

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 22nd March, 1946.

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

PRESENT

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

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

The Hon. the Attorney General (Acting), Mr. F. W. Holder.

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

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

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

The Hon. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. J. I. deAguiar (Central Demerara).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River)

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated)

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated)

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

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

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 21st March, 1946, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY

FACTORIES BILL.

Mr. EDUN asked and the COLONIAL SECRETARY laid over replies to the following questions:—

Q. 1—How long is it since the Factories Bill Committee has submitted its report to Government?

A. 1—The Report of the Committee on Factories was submitted to Government on the 16th of March, 1944.

Q. 2—Will Government state what is its intention regarding this draft legislation, and how soon is it expected to submit the Bill to the Legislative Council?

A. 2—A draft Bill to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee has been prepared, and it is hoped to introduce it into Legislative Council shortly.

SPIRIT SHOP HOURS

Q. 3—How long is it since the Spirit Shop Hours Committee has submitted its majority report to Government?

A. 3—The majority report of the Spirit Shop Hours Committee was received by Government on the 21st December, 1945. The minority report was received on the 3rd of January.

Q. 4—What is the reason for Government's action in not carrying out the recommendations of the majority report?

A. 4—The reports, which deal with an extremely complex matter, have had to be very carefully examined and considered by the various Departments of Government concerned, and this has necessarily taken some time. The reports will be presented to the Legislative Council as soon as possible.

LEAVE PASSAGES REGULATIONS.

The Council resumed the debate on the following motion:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 16 dated 22nd January, 1946, this Council approves of the introduction of Leave Passages Regulations as indicated in the Message, and undertakes to provide the necessary funds to give effect thereto.

The PRESIDENT: I was very glad to hear the considerable degree of agreement on the principle of this matter of officers taking leave outside the Colony, and particularly in Europe or North America. I had rather thought that there was a very considerable degree of opposition to this principle. Had I realised how much it was appreciated by Members of this Council, I need not perhaps have had to argue the matter so vigorously as I did on Thursday.

The proposal of the Deputy President, moreover, was precisely what I have had in mind myself as an appropriate action, and I had been ready to propose it myself if useful in the light

of the debate on the precise motion. I have therefore, instructed the Colonial Secretary to accept it, and we will proceed accordingly.

I would just like to say this, however: Several observations were made yesterday that the matter turned largely on finance, and that any Committee would have to bear this in mind. Again, observations were made regarding the line which must be drawn somewhere between officers who might qualify for the full privilege, and others. I would point out that it is precisely with this kind of practical politics in view that Government had framed the proposed Regulations. These proposals had been discussed not once or twice, but over a long period of months in Executive Council, and the matter had to be brought to a point by specific proposal.

Government put forward the present proposals as a matter of practical politics, to get a first step taken in this essential matter, and it was put forward quite definitely in the confident belief that it was within the financial powers of the Government, as well as being, as the Secretary of State has put it, an imperative need. Government went as far as we felt we could safely go.

Had we thought that the privilege could be widely extended throughout the whole Service we would, of course, have been only too glad to put that up, but in our opinion it would have been rash and premature to do so. Nor did we think it either wise or useful to attempt to spread a little butter over the whole loaf and produce something which would be of very little value, and not meet the need we have been urging. If we are going to do anything in the matter let us do something which will be useful, and which, if all went well, might be later extended.

As I said yesterday, it is necessary to be realist. It may be very popular to say that everybody must have precisely

equal privileges, and that there must be no distinction whatever in the regulations and practice affecting Government servants. But we must be practical and realist.

I mentioned finance as being important in this matter, and I think the comment was made yesterday that that can only be satisfactorily handled if much more effectively in the hands of Members of this Council. But that is just what I have been pressing on Members of Council for four years, and they have not responded to my invitation. Had they done so and set up five of themselves, appointed from among themselves, and not by me, with the Treasurer as their adviser, shall we say, a matter of this kind would precisely have been one for their consideration. It has only been on the failure of my suggestion that I have had to be practical and make use of Executive Council. You will find that recorded in our minutes several times over.

Now we can take an opportunity to do that by a Committee of this Council. As it is, Executive Council had considered this matter, and the present proposal as one within our financial power, has been put forward. I am not prepared to say that any considerable extension of it is so within our financial power. Members will observe that in the endeavour to expand, as in the amendments put forward on Thursday, we had to make certain reductions. But to expand very much further and still keep the total expenditure within manageable limits will not be simple, and may only too likely result in something which will not really take us forward in the principal objective, which is the high quality of the Civil Service. Let us keep that in mind.

I have two further comments on Thursdays' debate. One is the point made by the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member, that the grant of leave passages is not necessarily a solution.

That may be so. The only real solution would be to exercise a good deal more drastic control over an officer's leave arrangements. That certainly was so when I joined the Colonial Service. I served under the rule whereby officers were not allowed to stay more than a certain maximum time on duty, except with quite special authority granted. Officers were in fact ordered on leave according to a roster kept in the particular Department, or whatever it was, with the deliberate object of working at maximum efficiency. I remember very well at the end of my first tour in Colonial Service being engrossed in a certain piece of work which involved the mapping, assessment and administration of quite a large city, and I very dearly wanted to round it off. My senior officer in effect said to me: "My boy, you will do the job twice as well if you get away and have leave and then come back to it." I believe that policy to be absolutely right. Moreover, officers were very strongly encouraged, and sometimes even ordered, to pursue some refresher courses when on leave. However if the grant of leave passages is not necessarily in itself a complete and perfect solution, it is going quite a long way towards it, and I would have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that after a few years we will be getting somewhere towards what we want, and that is a high quality service.

The other comment is as to officers brought in from abroad. I was very glad to find the general agreement that this Council should be prepared to be liberal whenever it is necessary to secure and keep such officers when justified, and I observed that several Members said that all Government had to do was to come to Council and put up any particular case on its merits. I shall be very happy to do so, when and if necessary.

We will then proceed as quickly as possible to appoint a Committee if that is accepted by the Resolution, and ask them to get on with it as quickly as possible. I do want some decision on this matter, and though I have said very definitely that I regard the major factor to be that of the general benefit to the local officer, and that is the long view of this matter, nevertheless I have certain immediate things to settle. We want, for example, a Commissioner of the Interior; we want trained Geologists with practical experience: we have money for a forestry division, but we cannot get a trained Forestry officer. I am told that Guiana stands absolutely last on the list of preference, and that in spite of its vast technical interest. I am being forced therefore to resort to the expedient of temporary appointments on short contract, the disadvantage of which was so clearly put by the hon. Member for Georgetown North, and emphasised by the Colonial Secretary when he pointed out that it simply means we get a good man, and as soon as he has really got a grip of his job, off he goes, and we lose the continuity which we often say we want.

I would not propose to appoint the Committee straight-away, but as Executive Council has dealt with this matter previously, consult them at the next meeting as to the composition and terms of reference, and the celerity with which we can get a report.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Before the hon. Member speaks may I make a suggestion that we consider the advisability of the Council as a whole being appointed a Committee to consider the matter? I feel that if you limit the number there may be objections which would be undesirable. Why not consider the advisability of the Unofficial Members of the Council sitting as a Committee?

The PRESIDENT: Can you guarantee any results?

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think you would have better results than if the number were limited.

Mr. de AGUIAR: In view of what Your Excellency has just said I do not think any useful purpose would be served by my addressing the Council today on this subject. I may say that I was going to suggest that the proposal before the Council is one which might either be accepted as it stands or rejected, but it seems to me that as the desire is to appoint a Committee perhaps that might be the best course to adopt, although I have very grave doubts about that. We have had put before us the question of the present financial situation of the Colony. Several Members have referred to it, but if as I understand the desire for the appointment of a Committee is to extend the proposal now before the Council, I visualize that when it comes back before the Council it will be rejected without further consideration. If that is the purpose for asking for a Committee what is the good of wasting any more time on it?

