000.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

VOLUNTEER FORCE

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 49 — Volunteer Force — be carried out at \$114,168.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

LOANS FROM PUBLIC FUNDS

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 50 — Loans from Public Funds — be carried out at \$245,000.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

COMMODITY CONTROL

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 51 — Commodity Control — be carried out at \$96,581.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PUBLIC WORKS — RECURRENT

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 52 — Public Works — Recurrent — be carried out at \$300,000.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

Clause 2.—*Accountant-General to defray expenses of Civil Government.*

The Financial Secretary: I move that Clause 2 be amended by the substitution of the words “forty-five million, one hundred and four thousand, two hundred and fifty-two” for the words “forty-five million, ninety-nine thousand, two hundred and fifty-two” in the fourth and fifth lines.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Preamble.

The Financial Secretary: I think a preamble is useful in this legislation because it is the only place where the amount voted by the Appropriation Bill, plus the provision made by law, is added together. I move that the words “fifty million, four hundred and sixty-two thousand, four hundred and eighteen” be substituted for the words “fifty million, four hundred and fifty-seven thousand, four hundred and eighteen” in the first and second lines of the Preamble, and that the words “forty-five million, one hundred and four thousand, two hundred and fifty-two” be substituted for the words “forty-five million, ninety-nine thousand, two hundred and fifty-two” in the ninth line.

Preamble, as amended, agreed to.

Council resumed.

The Financial Secretary: Sir, as a result of the alterations made to the Estimates in Finance Committee, the Colony's expenditure will be increased by \$5,000, to become the total figure of \$50,462,418. The Revenue is the same as printed in the Estimates, but as a result of the addition of \$5,000 to Expenditure, the estimated surplus of \$1,095,207 will instead be \$1,090,207. I beg to make this report of the change in the Colony's financial position.

I beg to report that the Appropriation Bill has been considered in Com-

mittee with Amendments, and I move that the Bill be now read the Third time.

Dr. Jagan: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time and passed.

DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATES, 1960

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that it be resolved “That this Council approves of the Estimates of Development Expenditure for the year 1960 which have been laid on the Table, with the Amendment recommended in the Report of Finance Committee of the Legislative Council dated 15th January, 1960, totalling Twenty-four Million, Six Hundred and Seventy-nine Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighteen Dollars as detailed by Heads in the undermentioned Schedule and of the projects therein being financed from the Development Fund Ordinance, 1954.

SCHEDULE

Head No.	Head of Estimate	Estimate in 1960
I.	Agriculture	\$1,426,120
II.	Civil Aviation	540,000
III.	Drainage and Irrigation	7,842,600
IV.	Education	1,086,000
V.	Finance (Industry and Credits)	1,500,000
VI.	Geological Surveys	503,019
VII.	Health	306,300
VIII.	Housing	1,239,711
IX.	Lands and Mines	160,000
X.	Land Development	1,661,693
XI.	Post Office	650,000
XII.	Public Works	4,930,000
XIII.	Transport and Harbours	2,019,688
XIV.	Miscellaneous	120,787
XV.	Rural Self Help	150,000
XVI.	Social Welfare	170,000
XVII.	Local Government	120,000
XVIII.	Amerindian Development	208,800
XIX.	Tourism	45,000
		\$24,679,718

Sir, I gave a full description of the financial plan for the 1960 Development Budget in the Budget Statement, and

[THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY]

the Estimates themselves were considered in detail in Finance Committee, the only amendment being purely verbal, and the total figure being the same as printed. I do not wish therefore to waste the time of this Council by reiterating what I said before, and so I beg to move that this Motion be adopted.

The Attorney-General : I beg to second the Motion.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh : I wish to take this opportunity to repeat some of the things I have said in this Council. On the Corentyne Coast \$16 million is being spent on the Black Bush Polder Scheme. Let me warn the Government that the 13-foot-deep canal leading to the ocean is now only 3 feet deep. I am certain of my facts in this matter — I have my connections with the Corentyne. Millions of dollars will go down the drain. People will plant rice in the Black Bush Scheme and not be able to reap it because no water could be let in.

Let there be sufficient warning. If the Government is not aware of it, and the experts have failed to advise them properly, then it is time that advice be taken from people who live in the area and have practical knowledge of these things. If not, it will be a continuous expense to the taxpayers.

