

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1942.

The Council met at noon, His Excellency the Governor, SIR GORDON LETHBRIDGE, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

## PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,  
Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr.  
E. O. Pretheroe, M.C., K.C.

The Hon. J. S. Dash, Director of  
Agriculture.

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E.,  
(Eastern Berbice).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. W. A. D'Andrade, O.B.E.,  
Comptroller of Customs.

The Hon. M. B. Laing, O.B.E.,  
Commissioner of Local Government.

The Hon. L. G. Crease, Director of  
Education.

The Hon. B. R. Wood, Conservator  
of Forests.

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar, (Berbice River).

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

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

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, (Nominated  
Unofficial Member).

The Hon. C. V. Wight, (Western  
Essequebo).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus, (Western  
Berbice).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, (Georgetown  
South).

The Hon. Jung Bahadur Singh,  
(Demerara-Essequebo).

The Hon. T. Lee, (Essequebo River).

The Clerk read prayers.

## MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 18th November, 1942, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

## THE SUGAR SITUATION.

THE PRESIDENT: The first business of the day is to proceed to the general consideration of the Estimates. I have two announcements to make concerning, rather closely, the economic position of the Colony in 1943, and I wish to make them now. The first is in connexion with sugar production. As Members are probably well aware, the position has been menacing throughout the last few months since the entry of the United States into the war, and the resulting position is that we have been unable to ship a great deal of sugar and molasses. That position, which has been threatening, is now very clearly not going to be improved during 1943 and, as far as we can see, in 1944, with the result, as I am advised, it will be quite impossible to expect that we will be able to ship more than a portion of our sugar crop in 1943, and that a substantial part will not be shipped.

In spite of that, H.M. Government are going to continue to buy the whole crop at a fixed price. That is in order that the economic upset to this Colony should not be so terribly severe as it would be otherwise, and that would enable grinding to continue. It is proposed to grind all the sugar cane cut, and produce sugar and store as much as possible pending the chance of shipping. Of course it is quite clear that we have to look forward to a progressive decline in the planting and production of sugar. For every kind of reason that in turn is going to affect the labour market and, directly and indirectly, the public revenue more and more. Government is going to be faced with two things. One is the necessity of carrying on useful work of some kind to absorb labour, and that will have to be done in the face of a falling revenue, which I think should become evident in the latter part of this year, unless of course, that is substantially bolstered up by other means of revenue or from other sources altogether.

#### PUBLIC WORKS AND EMPLOYMENT

I do not propose to deal with that side of the revenue, but on the matter of public works, and particularly the employment of labour, I have urged the Secretary of State very strongly to allow me to proceed as soon as possible with the greater public works, particularly the drainage and irrigation scheme, and I received a telegram yesterday approving of the beginning of the Boerasirie—Bonasika Scheme. That in turn is not quite so easy from the point of view of materials and supervision, but I have asked the Department by minute to-day to put up at the earliest possible moment a scheme for the starting of that work, which is likely not only to be enormously beneficial in itself from every point of view but also to provide regular employment for perhaps three or four years.

As you know, we have a number of smaller drainage and irrigation schemes to be carried out more quickly, many of which I hope we will be able to undertake from our own funds, and I have asked the Department this morning to be ready with them as soon as possible.

As regards other works we have always certain roads which should be properly done, and the shutting down of the U.S. military and naval work will enable us to get materials to go on with those works.

With regard to today's business the first item is that touching the Estimates and the motion to approve of the Estimates. The second motion in the name of the Colonial Secretary is that touching the Bishop's High School, and I should like to refer to it before we adjourn this afternoon in order to appoint a Select Committee of the Council to go into the details of the various obligations we have to take on and report to the Council when we come to the substantive discussion of the motion.

As regards the motion on the Estimates I would like to be able to call upon the Colonial Treasurer to reply to the debate not later than 3 o'clock in order to get that portion of the business finished to-day.