I do not propose to speak on the amendment at all. If the idea behind the appointment of a Committee is to extend the scope of leave passages then we are going to be faced with the question whether the Colony can afford the expenditure involved. Speaking off-hand I am inclined to the view that we may arrive at the very sane conclusion that the bill would be too large, as it would embrace perhaps the whole Service, and I cannot see how this Council or Government could consider such a proposal. If that is going to be the position let us face it. Let us consider the motion before the Council now and either accept or reject it. Personally I think there are many points in favour of giving the original motion favourable consideration. There are certain Members who have made a storm in a teapot over the proposal, but I do not see any think at all unreasonable about it.

Reference was made to the recent re-classification and revision of the salary scales of the entire Civil Service. It must be remembered that some of the scales fixed were designed to improve the position of those officers in the lower branches of the Service. It was a deliberate act. I do not think it can be said that officers in the senior branches of the Service received consideration on the same scale as those on the lower scales, and to refer to the revision of salaries as an argument against the proposal is, in my opinion, nothing short of drawing a red herring across the trail. In my opinion the grant of leave passages is a consideration to officers who are called upon to carry heavy responsibility, and I do not think it can truthfully be said that those in the lower branches of the Service are officers who are called upon at any time to carry responsibility comparable in any degree with that of senior officers.

We are too prone in this country to listen to every bit of tittle-tattle and agitation that goes on around us. I received a letter from the Trades Union Council only this morning. They were quite right to make representations. The Civil Service Association has also made representations. Whither are we drifting with all these representations? How are we going to carry on the affairs of Government if we are to have organizations of this kind unduly interfering with the Administration of this country? What arguments do they advance against this proposal? I respectfully submit that most of the arguments put forward are selfish. To put it quite bluntly, the attitude adopted is "If I do not get it you must not get it." That is how I sum up the arguments advanced by both of those organizations which have made representations to Government. I submit that that is not the proper way to consider this matter.

Reference has been made to the history of the scheme which is quite clear. The proposal, as originally put forward, is nothing new. It was in

existence before, but owing to financial stringency it was abandoned in 1927, and for very good reason too. Those of us who recall the state of the world and particularly of this country in 1927 will realize only too well that the decision to abandon such a facility to civil servants was a move which could not be avoided. As a matter of fact other retrenchments were made. I do not think that any Member of this Council or the public can honestly say that the financial position of this Colony in 1946 is worse than it was in 1927. If I were asked to express an opinion I would certainly say that our position today is very much stronger than it was in 1927. I remember only too well that in those days, if this Government had to spend a paltry sum of \$500 it had to consider very carefully to find out whether an equivalent sum would be recouped from revenue before that expenditure could be incurred. We are not in that position today. Our financial position is flexible, very buoyant, and we can afford to take chances. I submit that this is a case in which justice would be done if the original proposal should receive the favourable consideration of this Council.

Let us be fair to those men who have carried the responsibility that was asked of them. I think one hon. Member referred yesterday afternoon to what would happen if all the senior officers in responsible positions went abroad at the present time, and I think he quite rightly referred to the number of acting appointments which would ensue. The answer to that is this: We must remember that we have just passed through a period of six years of war during which none of those officers could go abroad. In some very special cases local leave for two months had to be given to certain officers. Am I to understand that because they could not go abroad they should now be deprived of the opportunity of doing so if they find themselves in a position to take leave? It seems to me that we should not deprive those officers who wish to go on leave during this time of the opportunity to do so. The only hope I would like

to express is that it will be possible to find suitable officers to carry on during their absence, or that suitable arrangements will be made for their work to be carried on during their absence. But I submit that that is no argument that should be put up at this stage.

There is a suggestion I would like to make. If it is the desire of this Council that this privilege should be extended to other branches of the Service I think the step we should take is to accept the motion in principle and then appoint a Committee so that it could inquire into all the questions raised by hon. Members and more particularly how much the Colony can afford in extending the privilege. It seems to me that that would be the correct course to take, but to postpone our decision on the matter is, in my opinion, postponing the adoption of the principle involved.

The PRESIDENT: The amendment I have authorized the Colonial Secretary to move does just that. We are asking the Council to approve the principle and then go on.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Now that you have referred to it, sir, and I have had an opportunity to glance through it, I do not think the amended motion goes even as far as what I have in mind. I am not so sure that this amended motion accepts the implication involved. In Your Excellency's Message the proposals are very clearly outlined. The amended motion must not only accept the principle of the motion before the Council but Government's proposal as contained in Your Excellency's Message, with the proviso that a Committee be appointed to go into the question as to how far or to what extent the proposal could be carried. If that is the decision I would accept it because it seems to me that we would be taking a step in the direction in which I think we would like to travel, but merely to brush aside the motion and let the matter be considered by a Committee and to come

back to the Council with proposals on a very wide scale which may not be accepted, would be to destroy the whole idea, and our discussion both yesterday and today would be a waste of time.

There is one further point I wish to make. We cannot regard the expenditure on leave passages as capital expenditure by any means; it is a working expenditure. In my opinion there is no difference in paying the passage of a senior officer than in giving him a special allowance which Government has done in the past. I think the proposal in the motion would give us an opportunity to obtain suitable officers for the Civil Service of this Colony. I support it on all grounds. One ground is that if we have to obtain the services of officers abroad in order to carry out special work in this Colony we are not in a position to offer them conditions similar to those obtaining elsewhere. If we accept the proposal in the motion we would have a better chance of obtaining the services of such officers.

On the other hand there are senior officers in the Service who would be afforded an opportunity to go abroad and learn something for the improvement of their work. There are several such officers who, while on leave, have taken the opportunity to pursue courses of study abroad which have been of considerable benefit to the Colony. The Commissioner of Local Government is one of those officers. We have had Police officers who have gone abroad and taken refresher courses while on leave. Perhaps hon. Members do not know that, or if they know it they do not want to admit it. Whichever way we look at the proposal, whether from the point of view of an officer from abroad or from the point of view of a local officer in a responsible position, it seems to me that this Colony would obtain the maximum amount of benefit, and the expenditure would be well worth while.

The proposal before the Council involves an expenditure of between five and six thousand pounds per annum.

That may sound a lot, but placed alongside the emoluments of the same officers it will be found that it represents a very small percentage of their annual salaries.

It must be remembered that these Officers are not going on furlough every year. They have to do so in accordance with the Leave Regulations. If you work on the salaries of the Officers over the period it would be found that the expenditure which works out between £5,000 and £6,000 per annum represents a very small percentage of the emoluments of these Officers. If that is true then it seems we are merely quibbling over something we should give as a benefit to these people. Before I take my seat, I would like to know whether the amended motion to which Your Excellency drew my attention will have the object in view. I am a little doubtful whether Government will have the authority to act on the motion. What I have in mind is something like this:

"With reference to Governor's Message No. 16 dated 22nd. January, 1946, this Council approves in principle of the scheme of free and assisted passages.

And this Council further recommends that a Committee of the Council consider how far and where the benefits of the Regulations may be extended to include Officers of a lower status than those embraced by the Regulations."

After the motion is accepted in principle so that Government can act on it, then this Council further recommends the appointment of the Committee to go into the question in order to see how far and to what extent the benefits of the Regulations may be extended to include Officers of a lower status than those embraced by the Message. There is, however, no amendment before the Council. Perhaps the hon. the Colonial Secretary would move it.

The PRESIDENT: Would the hon. Member like to move that?

Mr. de AGUIAR: Then, sir, I move—

"That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 16 dated 22nd January, 1946, this Council approves of the introduction of Leave Passages Regulations as indicated in the Message and undertakes to provide the necessary funds to give effect thereto;

And this Council further approves and recommends the appointment of a Committee of the Council to consider how far and to what extent the benefits of the Regulations may be extended to include officers of lower status than those embraced by the Regulations."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I second that.

The PRESIDENT: Really the amendment as proposed by the hon. Member for Central Demerara follows the wording of the motion on the Order Paper, and then goes on to the recommendation. Mr. Deputy President, you are the original instigator, we can now take it. I take it the hon. Mover is agreeable to that. It is only adding to and making quite clear the terms of reference.