The koker has been built about two miles from the ocean, and it is common knowledge what happens in such circumstances. If you go to Enmore you will find the koker built near the sea wall and not over the public road. The same with Uitvlugt. I do not know if it is Messrs. Pauling who are responsible, but whoever are responsible, that is where they have failed.

I come now to the other experts on matters of land. They informed us that we would have 140,000 acres of land for agriculture when the new Boerasirie Scheme, costing \$12,500,000, was com-

pleted. Today the experts are also telling the Government that the lands are useless. To those who say the lands are useless, I would point out that on sugar estates cane is growing on pegasse land. I know that coffee can grow on lands considered useless, and pineapple too. We are called upon to vote money, let us do so wisely, and let the people benefit thereby.

The question of our civil aviation is a sore point with me. Actually we have no airport; one is sited on land loaned to us by the Government of the United States of America, and the terminal building there caught fire the other day and was burnt down. We have to bear in mind that we are talking about tourism and we do not have an international airport which can rank with others abroad. Tourists like flashy things, and they do not want to go into a building that will fall to pieces any minute.

Mr. Tello : I had better take the opportunity now to make some remarks. The emphasis in this Development Programme, I will remind Members, has been placed on agriculture. I heard on a Government Information Services radio programme tonight that the British Guiana Rice Producers' Association has circulated a paper warning rice farmers of the possible fall in the price of rice, and of the repercussions it can have on the rice producers of British Guiana.

Secondly, I heard on that same programme that there is the possibility of a falling off in the demand of the West Indian market. I just heard this evening that quite a sum of money is being spent in Jamaica to reclaim certain lands for the production of rice. I remember the hon. Minister of Natural Resources giving the assurance of the markets for rice, and also the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, who is quite familiar with these things being also Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, assuring us. So I feel we would be quite happy spending \$11 million on agriculture, a great portion of which will be used in the interest of the rice cultivation. How

much truth there is in this G.I.S. programme, I do not know. I did not see the paper which is being circulated and it came as a shock to me having heard in the Council assurance from one who is qualified to speak for the Rice Marketing Board. But this Council is entitled to know something from the Government as to the immediate and long-term future of the rice industry, because whatever we might say, cocoa and all those things must be thought about for the next four or five years.

Actually, for a period of five to six years rice is still going to hold second place in agriculture and third place in the Colony's exports. If this thing is true — I am not a rice producer but I have relatives and friends who are and, naturally, I have become a little alarmed — it is rather peculiar that the rice producers should be informed of this new development with regards to the marketing of rice and this Council, which is asked to vote the money, knows no such thing and has received an assurance which is contrary to that.

I am told that the G.I.S. is not influenced by anybody; it only reproduces facts, and hearing it over such an important programme, I feel that the G.I.S. is just voicing an official statement, and I am informing those hon. Gentlemen who are quite ready to approve a sum of \$11 million, part of which is to be spent in the interest of rice cultivation. My friend, who is an agriculturist, has shown that there is a tremendous amount of land wasting. If you are not certain of your markets and you have the poor peasants putting their life-blood in what they hope will offer them a better standard of living only to find there is no market or inadequate market, then the people will be frustrated. Again, I suppose we will have some explanation from Government, and I think if the explanation is worthwhile we will accept it. But I feel that this Council is slighted in this matter because now we are in the heart of discussing the Budget and yet we can hear from the G.I.S. something which is

not told to Members of this Council. I do not know how much truth there is in it, but it is alarming.

We heard nearly 50% of this \$11 million is to be spent on rice and the balance on other crops. We have heard, also, to have no fear. In reply to the speech of the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, the assurance was given: 'We will look into the matter; we will sell the rice if only we can produce it.' I hope we will get a further assurance here that either I misunderstood what I heard over the air or what was broadcast was not accurate. I am satisfied that this money which is being invested in the productive sector is certainly the correct thing. As I said, you can be in the right church but in the wrong pew.

Before I conclude I must say I am grateful to the hon. Minister of Natural Resources who, at least, came out with the information with regards to land policy. They are following the example set by the previous Government, which has always been accused of doing wrong things. In the case of their land ownership policy this Government propose to follow previous Governments, including the Interim Government in the case of Crown and Colony lands, but as regards other lands: 'We have made up our minds; we have no policy about them though we have made arrangements to adopt the Land Acquisition law; though we have also strengthened ourselves by passing the Land Bonds Bill, but in truth and in fact we have not made up our minds what we are going to do about this land business — whether it will be leasehold or freehold — but in the case of Crown and Colony lands, we would follow the pattern set — leasehold'.