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#### PAPERS LAID.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following report:—

Colonial Audit Department—Annual Report of the Auditor to the Director of Colonial Audit and to the Government of the Colony of British Guiana, for the year 1941, together with Governor's despatch forwarding the report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer) laid on the table the following report:—

Report of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to consider the estimates of expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1943.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill:—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to empower the Governor to extend the time within which certain documents may be deposited with the Registrar by Life Assurance Companies.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture) gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill:—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to provide for the Control of Sugar Experiment Stations for a further period of five years from the first day of January, 1943.

## UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

## OLD AGE PENSIONS.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT gave notice of the following Motion:—

WHEREAS a Committee was on October 27th, 1939, appointed by His Excellency the Governor to consider the possibility of making further provision for the poor and/or aged inhabitants of the Colony of British Guiana and more especially the introduction into this Colony of the provisions of the law relating to Old Age Pensions as pertain in the British Empire:

AND WHEREAS the aforesaid Committee submitted its report (*vide* Legislative Council paper No. 11/1940 C.S. No. 93/17) to which was annexed a Draft Pensions Ordinance and Regulations

AND WHEREAS the Committee recommended that the aforesaid Ordinance and Regulations should be brought if possible into effect as from January 1st 1941, in order to allow Old Age Pension payments to commence on July 1st, 1941:

*Be it Resolved.*—That this Council recommends that Government makes provision on the Estimates for the year 1943, in the sum of \$200,000 for payments under an Old Age Pensions Ordinance which should be forthwith enacted.

Mr. JACOB gave notice of the following Motion:—

WHEREAS it is desirable to introduce in the Colony of British Guiana further provisions for the poor and aged inhabitants by way of an Old Age Pensions Scheme;

AND WHEREAS a representative Committee went into the entire matter and recommended in April, 1940, that an Old Age Pensions Scheme should be brought into operation in British Guiana with the least necessary delay:

*Be it Resolved.*—That early effect be given to the recommendations of the Committee by way of introducing the necessary legislation to provide for the payment of Old Age Pensions:

*And be it Further Resolved.*—That this Council recommends and approves of a sum not exceeding \$200,000 being placed on the draft Estimates of Expenditure of 1943 for the payment of Old Age Pensions as recommended by the Old Age Pensions Committee.

## DEVELOPMENT OF FIBRE INDUSTRY.

Mr. ELEAZAR gave notice of the following Motion:—

THAT Government be requested to obtain through the Colonial Development and Welfare Act a Loan of \$250,000 (two hundred and fifty thousand dollars) free of interest for a period of 10 years for the development of the Fibre Industry in the Colony.

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

## BUDGET DEBATE.

The Council resumed the debate on the following Motion:—

That this Council approves of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1943, which have been laid on the table.

Mr. McDAVID: Before we go into Committee, I think this is the time when Members take the opportunity to make their general comments on the financial situation generally, on Your Excellency's Address and on the Budget Statement,

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to take this opportunity to make a few remarks with respect to Your Excellency's speech to this Council on the 18th ult. as well as the speech by the Colonial Treasurer. Before the advent of the 1928 Order in Council it was usual for the senior Elected Member to read to the Governor the considered opinion of the Elected Members of what used to be called the Speech from the Throne on the occasion of the opening of the Legislature. On the advent of the present Constitution that privilege was denied us so that it becomes necessary now for Members to adopt various devices in order to be able to express their views on the situation in any particular year. In those circumstances I crave Your Excellency's indulgence to make some remarks on the speech which you so ably delivered on the 18th of last month, a speech which was lucid, candid, detailed and fault-provoking.