Mr. GONSALVES: I do not understand it that way. I understand that the motion we are accepting is the original motion as it stands and this is only a rider to that. That is what I understand from the trend of the discussion. Do not let us get away with it that way. I am not going to agree to that amendment.

Mr. LEE: The hon. Member for Central Demerara is trying to get us by his amendment to accept the Governor's Message and then the Committee will be appointed to consider whether the lower Officers should be included. That is not the object.

Mr. de AGUIAR: That is what I understand.

The PRESIDENT: Let us go on with the debate.

Mr. ROTH: Sir, I regret I cannot subscribe to what appears to be the majority opinion on this Council which,

I venture to suggest, in some cases is motivated by ignorance. I am not in favour of the appointment of a Select Committee because I cannot see that Junior Officers of the Civil Service should be granted these free passages. The commercial firms do not give the office-boy and the junior clerks the same privileges and perquisites as are given to the Seniors and, therefore, I do not see why the Junior Civil Servants should have the same privileges as the Seniors. There is a saying in this country which runs thus: "Paying for one's footing." Let the Junior Civil Servants pay for their footing and, if they are worthwhile, they can look forward to these free passages on obtaining senior posts. Furthermore, I am almost confident that if we include the lower ranks the cost of the scheme would ultimately become prohibitive and in the long run no one would benefit. I intend to support the original motion, as it stands, without any amendment.

Mr. LEE: Speaking on the motion as moved by the hon. Member for Central Demerara, I feel that the hon. Member is trying to compare the position of 1927 with the present position but he has forgotten that in 1927 there was a depression. How, as a commercial man in this country, is he going to show to this Council that there will be a depression in the next two or three years? He has not reviewed the past two years and shown what deficiency we will have to meet in 1948 and 1949. When we had money we agreed to give the Civil Servants free passages, but the depression came and we had to go begging and asking for certain things to be done away with. The same thing may occur again. We have had a deficiency of nearly a half million dollars (\$500,000) in 1945 and in 1946 we will have a deficiency of \$3,500,000, but he has not dealt with that. If expenditure is to go on in the same way—we cannot say whether Government will take away the War Bonus or reduce it—and we

have the same commitments and there is not the revenue to meet it there must be a deficiency.

The question is, can we afford this expenditure? If Government is certain that we can afford it for a period of ten continuous years from now, then I say it is a good thing to do. I am not saying that the men are not entitled to go abroad and refresh themselves. But can we afford it? I am not talking about the difference between the higher and lower ranks of Civil Servants. I know that some Senior Officers work in office and also at home and are entitled to some such benefit as is proposed. I would subscribe to the views of certain Members that if Government desires to employ an efficient officer and in order to obtain him has to offer special conditions, let Government come to this Council and, I am sure, this Council would vote the money. It is all very well to say increase salaries and increase War Bonus, but can the Colony's revenue stand such increases?

On the last occasion you, sir, said that we will not go begging for the next ten years which, I felt, was as the result of your experience, but the Colony's revenue has fallen considerably. Are Members of this Council going to consider what will happen in 1947, 1948, 1949? Are we to come back to have this thing removed? I say, if we are going to do something for the benefit of the Senior Officers we must know that we can afford it.

Mr. GONSALVES: I am going to use this opportunity of the amendment in order to say what I want in reply to the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member as regards some help being given to the Juniors. I endeavoured to get information yesterday, and as a result I understood that a man joining the Service at the age of eighteen years will take thirteen years to reach a salary of \$100 per month. Is it reasonable to ask a man to give

thirteen years' service and on obtaining leave he is not to be entitled to get some assistance as regards his passage to spend his holiday abroad? Should he not be entitled to some kind of consideration?

The PRESIDENT: The position is, we have the original motion, the Mover of which is quite prepared to accept the addition as proposed by the hon. Member for Central Demerara. We have no other actual amendment in front of us in words except that proposed but not actually moved, a copy of which was circulated to Members with the Order Paper. I think it does not go as far as the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Central Demerara. It merely says "approves in general principle" and suggests reference to a Committee.

Mr. GONSALVES: If it is not too late I would take this opportunity to move that amendment.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. the Colonial Secretary does not propose to move it. Are you prepared to move it?

Mr. GONSALVES: I thought the hon. Mover had accepted the amendment in deference to the wishes of the majority. Your Excellency suggested it yesterday.

The PRESIDENT: If you like to move it you can do so.

Mr. GONSALVES: I prefer to give preference to the Mover.

The PRESIDENT: As you represent one point of view and the hon. Member for Central Demerara represents another point of view, Government will stand back and give you the courtesy of the right of way.

Mr. GONSALVES: Then I beg to move it.

The PRESIDENT: Therefore we have two amendments in front of us. Would the hon. Mover care to speak?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, sir; I would like to say that I am indebted to the hon. Member for Georgetown North, Mr. Seaford, and the hon. Member for Central Demerara, Mr. de Aguiar, because I think they brought the whole problem to a head. In other words, many Members have said "We agree in principle that Officers should get Leave Passages. The Government, as Your Excellency has told this Council, has put a practical proposal before Members. If Members want that proposal expanded then you would be hedged around with the greatest of difficulties, because some hon. Members want to go so far as to kill the proposal and others want to go so far as is fully justifiable. Therefore, a Committee will have an acutely difficult task in reconciling the extreme points of view so that when this Council has to deal with the motion it will have sufficient Members to pass it. In other words, if you appoint a Committee without any limits or terms of reference at all, then I am afraid the motion will die and the original proposal will never come into effect.

It is just a question as to how far you can draw the line. The Government does not want to say "These people cannot get it," but says "We must have Leave Passages but we can only afford them to a certain number." None of us knows how much it is going to cost. We can only guess and I say to Members, if you really want leave Passages to be given, as most of you say, in principle then let us pass what the Government, what His Excellency, the Colonial Treasurer and myself have taken two and a half years to think out. His Excellency, the Colonial Treasurer and myself know far more about Government staff matters than hon. Members I see the hon. Member for North-Western District is laughing. What we have put

before this Council is what most Colonies are doing. What we have put before Members is a reasonable and practical solution. I say, let us try it. You may find it very much cheaper than we told you. If it is cheaper, then by all means expand it. Appoint your Committee to consider the best means of doing so. I agree with the amendment by the hon. Member for Central Demerara. It is the fairer one and is the acid test of this Council's intention.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Unfortunately the hon. Member for Georgetown North is not here. He was under the impression yesterday afternoon that if this motion is given effect to it would only affect Officers who are going to join the Service.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I can correct the hon. Member. I was speaking to the hon. Member for Georgetown North. That is entirely wrong. He told me he was entirely in favour of the Message as put.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not think the hon. Member for Georgetown North understood it would affect everybody in the Service. The hon. Member for Demerara River was present and can support the impression made.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Mr. Seaford, as a Member of the Executive Council, knows all about it, and he was a member of the sub-committee. I think the hon. Member is entirely wrong.

The PRESIDENT: I really do not think the hon. Member could have gone away with that impression. We will ask him. The simplest way is to put the second amendment by the hon. Member for Central Demerara against the amendment on the Order Paper which does not go so far.

Mr. LEE: May I be permitted to refer to the procedure? There are two amendments, and unless you abandon the original motion—

The PRESIDENT: We are now only putting the amendment with this addition and the other amendment. I will just have the vote on the two amendments. I, therefore, put the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Central Demerara embracing the original wording of the motion with the addition of the appointment of the Committee.

Mr. de AGUIAR's amendment put, and the Council divided, the voting being as follows:—

For: Messrs. Roth, Dr. Singh, de Aguiar, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General, and the Colonial Secretary—6.

Against: Messrs. Thompson, Ferreira, Edun, Lee, Jackson, Jacob, Gonsalves, Percy C. Wight, Austin, Critchlow, C. V. Wight, Woolford.—12.

The PRESIDENT: The amendment is rejected by 12 votes to 6. I now, therefore, put as the substantive motion in the form as circulated with the Order Paper, the amendment by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves).

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

For: Messrs. Thompson, Ferreira, Edun, Jackson, Gonsalves, Austin, Dr. Singh, Critchlow, de Aguiar, C. V. Wight, Woolford, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—14.