Mr. Benn: To a point of order! I would like to correct the hon. Nominated Member by saying that land acquired by Government would become Colony land.

Mr. Tello: What I am saying now is that you propose to buy freehold land with the taxpayers' money or with bonds

[MR. TELLO]

and then put it in the pool of land that you are going to let to the people by leasehold. You have your Land Acquisition Ordinance. You told us quite clearly that you are going to pursue the policy already set by other Governments — that any Crown or Colony land will be leasehold and nothing else. But you further enlightened us tonight that whatever land is purchased will be put in the pool of Government land to —

Mr. Benn: Colony land!

Mr. Tello: You said this: The only policy you are pursuing now is, in the case of Colony and Crown land, it will be leasehold; and when you purchase land it is going to be Crown land. *(Laughter).*

Sorry, Sir, I got myself mixed up. When you purchase land on behalf of the Colony, once it becomes Colony land it will be subjected to the current policy of leasehold. I know I am being laughed at, but these things do not worry me. I am just a simple voice trying to point out where there is an error or misunderstanding and hon. Members look upon it as a joke and something to laugh at. But I am not the only one. I see organizations writing in the Press that they are worried over Government's land policy. I have been prodding this Government and, at last, we have had it. If I am wrong, I should be pleased if the Minister would correct me and in correcting me, the general public would understand and would stop worrying.

I am again repeating that I would be very grateful for some sort of positive statement of what I heard as regards the future of rice in the West Indian market.

The Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan): The hon. Member for Georgetown South referred to the silting of a section of the drainage canal from the road to the seashore, and he is quite right in saying that there has been a great deal of silting. Now, I want him to be assured that the Government is fully aware of this position. Indeed, when

this matter was brought to our attention several months ago before the bridge was constructed I, personally, took this matter up with the Director of Drainage and Irrigation. He told me that this matter was brought to the attention of the consultants and the consultants felt that in due course, when the whole scheme was functioning, this thing would function adequately and everything would be all right. In addition, this fact was also disclosed: If what was requested was done early — that is, a koker on the seashore — it would involve additional expenditure. In other words, a koker would have to be built on the seashore and a bridge would have to be built across the road — a first-class bridge. And so it was felt, on the consultants' advice, that the bridge on the roadside and the koker should be combined, and if the worse came to the worse, then possibly at the end another koker would be built by the seashore.

So I want to assure the hon. Member that this matter was taken up personally by me months ago, before the present Minister of Natural Resources took over, and on the complaint of the farmers in the area who felt, from their local knowledge and experience, that it was not going to work. However, we were assured that it would work, and let us hope it will. Even if it does not work, my information is that it would not have cost a tremendous lot more to put that structure on the roadside. The alternative was to build one bridge just as strong as the one there now, and a koker at the seashore, which would have cost a quarter of a million dollars. That is why it was done.

With regard to the observations made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, about our rice markets in the West Indies, it is not true to say that West Indians are going to eat less rice in the future. There is every indication that the consumption of rice in the West Indies can be increased to a tremendous extent. In fact, when one compares the consumption of rice in the West Indies with that in the Far East one finds that

the average *per capita* consumption is very small indeed, and that there is much room for expansion.

This may involve a sales campaign, but it must be remembered that for many years British Guiana could not meet the requirements of the West Indies, and for that reason the Rice Marketing Board did not engage in any campaign to increase sales of rice in the West Indies market. In fact the Board did not explore possible markets like the French West Indies, Martinique and Guadeloupe, the Dutch West Indies, Curacao and Aruba, and indeed the Venezuelan market. This year we were not in a position to sell or to offer rice or padi to Venezuela because we did not have enough to offer. The Board took the line that it would prefer to wait until the Spring crop.

So that the hon Member need not be so afraid about the position of rice in the markets of the world. Our information is that with the increasing population throughout the world, economists and food experts all over are becoming tremendously worried about the rate of population growth. The hon. Member himself must know this: that food reserves are not growing as fast as the world population is increasing. Certain countries have large surpluses, like the United States, but that does not mean that there is going to be a surplus of food throughout the world. Consumption standards are very low, particularly in Asian and African countries, and many people will die of famine. So that we need not be too worried. Rice is a staple crop which is consumed by millions of people all over the world. The question is whether they have the money to buy it.