You succeeded, Sir, in diagnosing very accurately indeed the chronic economic disease from which this country has been suffering, but I beg leave to differ from the conclusion which Your Excellency has drawn from the symptoms as to the cause or causes of that disease. Your Excellency found that for some unknown reason this country lacks the driving force of co-operation with Government in many respects, and further that in some inexplicable manner the community, while complaining of failure on the part of Government and of the several Departments and some of the officers of those Departments, still approached Government in the belief that Government could do the very things about which they complained. I take exception in that case to the word "belief." I venture to assure Your Excellency that it is not a matter of belief in most cases: it is a matter of forlorn hope and it is not an appeal to Government but to Your Excellency as Governor to give sympathetic consideration to some of those complaints,

Your Excellency also complained that you did not see that pioneering spirit which is necessary for the development of certain areas in this country. Pioneering in British Guiana! Shades of men who are still alive today and who have known what it is to travel over rocks and falls, and others who have gone down in hundreds at Tumatumari falls between 1886 and 1923! That danger is still there and men are still pursuing that course. With respect to the development of the interior Your Excellency will be surprised to know that not so very long ago no one could get a piece of land in the interior unless he applied for a concession of at least 100 acres and paid \$10 per acre. That certainly was no assistance to pioneers but was a deliberate and considered plan to prevent people from going into the interior for the purpose of settlement.

When Your Excellency says that people are not taking sufficient interest in land settlement I say again that that conclusion can only be arrived at by a person who is unaware of the facts of the case. It would surprise you to know that within the last decade—it might be only half a decade—a sugar plantation not 15 miles from Georgetown was found to be indebted to Government in the sum of \$20,000. Government pretended to make an attempt to get that amount but stood by and allowed that estate to be sold at execution for \$8,000, losing \$12,000 on the transaction. The person who purchased it sold it within a month for \$16,000. The second purchaser, a person with some initiative, made some improvements and sold it again for \$50,000. To crown it all, Government in turn purchased two acres of the land for \$2,000. Those facts are on the books of the Government and cannot be contradicted. Where is Government's sincerity in inducing people to take to the soil? That estate is in a district which claims a modicum of drainage and irrigation and is within a reasonable distance of Georgetown with trans-



portation facilities by rail as well as by road. Was that encouraging land settlement? People are told to go to the Rupununi, the Mazaruni River or the Berbice River District, but when Government has 10,000 or 20,000 acres of land in a fine locality it prefers to throw away \$10,000 and allow an individual to make a profit of over \$25,000. Though the people of this country have many faults I consider that this country has been suffering from what I have described before as a system of "obscurantism"—keeping the people in the dark and bluffing them.

Your Excellency thinks that at no distant date Government will have to take more power to deal with conditions locally, but I am not sure that lack of power is the cause of the trouble. I think it is the power which Government had and used in a wrong manner that brought about the condition that we now see. I admit that in some directions, if Government had the power, certain land-holders would have to give up what they have grasped and kept from other people without any beneficial occupation. There are many such people in the country who have always had the power through the influence of the local Government and the Colonial Office, and they have succeeded in hoodwinking the powers-that-be into believing that those people who are sandwiched under unfavourable circumstances are the persons to blame. The whole tenor of Your Excellency's speech is a call "To arms!" But as soldiers we feel that our duty is to do or die and not to reason why. The blunder is not where it seems to be; it is the other way about. I am not here to-day to preach a sermon. I am rather in the mood I have always found myself in—the mood to tell Government some plain truths in the best possible way.

It must appear to Your Excellency very strange that people come to you and crucify certain Government Officers and almost in the same breath they

laud another. Would Your Excellency be surprised to know that the opinion you have formed of Mr. Laing, which the Secretary of State has endorsed, is the opinion of the whole Colony? The people are aware of the fact that Government wants humanizing. I have heard it said over and over in this Council by people who ought to be better informed, that the people seem to want Government to do everything for them. That seems so childish. Government levies Sea Defence rates from people on the Berbice River and all the rivers but denies them assistance in their river defences. If people in the Berbice River have to pay taxes for police supervision in Georgetown and other parts of the Colony and to maintain public roads and railways, surely they should have the right to ask Government for something. The people on the Berbice River are denied even a donkey cart track from Mara to New Amsterdam. I cannot think of a single thing in this Colony which is not taxed and taxed to its utmost. Taxes are levied from people who are denied the simplest public amenity, and they are told that they go to Government for everything. Where else can they go? We must place the picture in its proper perspective. We must see the people's side and that all the power has been taken from them and given to Government who could not govern, with the result that we have only misgovernment. It is therefore not fair to make the people share the blame. I like the company of Government Officials in this Council and I shall miss them when they have gone from here, but I regret exceedingly that the new Constitution which has been promised us has been delayed in coming.