Against: Messrs. Lee, Jacob, and Percy C. Wight—3.

Did not vote: Mr. Roth—1.

Motion carried.

The PRESIDENT: The motion as circulated today is accepted in principle. It asks for the appointment of a Committee which I shall proceed to do as early as possible and see if they can produce something which must be practical but more acceptable to this Council. I shall consult the Deputy President as to his suggestion of a Committee of the whole Council. Yesterday most Members who spoke suggested a small Committee with the idea of being practical and then the matter will come back to this Council as a whole.

RICE PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION BILL.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that the following Bill be read a first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the establishment of the British Guiana Rice Producers Association and for purposes connected therewith."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice that at the next or a subsequent meeting he would move that the Bill be read a second time.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (OFFENCES) (AMENDMENT) BILL.

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

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Ordinance by increasing the imprisonment which may be awarded for larceny of bicycles and similar offences in relation thereto; by prohibiting kite-flying in Georgetown and New Amsterdam; by providing for the imposition of penalties on persons smoking on wharves in contravention of a notice forbidding such smoking; by prohibiting roller-skating on public ways in Georgetown

and New Amsterdam and on public roads; by providing for the imposition of penalties for the release of animals lawfully seized to be impounded as strays and for the unlawful rescue or release of such animals when impounded; and by making further provision for the control of brothels."

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, JANUARY-MARCH, 1946.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Sir, I beg to move:

That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Additional Provision for January to March, 1946, which has been laid on the table.

Before I move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to consider this supplementary estimate I would point out that the total of the estimate is \$314,972.42, of which about \$134,000 relates to items on the Development and Welfare budget. The remaining \$180,000 comprises a number of large items of re-votes, and a few smaller items which have become necessary since the main estimates were passed. I move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to consider the Schedule.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE.

AGRICULTURE.

32 A.—*Fishing Industry Development*, \$10,582.68.

Mr. JACOB: May I ask what is the present position as regards assistance to the fishing industry by way of removal of some of the high duties on materials used in connection with the industry, such as seine twine, tar

etc? I understood it was the intention of Government to do something, and I think this is an opportune time to make some effort to help the industry. This loan is useful up to a point, but something more is needed to enable the fishermen to maintain their nets and carry on the industry in a satisfactory manner.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. Member has made that point before, and I do not think any final decision has been arrived at as to whether or not we should amend the Customs Ordinance in that direction. The Council will remember that there have been objections to an amendment which would affect items which are not only used by the fishing industry. However, I can say that it has been decided that any specific cases requiring assistance by way of refund of duty should be dealt with *ad hoc* by the Advisory Committee, and that money should be granted to individuals to enable them to meet any particular charge. That is my recollection of the last decision.

Mr. JACOB: That would mean the granting of loans—not free grants.

The CHAIRMAN: Free grants to cover the duty that was paid.

Mr. JACOB: I am very much against assisting individuals or a particular set of individuals. If Government wants to help the industry it must organize the help in such a way that everyone connected with the industry will receive that help. If it is felt that by removing the duty on say fishing twine a couple of hundred pounds of duty free twine would be used for other purposes with some loss of revenue, surely the Committee could suggest some means whereby those engaged in the fishing industry would alone benefit by the removal of the duty. A Fisheries Officer has actually been

appointed, and I see no reason why fishermen cannot be told to present their bills to the authorities for the purpose of receiving a drawback of the duty paid on articles used in the fishing industry. I can quite see the hesitancy on the part of Government to give real help to the people engaged in this industry. I have seen that all the time with respect to other industries. Government prefers to ask this Council to vote money for loans to these people, most of which will not be repaid. I question whether some individuals who have got loans were really entitled to them. The proper method of assisting these people would be either to collect a lower rate of duty on articles used in connection with the industry, or to give them a drawback on the duty paid.

Mr de AGUIAR: The Treasurer's reply to the hon. Member's inquiry was quite correct. I do not know whether the hon. Member has appreciated the difficulties. He had raised the point before and the Government promised to consider the matter. From the very first consideration given the matter it became apparent that there were several difficulties in the way. The hon. Member glibly suggests that people engaged in the fishing industry might keep their bills and present them for a refund of duty paid on the articles purchased for their industry. Surely he must know that that would not be the correct way of dealing with the matter. Government would not be concerned with the bills but with the use to which the articles were put. That is just where the difficulty arises. The matter has not been lost sight of. It is still under very active consideration by the Committee, and the hon. Member may be assured that if means can be found whereby the revenue can be protected

—that is that the articles are going to be used in the fishing industry—Government will give the matter very favourable consideration.

The hon. Member questioned some of the loans granted by the Committee, and whether they have been granted to the right people. He is so accustomed to seeing evil in other people's minds—

Mr. JACOB: I rise to a point of order—to suggest to the hon. Member that he should see the evil in himself.

Mr. de AGUIAR: If that is the hon. Member's conception of rising to a point of order I confess that I fail to see it. I repeat that he questioned some of the loans which have been granted by the Committee. He says he knows. All I ask is that if he knows why doesn't he say what he knows? He is a Member of this Council and has the right to point out to Government if he knows that there is any indiscriminate granting of loans. It is his duty to report the matter to the Government. What I can tell him is this—and he can accept or reject it—that every application received from persons engaged in the fishing industry prior to the appointment of the Fisheries Officer was carefully investigated, first of all by the Chairman of the Minor Industries Committee, and then by the Committee as a whole. As a member of that Committee I accept full responsibility for any loan granted under this vote. I repeat that if the hon. Member knows of any instance in which assistance was given to the wrong person it was his duty to report the occurrence to the Governor or direct to the Chairman of the Committee. We have too much of that sort of thing going on in this country, and it is time the hon. Member cried a halt.

Mr. LEE: I would like to assure the hon. Member for North-Western District of the scrutiny and care exercised

by the Committee in connexion with applications for loans. As a lawyer I have made applications on behalf of clients and I have received replies that the guarantees had to be examined and considered carefully before any loan could be granted. I know of several cases in which fishermen in the country districts have received assistance, and there are cases in which they have misappropriated the funds granted them. We cannot expect to find 100 per cent. good in everything.

Mr. EDUN: When this matter came up on a previous occasion I made the suggestion that the Committee should explore the possibilities of fresh water fish culture. I think we could produce fresh water fish in greater quantities. For instance the *hassar* can be caught by the millions in our savannahs.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I am grateful to the hon. Member for his suggestion. That is precisely Government's policy in the matter. At the present moment the Junior Fisheries Officer is primarily engaged in obtaining the necessary statistics with regard to coastal fish, and as soon as he has completed that work he will turn his attention to what has been referred to as fresh water fish.

Mr. JACOB: My complaint is not that the wrong people have been given loans, but that most of the money will not be recovered because people with practically no experience in the proper methods of fishing have been granted loans. I am not saying that the necessary guarantees have not been obtained, but that people who lack experience and the necessary capital to carry on fishing have been advanced money, a good deal of which will be lost to the Colony. That is the gist of my remarks this afternoon. I repeat that better facilities should be granted fishermen who are actually engaged in fishing, if Government wants to help the fishing industry.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 35. — *Essequibo Estates* \$11,450.

Mr. LEE: I observe that this sum is required for the reconditioning of internal drainage and irrigation works at Anna Regina *cum annexis*. May I inquire whether these works will be done by contract or by the Public Works Department? I have found that the Department does such work cheaper than when it is done by contract.

The CHAIRMAN: I am very glad to hear that. It is the first time I have been told that Government can do anything a little cheaper. (Laughter).

Mr. de AGUIAR: The hon. Member's remarks will be borne in mind. If it is found that the Public Works Department can carry out this work cheaper than a contractor can, that step would be taken, but I think the hon. Member will find that more often than not it is far more advantageous to obtain the services of a contractor. However, his remarks will be borne in mind.

Mr. EDUN: I suggest that the quality of the work done by the contractors should be carefully examined.

The CHAIRMAN: I take it that the matter will be referred to the Advisory Committee.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I hope to have the assistance of the hon. Member who made the suggestion.