As regards prices I feel sure that British Guiana will be able to sell its rice. It may be that in trying to sell our rice we will have to drop our prices because we may have to go farther afield. And that is why the Rice Producers' Association has been calling on the farmers to improve their methods of cultivation; to use fertilizers and improved techniques, improved strain and so on. The point

which we are trying to get established—the provision of better drainage and irrigation facilities and more lands — will help to improve the economic position of the farmer, so that he will be able to offer his rice at a little less. At the moment, because he is subject to floods and drought, the farmer's return is very small, therefore he has to get as much as possible for his rice. If he was getting twice as much or 1½ times from the same acreage he could afford to sell his rice at a lower price. If he had a larger acreage of land, which we are aiming at, instead of scratching five acres with his hands and oxen; if he was able to sit on a tractor and plough 25 or 50 acres of land, his cost of production would be reduced and he would be in a better competitive position with other producers of rice.

The hon. Member need not be worried about our trying to bring more land under rice cultivation. The mere fact of trying to increase production is an assurance that the rice farmer will be able to compete with other producers. We must not forget that the people who are producing rice in the Far East will not be content to work for 36 and 48 cents per day. They are also aspiring to a higher standard of living, and they will use their products to get better prices. Let us not be too worried about the future. Government is attempting to diversify the economy of this country. We are offering crop bonuses for cocoa with the sole aim of diverting some of these lands to those projects which the farmers do not want to take up because they are long-term crops which do not bring immediate returns. But if provision is made for long-term loans and crop bonuses the farmers will find it profitable to go in for those other crops.

I want to assure the hon. Member that we are quite aware of the fact that we do not want our agricultural economy to be confined principally to two crops — sugar and rice. I also want to assure him that British Guiana's rice production is infinitesimal compared with world production, and we should not be too wor-

[DR. JAGAN]

ried about rice markets. Right here in Latin America we can sell more rice.

Mr. Davis: I am glad to see the Minister of Trade and Industry back and in such good form. I am also glad to see that he has such a thorough grasp of the rice situation. For over a year I have been trying to have a Motion brought before the Council with regard to the establishment of a Stabilization Fund. I think we will one day be made to regret our tardiness in approaching the matter. I think we shall also have to streamline our milling of produce, and the sooner we face up to that necessity, the better.

I would like to draw attention to Head XVI — Social Welfare — under which it is proposed to spend \$100,000 this year out of a total allocation of \$300,000 for the erection of a new Prison. I have recently had an opportunity of hearing a discussion on the subject by people qualified to do so. I refer to the Official Visitors to the Prisons, and according to their reports on conditions at our prisons the situation can only be described as being alarming. They say that prisoners live under sub-human conditions; that the prisons are grossly overpopulated, and that young offenders are seriously affected by the contacts they make in prison. It is for this reason that I am asking the Minister of Community Development and Education to try to persuade Government to give this particular phase of development early priority. Perhaps if he could see his way to release a statement on what is proposed to be done, I think the public would be satisfied that something is being done.

Mr. Rai: There is provision in the Development Estimates for the expenditure this year of \$100,000 towards the building of a new Georgetown Prison. It has been already stated in Finance Committee that negotiations are on foot for the acquisition of a site for the new prison, which will not be in Georgetown, but not too far away from the City. There

has been opposition by people to having a prison beside their property, but we hope in a very short time to clear the site and start building operations.

It is true that the Georgetown Prison does not afford ideal conditions for prisoners, but I have visited all the prisons in this country and I am satisfied that prisoners are not being kept under sub-human conditions. I am personally satisfied on that point. In addition there are Visiting Committees attached to the prisons. Visiting Committees are free to interview prisoners by themselves or in the presence of prison officers, and these complaints could have been directed through the Superintendent to me. I wish to assure the hon. Member that the Visiting Committees are serving a useful purpose.

Prisoners in New Amsterdam and Mazaruni are made to do as much outdoor work as possible, like farming and other creative activities. Visiting Committees can make reports to me, but I have not been receiving any adverse reports.

There is now provision for the detention of young offenders at Sibley Hall, Mazaruni. Those between the ages of 16 to 21 are to be housed at an industrial centre, but we will not be able to start this until the latter part of the Development Programme has been reached. I am sure my hon. Friend will be satisfied with these explanations.

Mr. Davis: Thank you, Sir.

The Financial Secretary: I think that all the main points have been replied to already, and I will not therefore exercise my right of reply.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Secretary: I beg to move that Council do now adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock.

Agreed to.

Council adjourned accordingly, at 10.05 p.m.