I am not singular in my view that our present parlous position is due to maladministration. Some people would like to blame all the Electives; some would like to blame the labouring population of the country. Some people think the labourer asks too much for his hire, but surely the man

who pays the piper should have a voice in calling the tune. It is no use blaming the people. They are not going to do one single jot more because they are blamed. They do want assistance and they have appealed to every Governor who has come here to assist them. I know of my own knowledge that some Governors have turned a deaf ear to those appeals; others have tried, some have succeeded in a small way, but all those who have succeeded in a small way have had to fight like Paul against the beasts of Ephesus in the shape of the vested interests in this Colony. Sir Alexander Swettenham fought against the vested interests, and what fate did Sir Walter Egerton, one of our most progressive Governors, share here? He had to face tremendous opposition in this Chamber from the vested interests, but what effect it had I do not know. Some people say it had no effect while others say it did, but he had a recall petition against him signed by Members of the Legislature. Some of those Members are now defunct, with one exception. In the face of that, Your Excellency will understand that when people go to the Government they really go to the Governor. They know long before now that their appeals generally fall on deaf ears, but they may find a "Swettenham" or a "Denham" or an "Egerton" I do not think Your Excellency has fallen one whit behind any of those Governors, and that is the reason why I have endeavoured to point out to you the other side of the picture.

Your Excellency must have observed that throughout the British Empire and outside the Empire, the countries at war and even the neutrals, are finding time in the midst of this conflict to plan for post-war conditions. What is Your Excellency's experience in British Guiana? The experience is that if anything is to be done we will have to go back 100 years. We have to irrigate and drain the land before we can start anything. I mention that in the hope that Your Ex-

cellency will not confine your energies here just to what should have been done 100 years ago. There are other avenues which will bring some hope to the inhabitants of the country, but after much consideration and considerable experience over a number of years I say that if you have to depend on official information you would find that it is against everything that is brought forward to move the country onward. Take for example the information that the interior of this Colony consists of the most valueless oil in the world. I have seen that in official documents signed by responsible Officials, but I have visited the parts of the country referred to and the facts belie that expression of opinion. What has been the result of the considerable amount of what is called "experiment" carried on here? We leave the thousands of fibres with which this country is teeming and go to Bengal to find jute which cannot thrive here. I have authority for what I am saying now. We have several authorities on the curing of tobacco in this country, but Government went to Nyassaland to import a Barbadian. Why didn't we go to Barbados to get him? Anyhow we got a gentleman to tell us that it cannot grow here at all because the country is unsuitable. These things do not make for the progress of the country and to that is added the mirage that there is no labour. To-day we have an abundance of labour of a kind in this country, but we cannot employ it because there are no avenues. I do not say that the sugar industry, our only organized industry, has not done good service to the Colony. I hope it will be the backbone of the country for a long time to come. We are still suffering from the fear of a shortage of labour, forgetting that there is mechanization in field and factory and that applied science has so improved that further mechanization can be looked forward to. It will soon be found possible to mechanize reaping, which will throw thousands of labourers out of employment through no fault of their own.

A labourer is not satisfied with a paltry 80 cents per day when he is the only wage-earner and has four or six persons dependent on him.