Item agreed to.

FIRE PROTECTION.

Item 1 (g)—*13 Motor Mechanics*, \$2,160.—

Mr. EDUN: I observe from the note that this item is to provide for the appointment of six additional mechanics so as to improve the working conditions, etc., of the civilian staff of the Brigade who work 12 hours a day at present, and with this addition it is proposed to

put an 8-hour day into effect. I consider this a step in the right direction. Knowing the staff of the Fire Brigade as I do, and their complaints about long hours of work, I think this scheme has been long overdue. I commend Government on the step taken.

Item agreed to.

LAW OFFICERS.

Item 1 (i)—*House allowance*, \$160.

Mr. LEE: I observe that this item is to provide for the payment of a house allowance at the rate of \$40 per month to the Magistrate who is acting as Crown Counsel. In some districts Magistrates are given free quarters, but in other districts they are not.

The CHAIRMAN: I think all Magistrates are provided with free quarters except those in Georgetown. Isn't that so, Mr. Attorney-General?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, sir, that came into effect as from the 1st August last year.

The CHAIRMAN: It is so delightful to live in Georgetown. It is not quite so in Berbice.

Mr. LEE: But some Magistrates receive less salary.

Item agreed to.

Item 26B.—*Purchase of Cinema Van and Film strip projectors*, \$3,312.

Mr. deAGUIAR: I propose to move the deletion of this item.

The CHAIRMAN: I am going to hold it over. I wrote a minute on it yesterday. We want to know what we are letting ourselves in for. The recurrent expenses are put at £400, and I said we should really have a look at what the capital cost is going to be, plus recurrent expenses and depreciation.

Mr. de AGUIAR: That is precisely the note I have here. I do not think it is a luxury.

The CHAIRMAN: I will bring it up in Executive Council. It is not clear whether the British Council is going to carry some of the expenditure. I am quite prepared to allow it to stand over.

Mr. LEE: Certain new Regulations have been introduced with respect to the erection of cinemas in the country districts, and they are so stringent that only a wealthy man can afford to erect one. These mobile cinemas will be of great educational benefit to the people in the country districts, especially on the sugar and rice estates.

The CHAIRMAN: I am very glad to hear you say that. I was impressed by the argument put up that cinemas of this kind would be able to show medical and health films, teaching people methods of sanitation and general education. It seems to me a most valuable form of visual education, and I personally support it, but, like the hon. Member for Central Demerara, I would like to know what the cost is going to be, and who is going to carry it.

Mr. LEE: I understand the policy is that these films, which are made in England, are sent from Colony to Colony. They are not purchased; they are rented.

The CHAIRMAN: I have not heard that. I have only heard the proposal that we pay half the cost of the van and the Imperial Government pays the other half and it becomes our property. I think it is the films that go around.

Mr. LEE: The apparatus will not cost very much.

Mr. EDUN: I think I agree with the hon. Member for Central Demerara that we should not waste this money. My experience in the villages and on the sugar estates is that English films do not attract the workers. These British Council films will not attract the people.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not intended to show that kind of film at all.

Mr. EDUN: If Indian films are shown along with these films the people in the country districts would be interested. I think it would be a waste of money to show these films only.

Mr. JACOB: I am disappointed to hear the remarks of the last speaker and those of the hon. Member for Central Demerara, but I am more disappointed still that Government, having put the item on the schedule, thinks it best to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not withdrawing it; we are holding it over until we can put before the Council what the cost will be, and the recurrent charge. We are not taking it off.

Mr. JACOB: I have always thought that when these things are put on paper and circulated among Members of the Council they had been well thought out and would be backed up. The withdrawal of this item will mean that this \$3,000 will be utilized in some other way, possibly for the benefit of those who are enjoying leave passages. We want to educate the people of this Colony and to disseminate information. I have in my hand the Recommendations of the Royal Commission, and under the heading "Administration and Public Opinion" it is clearly stated:—

30. We recommend:—

(a) As regards the attitude of public opinion, that Governments should adopt a much more positive policy of bringing their point of view before the mass of the people, and of explaining in sufficiently simple terms the reasons which lie behind their decisions of major problems; and that the active assistance of all persons of standing, and of all available means of publicity, such as broadcasting, should be enlisted in an organised attempt to prevent any further extension of colour prejudice.

We have the B.P.I.—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: On a point of information. Didn't the hon. Member oppose the B.P.I. vote?

Mr. JACOB: I opposed the recurrent expenditure, not the whole vote.

The CHAIRMAN: I am quite prepared to leave the item on.

Mr. JACOB: The Imperial Government having agreed to contribute to this publicity scheme, and Government having put the item on the schedule I think it should be carried through and some attempt made to educate the people. I trust that the item will not be withdrawn, and that a further sum will be voted. This kind of work is done in other parts of the world, in India and other countries where there is mass illiteracy as in this Colony. It is only right that this project should be carried through. I support it and I hope it will be continued.

The CHAIRMAN: We will keep it on. Those Members who do not like it can vote against it.

Mr. de AGUIAR: There is one further comment I wish to make. In this Council we sometimes accept gifts gratefully, and sometimes we do not. In doing so we often disregard future costs arising out of these grants, and more often than not we find ourselves in the unfortunate position of having bitten off more than we could chew.

The result of it is, however good our intention may be, we find ourselves running after a thousand and one schemes, a thousand and one proposals and accepting a thousand and one gifts. With all due deference to what the hon. Member for North Western says this is a matter which we should carefully go into and ascertain what the future cost is going to be. There is going to be recurrent expenditure. We should ascertain whether we will be able to carry it on or not. I can quite see this is possibly one of the first things we will abandon should we come to the point that we have to cut our suit according to the cloth. There are others

which will also suffer the same fate, and this is because we accept these grants without giving consideration to the future cost we will have to bear.

Mr. LEE: The hon. Member for Central Demerara does not consider the particular aspect of this matter. Even if it costs us \$3,000 a year as running cost, has he considered the distance from Crabwood Creek on the Corentyne Coast to Pomeroon and how long it will take this van to go from village to village? Even if the van goes around twice during a year, the benefits derived from such an educative policy would make an expenditure of \$3,000 a year nothing at all in comparison with the educative benefits obtained.

Mr. de AGUIAR: The hon. Member has struck the point. He suggests that the van should go throughout the Colony twice a year. I want to suggest to him that the van will not be able to visit certain parts of the Colony once in three years. There are about 200 odd villages. I do not know how it is proposed to disseminate educative information among the people of those villages with just one van operating throughout the whole Colony.

Mr. EDUN: I did not want to say anything more, but in view of what the hon. Member for North-Western District and the hon. Member for Essequibo River have said I think they have not fully explored this matter. I know that at the present moment there is on foot a lot of Social Welfare schemes, but up to now I have not seen anything done which has captured my own imagination about these schemes. It is a waste of money and this will be one of those too. I want to refer hon. Members to page 127 of the West India Royal Commission Report on Adult Education and to ask this Council to give us \$10,000 to begin Adult Education on the Sugar Estates and in the Villages. For a few years now I have been preaching and begging this Government and the Sugar Pro-

ducers to do something for the people on the estates, but nothing has been done. This is only wasting time to have a magic lantern van going around the villages and showing pictures. If you can show the Hindus and Muslims on the estates, pictures in the Hindi and Urdu languages, the people would go to see them.

Mr. JACOB: I am a bit amused. I deprecate very strongly this racial question being brought up here at almost every meeting of this Council. I am unfortunately associated in a large measure with these things, and I want to say here that I deprecate very strongly this Hindu and Muslim business being introduced in this matter. I am talking about adult education whether the people concerned be Hindus, Muslims, Africans or White. My hon. friend would be interested to know that the Education Advisory Committee has been working, I must admit, very slowly and something is being done for Adult Education. Not a week ago specific recommendations were made to be submitted to Government, and those would be a means of helping Adult Education. So, I think, if I mention that the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member would support the retention of this item on the Schedule. A few things are being done as regards educating the masses. It is unfortunate that religion is brought into this matter by the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member. I do not know why he brings these things here and then say we are not properly informed. I trust he will not for the sake of his own community refer to these matters every now and then in this Council. I feel this item should remain and the amount should be increased or reduced later on.