Advertize for 30 policemen to-day, and there will be 300 applicants if not more. Call for 30 pupil teachers and there will be 600 applicants, or for 20 nurses for the Hospital and there will be 250 applicants. Those people will never go into a rice field or a cane field. What is the outlook for them? Your Excellency has hinted it and, I hope, you will ask the Secretary of State to give you another term here, but you cannot be here to see those irrigation and drainage schemes come to fruition. It is physically impossible and politically impossible, unless you are going to change the whole procedure as applied to the Colonial Empire.

I think my friend behind me is burning to express his views on the Budget situation. We have to adopt these devious means to put the other side of the picture to Your Excellency because of the abolition of the considered reply of the Elected Members to the Governor's Speech. It was too bitter; the pill could not be swallowed. Therefore on the day when the present Constitution came into vogue I, as the Senior Elected Member, should have had the privilege of replying to the Governor's Speech, but a friend of mine told me "We are all unofficials now; you are no longer Senior Member". An old gentleman therefore came forward and said that the Budget was a very nice one and thanked His Excellency. That was all the reply of the Elected Members to the Governor's Speech. That is the way in which an old and useful custom is brushed aside.

People send petitions to this Council from time to time. They are laid on the table and that is the last the Council hears about them. It was not so in the old days. A Petitions Committee of the Council enquired

into petitions and reported to the Council. The moment the new Constitution came into operation all those privileges were wiped away with one stroke of the pen. That is one of the reasons why we regret that we have not got the new Constitution, which has been promised us to start with, but there is the redeeming feature that we still see some of the old faces and we rejoice to be with them.

I would like to impress upon Government that we are looking forward to some degree of post-war planning. We cannot wait until the war is over to do that. Is British Guiana so different from other places in the world? Every person in the world today is thinking of what is to be done after the war. The question is: after the war, what? British Guiana has not been able to find an answer for itself, but the Secretary of State has put forward some nine or ten conditions which apply to the Colonies, and the first of them is "Economic Salvation." I would like Government to address its mind to the question: what must this country do for its economic salvation? All that has been promised by the Atlantic Charter and by the Home Government is that we will be able to work out our own economic salvation without fear and without trembling, and with freedom. Freedom seems to be certain, and fear and trembling will have departed. Those things having been removed we would like to see some economic planning which would answer the question: After the war, what?

I thank Your Excellency for permitting me to address you in this way. It is a cursory reply because your speech was a lengthy one and so full of weighty matter that I could not hope to deal with it as it deserved in so short a time. I hope Your Excellency will take all I have said as sincere and well meaning, in the hope that something will be done for this benighted country.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Before I deal with the subject before the Council I would like, sir, with your permission, to make some reference to the announcement that was made by Your Excellency this morning regarding the future—and I take it to mean the immediate future—of the sugar crop. I do so because in the first place I regard that announcement very seriously indeed and, if I may, I would like you to give this Council a little more information on the subject if it is available. I have in mind, if I interpret Your Excellency's remarks correctly, that it may mean not only the restriction of the sugar industry in this Colony but, unfortunately, a reduction of the areas planted at present. If the intention is to reduce or to cease further planting of cane in this Colony I have no hesitation in saying that the situation is one which is of very great concern to every man, woman and child in this community. I am not at this moment thinking of the vested interests in sugar but of the possible effect it will have first of all on the labourers in the villages, and secondly, and very important too, the position of those cane-farming areas, particularly in the constituency which I have the honour to represent. Quoting from memory, I think in 1941 the acreage under cane cultivation by peasant farmers was something like 2,000 acres and produced approximately 4,000 tons of sugar. I know the value of the cane-farming industry to those people and I do urge that whatever steps may be taken the interest of the cane-farming industry should receive prior consideration.

That, of course, is merely a side issue of the question. Those remarks apply with equal force to the industry as a whole, and one is tempted to ask the question, in view of the announcement made by Your Excellency, whether the position of the other Colonies in the Caribbean area is likely to be similarly affected? I know that we are considered to be at the bottom of the map in so far as shipping facilities

are concerned, nevertheless it seems to me that if it is found convenient for steamers to come down to any of the ports in the West Indies, to travel an extra 400 miles to this Colony in order to lift its sugar, it would be of considerable benefit to the inhabitants.