Mr. EDUN: Just a final remark to my hon. friend. I happen to be a Muslim and am proud of the fact. I am sorry for those Indians who change their religion as they change their coats. You will never get the Hindoos and Muslims to conform to certain senti-

ments and ideals. You can never mix oil and water. As long as Government takes taxes from the Hindoos and Muslims it must face the facts and give them equal treatment or give them back their money. It will come to that.

Mr. LEE: Perhaps if the hon. Member goes to the Cinema more often he will see films of the kind of agriculture India carries on. If that will be done by this mobile Cinema would my hon. friend record his vote against it? It will show the people how they cultivate the land, how they weave and spin their cotton into cloth. Those are things my hon. friend would like to see the farmers educated in, and those are the things this mobile Canteen is intended to do. But that is what he is refusing Government the opportunity to do for the benefit of his own race of people. How can we reconcile his attitude?

The CHAIRMAN: Government is quite prepared to keep the item on the Schedule, but I warn Members there is a recurrent charge to follow.

Items passed.

Item 37—*Expenses of 1946 W. I. Conference (St. Thomas)*, \$6,400.

Mr. JACOB: I have here certain questions about this expenditure and, I trust, they will be answered promptly.

Item passed.

POST OFFICE.

Item 14 (a)—*Rent of temporary accommodation for G.P.O. Services*, \$5,500.

Mr. JACOB: May I enquire what amount is paid as rent for that temporary accommodation? I see here provision for \$5,500 for 1946. What was paid in 1945? May I be supplied with the figures.

Item 38—*Probation Officer (Office Accommodation, etc.)*, \$1,560.

Mr. LEE: Do you think the policy of the Government in respect of the method of probation work as carried out by the Probation Officer throughout the Colony is the correct one? I feel that it is not. Take for instance the Salvation Army Probation Officer on the West Coast Demerara. I do not know if his method is practised throughout the Colony. There the youth is brought before the Court and his Solicitor or Counsel influences the Magistrate that it is just a small lapse on the youth's part. The Probation Officer in attendance also pleads on behalf of the youth and the youth is put on probation. After that the Magistrate has no power to cause that youth to report to the Probation Officer weekly, monthly or otherwise. What happens is this: The Probation Officer resides at Den Amstel three or four miles from the Court and the youth may reside at De Willem, eight miles from either the Probation Officer's residence or the Court, and does not see the Probation Officer at all during the period of his probation. I do not think that is the policy Government wants adopted and I would ask Government to enquire into it and see that there is better and closer contact between these youths and the Probation Officer, who should have them under close supervision. I feel that if certain Indian Priests are also made Probation Officers they would exercise more influence on the Indian youths than the Salvation Army Officer who is of another race. I ask Government to enquire into this matter.

The CHAIRMAN: We will take note of that.

POST OFFICE—TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The amount of \$5,500 asked for covers the rental the present temporary building and, I think, the accommodation afforded us by the Town Council in the basement of the Town Hall. I will give the information a little later.

Mr. JACOB: Whatever the figure is, we have an idea that it will be about \$5,500 for 1946. I do not know what are the plans for a new Post Office. I was very disappointed that this Administration would rent out the site for the Post Office and not make plans to build on it.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, the Architect has started on it.

Mr. JACOB: I do not know what is the estimated cost of the new Post Office, but to pay \$5,500 per annum as rent is not good enough.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the figure is \$175,000 for the new Post Office.

Mr. JACOB: It will be of concrete, I take it. I think the sooner Government begins to build its own Post Office the better it will be for all concerned. Government is throwing away \$5,000 to \$6,000 per annum in rent. No private individual would adopt the method of this Administration in a matter such as this. If I had that place I would not rent it to a commercial firm. According to the Town Planning Bill the building erected on that site may not be removed for some years and Government may get some rental for the site, but why did not Government put up a temporary building there for the Post Office for \$10,000 or \$15,000 and use it as Government is using those buildings erected behind the Public Buildings? Had the Government done that, I think, this Colony would have saved money. I think it is very poor administration indeed to have done such a thing. It is no wonder that this Colony is in its present state particularly in its finances. No businessman would have done it. As a matter of fact the firm which has rented the site has its own lands lying idle. What is the object? (laughter) Members laugh because they have nothing to lose by it. Those of us who have ourselves anchored in this Colony,

who have children and have to live here and cannot leave, cannot but be serious. I will repeat all the time that is why this Colony is in such a parlous state. As long as the Administration goes on as it is doing that will be.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Does the hon. Member seriously mean that this Government should have undertaken to build a temporary Post Office premises on that site and saved money in doing so? Surely he must know that 50 per cent. of the money spent in erecting a building large enough to accommodate the General Post Office on the site on which we are going to erect the new Post Office will be wasted. I put it to the hon. Member that the best and safest course is to rent such accommodation as we can get and leave the site available until we can build on it. I know the hon. Member is incensed because a firm has put temporary quarters there. All have to move together under the Town Planning Scheme and obviously someone will have to go first. The commercial firms will go there first and this temporary building will be pulled down and so allow Government to come in.

The point is this. The architects for the Government are going to be the same for the firms, as I understand it. So it is hoped that this development will go together expeditiously and to the advantage of all. I can assure the hon. Member that the cheapest and most economical way of acting is that. We will not have saved money by trying to erect a temporary Post Office on that site. Surely we will have spent more than we are doing now.

Mr. JACOB: Sandbach Parker & Co. have put up a temporary premises on their site. Messrs Ferreira and Gomes and other parties have done the same thing. Surely this Government could have done so too.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The firms have to make money; they have to carry on so as to keep their customers and trade. If Messrs. Ferreira and Gomes had not rushed in and put up a temporary building they would have lost business and lost the goodwill they had. The same conditions do not apply to Government.

Mr. JACOB: Therefore Government is contented to squander the taxpayers' money and give the site to a firm. I would prefer Messrs. Booker Bros. to buy over the Colony and run it, as they will do it properly and to the advantage of the people. I make that statement fully knowing the application of it. Perhaps the best thing is to sell out. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer said the firms come first. Then we must stand aside and wait. That is the mentality of the expert advisers of this Government.

Item 16 -- Replacement of equipment destroyed by fire, \$28,000

Mr. ROTH: With regard to (a) "Private Letter Boxes, \$10,000"—am I to understand that this money is to be spent on the temporary building and then in the next three years when you erect the new Post Office premises a much larger sum is to be spent on such equipment?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I take it this amount is to provide Private Letter Boxes in the City. At the moment I do not see where they can be erected. At present the mails are sorted at the Town Hall and I do not think they can be put there. It seems we will have to wait for the new premises.

Mr. ROTH: In that case the amount is not necessary on this schedule.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: They have been ordered.

Mr. JACOB: I am moving the deletion of the item for \$5,500 rent.

Items under Head XXIX — Post Office—passed.

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT & WELFARE
SCHEMES.

Item C.S.1—Operation Subsidy—Shuttle Service, Mackenzie/Georgetown, B.G. Airways, Ltd., 7,680.

Mr. LEE: Since the last occasion that I enquired of Government about this Service there have been complaints in respect of passengers being left at Mackenzie. I tried to prove to the people of Barbados and Trinidad that there is not much difference. You land at the airfield in Trinidad and get to Port-of-Spain in twenty minutes; at Barbados you get to Bridgetown in 20 minutes after landing, and in this Colony you land at Mackenzie and only take thirty minutes to get to Georgetown. The only difference is that one travels by car in those Islands and by plane in this Colony. But in those Islands there is accommodation to be had. At the airport you are told you have to pay so much for transportation. I think something should be done in the matter because it will depreciate the value of the Shuttle Service. I ask that consideration be given to the matter so that persons will not have to sleep at Mackenzie before getting to Georgetown.

Item L.G. 2D—Extension of Social Welfare Organization, \$36,436.

Mr. EDUN: I just want the wording to be clarified. It is stated here "replacement of the amount originally provided in the draft estimates and reduced during consideration of the estimates." I have found that statement in two places. I wonder what it means.

The CHAIRMAN: May I explain that. During the consideration of the Estimates I said that we had just then had a despatch about Colonial Development and Welfare allocation. Under

the new provisions we were to take all our potential money and then consider what expenditure we can carry for the next ten years. It meant that Development and Welfare grants and our own money became more intermingled than previously. Then after the 31st March, this year, any unexpended balance of previous Development and Welfare grants goes against the allocation under the new Act which comes into effect from the 1st April, 1946. Therefore I had to consider whether after the 31st March, 1946, these particular items should continue to be carried on Development and Welfare grants or taken in our own funds or possibly dropped altogether. Therefore we took the way out of finding only sufficient money up to the 31st March in order to give us time to consider between January and March what to do about it.

During last month I considered it very carefully with Government Officers, and particularly Mr. Laing, Social Welfare Officer, and we came to the conclusion that it would be practical to carry these particular things under the Development and Welfare grants. It is practical to begin that way because most of them will run for another two years. It will be more convenient and more practical and will give less trouble and better work to continue the grants, as they are, in 1946 and some in 1947 and one or two will go on to 1948. That meant we had to put back 75 per cent. of what we had cut off in the Budget Session. The decision is that we should go on with the schemes. We can carry them through for the three years for which money was originally given. That meets the hon. Nominated Member's point. We can take them out and put them on Colonial funds but it makes no difference now.

Mr. SEAFORD: As Your Excellency has said, it really makes no

difference. If we take this item out it means that we will have a certain amount of money from Colonial Development and Welfare grants to use for something else. It really does not make much difference. The question is: Is it going to carry out all these works? The time will come when we will have to consider the matter very carefully.

The CHAIRMAN: That will come up next year.

Mr. SEAFORD: It would be rather a pity after we have spent so much money to start these works if we have to drop them next year or the year after.

Item agreed to.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am sorry I was not here earlier. I intended to ask whether the trip to the Virgin Islands was really worth \$6,400.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you like a debate on the subject? I would ask the Deputy President to come and answer your question.

Mr. SEAFORD: I may raise the question with the Deputy President myself.

MEDICAL.

Item M10. — *Training of Nurse-Midwife at Public Health Training Centre, in Jamaica*, \$1,080.

Mr. LEE: I think that if the Development and Welfare Organization desires to assist some of our young people in health education they should be sent for training in England instead of Jamaica. I think that we have lecturers in this Colony who can teach candidates up to the same standard as in Jamaica.

Mr. EDUN: I support the view expressed by the last speaker. I

remember that when the matter came up on a previous occasion I spoke against it. I have not visited Jamaica but I have been to Trinidad and I have been able to compare the cultural standard there with our own. I think we ought to have some pride in our own country. I do not like the mannerisms of the people in that country, and I do not think we have anything much to learn from Jamaica. In matters of this kind the training of our youths should be obtained in Canada, the United States, or in the United Kingdom. We are thinking about a West Indian University in Jamaica. I maintain that it will have to be up to a standard which would appeal to the youth of this Colony. Unless it attains that standard I do not think it would be a success.

The CHAIRMAN: We will draw the attention of the Director of Medical Services to the point made.

Item agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 39.—*Assistance to Minor Industries*, \$5,000.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I was wondering whether we could not get an increase of this amount. I know that the Committee will approach Government for a further increase, but if Members are in agreement I propose that we suggest the insertion of another \$10,000.

Mr. LEE: I observe that the note says that loans will be made through the Loan Bank section of the Department of Agriculture. I take it that the Department will insist on bills of sale and mortgages.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The terms of the loans will be fixed by the Committee which deals with these matters, but the administrative action

in making loans and taking whatever security has been decided upon will be taken by this particular section of the Department of Agriculture, for the reason that they are familiar with that kind of work and they have the machinery to handle it.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am rather surprised that the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) has only asked for another \$10,000. Surely he will not ask this Council to give a blank cheque. He put up no reason for his suggestion. We have not the remotest idea of what they want the money for. I am not prepared to give a blank cheque.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Money is necessary, and the Committee have already approved of several loans, but the money is not available. If we are to develop minor industries we have to lend money. We have already lent fishermen money to the extent of \$4,000, and the fishing industry is doing extremely well. So far we have lost nothing. We propose to advance money to small industries in the North-West District. There are proposals before the Committee for the improvement of the cultivation of lime which produces a very fine oil. There is also the deserving case of a man who was trained in the Forestry Department, and who wants some tools. He has been making some very fine articles from local wood, such as ash trays and things of that sort. The Committee feel that he should be given some encouragement. If it is the desire of hon. Members to stifle minor industries then they need not grant this money.

There is the case of a man who wanted to launch out in timber cutting, and some of the sawmills assisted him, but at present the big firms would not do that except under certain conditions which would mean that he would become their employee. If we are to

make some effort to assist minor industries we must have the money to do so. Reports are forwarded to Government from time to time, and the hon. Member is in a position to see the amounts which are being advanced. The hon. Mr. Roth will be able to tell the Council that several matters are hanging fire simply because we have no money.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think the hon. Member has missed the point. The Council would like to know how the money is going to be spent. Is it to be a grant or a loan?

The CHAIRMAN: Grant and loan.

Mr. SEAFORD: As far as I know nothing has ever been circulated by anybody showing how much money has been spent. I am speaking entirely from a practical point of view.

Mr. WIGHT: I think the Board is very practical indeed. Sometimes some of us feel that it should be a little more progressive and ready to assist. There are no grants whatsoever, except in the case of small remissions of duty, or a small amount of \$10 for the import of certain articles. The majority of the assistance given is by way of loans, and wherever possible we endeavour to see that security is given. Everything is mortgaged and remains the property of the Board until the loan is repaid.

The CHAIRMAN. I am prepared to put it to the vote. It seems to me that if we are really doing this thing we should do it decently. The sum of \$5,000 is very little.

Mr. LEE: I am amused by my two hon. friends. The trouble about this matter is that the Department is held responsible for this money while the Committee decides what should be done. I agree that the vote should be increased.

Mr. EDUN: I know that a very practical and a very big proposition will shortly be put before Government by the Village Chairmen's Conference for the construction of a bridge across the Demerara river. (laughter).

Mr. ROTH: With reference to the remarks of the hon. Member on my right there is a movement on foot to convert the Board into an executive body. There seems to be a certain amount of misunderstanding and cross purposes between the Advisory Committee of the Department of Agriculture and the Minor Industries Committee. That has arisen because of the fact that the actual handling of the money has been vested in the Department of Agriculture for the reason that the Minor Industries Board has no executive power. I hope that Government will soon make it an executive Board, which would simplify matters very much. I hope that instructions will be given for the circulation of the report of the Committee so that Members would know what is being done with the money, and how the interests of Government are being safeguarded.

The CHAIRMAN: I am prepared to allow the amendment that the item be increased to \$15,000, on the understanding that loans should go through the Loan Bank section of the Department.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think that would be taking too big a jump. I appreciate all that has been said, but I do not think the Committee should endeavour to set themselves up as a rival Loan Bank. I am afraid that the people who go to the proper organization and get money may find themselves drifting in the stream between the enthusiastic Mr. Case and the equally enthusiastic Board to get loans. There are cases which cannot be dealt with by the Committee, and

I think we should go a little slowly and not convert them into a lending bank.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I think it would be well if we just increased the amount by \$5,000. It would mean that people would be held up and become discouraged. We have two very keen businessmen on the Board. Sometimes they are too keen. We have assisted a few persons and we have given a very good advertisement that Government intends to help in cases where people have failed to get monetary assistance outside.

The CHAIRMAN: I am prepared to let the amount go to \$15,000.

Mr. SEAFORD: Why not make it \$100,000? A million more would not make any difference to us just now.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: When the Board is given executive powers there will be no hesitation on my part in asking for something in the neighbourhood of \$100,000, so that the hon. Member's anticipation is quite correct.

Mr. SEAFORD: That will not surprise me. It surprises me that the hon. Member has not asked for a million dollars.

The CHAIRMAN: I will now put the question that the item be carried out at \$15,000.

The Committee divided and voted:—

For—Messrs. Thompson, Roth, Edun, Lee, Jackson, Austin, Critchlow, C. V. Wight, the Colonial Treasurer and the Attorney-General—10.

Against—Dr. Singh, Mr. Seaford and the Colonial Secretary—3.

Amendment carried.

The Council resumed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I formally move—

That, this Council approve of the Schedule of Additional Provision for January to March, 1946, which has been laid on the table.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Motion carried.

CONTINUATION OF LIVESTOCK
EXPERIMENT STATION.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move:

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 17 of the 9th March, 1946, this Council approves of a free grant of \$35,000 from the Development Trust Fund for the purpose of financing the operation of the livestock experiment station at Ebini Downs, Berbice River, for a further period of three years.

I feel sure that this Council will welcome this motion and will recall that in 1940 it was asked to approve of a grant of \$30,000 from the Development Trust Fund for the establishment of a Livestock Experiment Station at Ebini Downs, Berbice river, in order to test whether or not there could be improvement of pasture and feeding facilities in the savannahs so as to make them suitable for stocking cattle. In 1944 the Council approved of a further sum of \$6,000 to cover the cost of nutrition measures, making a total of \$36,000, as stated in the Message.

I think we can now say that the scheme has been successful; that the work done has proved that the methods adopted by the agriculturists have proved that cattle can be improved and maintained and reproduce themselves on those savannahs. The next step is to prove whether or not the proposition is economical, that is to say, whether or not, using the same methods, any

average farmer or cattle owner can get the same results and make it pay. Officers of the Department of Agriculture, and particularly the Veterinary Surgeon, went before the Advisory Committee of the Development Trust Fund and made out a very strong case for the continuation of this experiment for another three years. The Advisory Committee has recommended to Government that a further sum of \$35,000 should be voted from the Fund for the continuation of this scheme. I said that the idea is that it should be continued for a period of three years, but since a certain amount of revenue will accrue from what is being done it is hoped that the receipts will enable the work to be continued for a period of five years. At the end of that period we should know very definitely whether its success is not merely on paper, or success which could be translated into results from the practical point of view—that is from the point of view of the rancher who would like to use those methods.

I feel sure that the Council will welcome this attempt to complete what is a very valuable experiment indeed. I am sorry I cannot go into any very great detail about it. If the Council desires any further details we could ask the Director of Agriculture to be present. I formally move the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. LEE: What puzzles me is paragraph 4 of the Message. If we vote another \$5,000 for capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure of \$10,000 a year for three years the profits would carry the scheme for another two years. That is to say that in three years we will have gained \$30,000 to carry the scheme for two years. With all due respect to the Colonial Treasurer can we recover \$10,000 in three years time on \$15,000? To do that the scheme would have to earn about \$3,500 a year. If

such a thing can occur I would say "Do it at once." This is only on paper. If I could get fuller details I would be satisfied. I accept the statement that the experiment has been successful, but is it a business proposition?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I think the hon. Member should remember that we have already spent \$36,000, and we are now going to spend another \$35,000. I am sure if there is going to be any profit at all it should be only sufficient to carry the scheme for a further two years.

Mr. LEE: I am thinking of the capital we have put in. We have already voted \$10,000 for capital expenditure and we are adding another \$5,000. The expenditure is \$10,000 per annum and the scheme is supposed to make a profit of \$20,000. Only a few people are able to make such profit.

Dr. SINGH: The experiment has been a success, and the hon. Member is thinking of extending it because ultimately it will be of immense benefit to the Colony. That is the reason why we are pursuing it.

Mr. EDUN: While examining the Colonial Emergency Measures vote I took the opportunity to ask Government to debate an item of expenditure with respect to cattle. I thought that whatever money was spent here was in the interest of cattle-rearing and experimentation. This scheme was started in 1940 as an experiment, and in this year, 1946, it remains still as an experiment. It is absolutely in the nature of an experiment. I am totally against the expenditure of such a large sum as \$35,000, if I am not told what benefits the coastal pastoral areas derive from this experimentation. I see in this Message Your Excellency personally has made a plea for the retention of this scheme and the further expenditure of \$5,000.

If I am to support it, I do so purely on that plea. But I want to ask whether in the last five years the experiments at Ebini Downs were tried out in any other part of the coastal area.

The PRESIDENT: It is not necessary at all to do so. The Savannah is just at the back of Blairmont. It lacks good pasturage and we cannot understand why. That is why the experiment is made. It does not affect the coastland at all. It makes possible the development of this savannah which is 35 to 50 miles further in.

Mr. EDUN: What I was thinking was whether the use of mineral salts would help the pastures.

The PRESIDENT: It may.

Mr. EDUN: An attempt may be made to try it out. With those few observations I am going to support this motion purely on Your Excellency's plea.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member made a remark about the length of period of the experiment. When that experiment started the cattle were dying and it was found that there was something lacking in the grass. It took Dr. Fraser a few years to find out the cause of the trouble, and now that he has found it he has tried the growing of special grasses. He experimented not only with cattle but with sheep and poultry in that area. It takes a long time to get results from a flock—not in one year but years. It takes a considerable time. I have been rather closely connected with Dr. Fraser through the Development Board and the work he has carried out in the area. He has done most valuable work for the Colony. As the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has told you, we are not giving out money blindly. The case put up was so good and such wonderful work was done that the Board was unanimous in asking Government to provide this money for it.

The PRESIDENT: As I have said yesterday, it is not intended, and it was not really thought either, that this should have any connection with coastal pastures. There is natural good pasture on the coastland and the cattle I saw in January were in excellent condition. Quite a number of them were Rupununi cattle who had come down in a poor condition and after some months were doing immensely well. The problem is this: If you go back fifty miles behind the first savannah you get on this rolling savannah or Downs as they are called here. They are not wet but mostly dry and fairly sandy soil. Anyone who has seen the great pastoral areas of Africa and parts of America must be astonished at this savannah not having good pasture lands carrying thousands of cattle. I have been accustomed to extraordinarily poor pastures carrying something like one million cattle. The pastures looked poor but the cattle were doing well. I have been to Ebini and other places in Peru which look like perfectly good pasture lands and look better than Rupununi which is poor, yet the cattle come down from the Rupununi looking fairly well. At Ebini and other places up the Berbice River the cattle simply die off and the ordinary person cannot understand why. There was good pasture land with planted grass and yet the cattle simply wasted and died.

This experiment which has been started, is just the same kind of thing that is in other parts of the world. Dr. Fraser is now proving that cattle supplied with mineral salts will do well with this grass which is without these salts and is just a kind of mechanical belly-filler, which fills up the stomach but has no vitamin and the cattle gradually waste away. At Ebini the mineral salts are mixed and laid out in troughs. The first thing I asked was how the proper proportion is measured

out, and I was told that it was not necessary as the cow knows exactly which suits him. After the cow has had the grass he goes along to the trough for the mineral salts, and that is apparently all that is needed. Dr. Fraser assured me on my visit there that they could not carry on simply with bad grass and salts and he was introducing a special fodder grass. If that proves an economical proposition it means that the area of this savannah would come within the possibility of economic exploitation.

I went to the ranch of Mr. Ramjohn on the Corentyne and there I saw 122 cattle. Most of them were in a terribly poor condition; some were not too bad but some of them were very bad indeed. One Zebu bull looked fairly well and that was because he had certain privileges and got certain additions to his ration. I told him to go to Ebini and see what was happening there. The Agricultural Department advocates the use of salts and see what will happen. That is why Mr. Perreira came back with the possibility of such success because of these minerals salts being just put under cover and the cattle using them. I presume the salts are not very cheap at the moment. I think Members are justified in supporting the expenditure.

Motion put and agreed to.

Motion passed.

The PRESIDENT: We have now come to the end of the Order of the Day, as Government Officers have no desire to take any Government business. There is the Rice Producers' Association Bill which we can take the second reading of next week. I adjourn the Council to Thursday next, March 28, at 2 p.m.