It must be remembered that there are several issues to this question. I understood Your Excellency to say that this decision is one which is likely to have almost immediate effect. By immediate effect I mean from early next year onwards. My knowledge of the situation as it exists in this Colony at the present time makes me feel that considerable hardship will be created, for instance in the matter of our storage capacity. There is no doubt about it that every available space at the moment is required for sugar and other products, and if the congestion is going to be greater we can see at once how all these difficulties will add to our immediate problems.

Before I proceed I would like to say that I, personally, am very grateful for the opportunity afforded Members of the Council to examine in detail the Estimates of Expenditure for 1943, and I feel sure that those Members who took advantage of that opportunity left those meetings feeling satisfied that they are now in a position to offer some constructive suggestions concerning some of the items at least that appear in the Estimates.

Before I deal with the position in respect of 1943, I would like to make brief reference to the budget position in respect of the current year. The expected budget position at the close of 1942, as it was recently presented to the Council, seemed to have created in the minds of certain members of the community a very favourable impression indeed, and I have no doubt that most of them, if not the majority of them, appear to be gloating over the fact, or the apparent fact, that the Colony in spite of the difficult times we are pass-



ing through has been able to cover expenditure with the revenue which is expected to be collected during the current year, and what is more, that there will be an estimated surplus balance of something like \$32,000. For myself I would like to consider that undoubtedly a very good achievement, especially when I remember that when the budget was presented to this Council late last year an anticipated deficit of around \$100,000 was shown. That figure, however, was later revised to something in the vicinity of \$800,000.

Now, sir, I have listened with a good deal of interest to and I have also read with a good deal of interest the review that was printed and circulated by Your Excellency on this question. I have noted with a certain amount of satisfaction the statement made that the policy of subsidization of imported foodstuffs has not been carried out to the full extent that was originally contemplated, and also that the enforced postponement of public works was the main contributing factor to the very favourable budget position. Whilst this is so, I observe that little or nothing at all has been said about the increased burden of taxation the people of this country have been called upon to bear within recent times in order to meet the rising tide of expenditure. I think there can be no doubt that this responsibility that has been placed on the shoulders of the people of this community has been carried out with pride and, I venture to suggest, with cheerfulness. And whilst it is true that the final result of our position at the end of this year is something that we should really gloat over, it is my view—and in this I agree with the hon. Member on my left (Mr. Eleazar)—that we should not permit our vision to be clouded. Plans should be commenced at once, if not yet commenced, to place our post-war budget on a more scientific and economic footing. I know, sir, it will be said that it is too early to discuss any relief in taxation having regard to the number of

responsibilities that we have to carry in these times. Nevertheless, sir, I think and I feel that hon. Members of Council would agree with me, that this feature should find a place in the consideration of our future problems. I have arrived at that conclusion after giving this subject considerable thought, and it is my view that it is the only hope we can look forward to if we wish to see the economic structure of this Colony placed on an even keel.

I have already briefly referred to the rising tide of expenditure, but in order to appreciate the value of this remark let us examine even briefly the Budget position as it was presented to Council late in 1941 and the position as it is now presented to Council in respect of the year 1942. The estimate of expenditure was then shown as \$7,727,140 and the latest revised estimate as \$9,000,335 or an increase of \$1,273,195. Those were the original figures presented to this Council in 1941 in respect of 1942, but the latest revised estimate—I think Your Excellency quoted these figures—is \$9,000,335 or a difference of \$1,273,195. I am sure it is not expected of me in this Council to refer to the several items in detail. As a matter of fact it will take up a good deal of time, but from an examination of the figures I think it will be of interest to point out that although there is an increase in all departments the increase in some is undoubtedly very large.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. Member also speak of revenue?

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am coming to that. I know there will be some satisfactory explanation for this abnormal increase and, as a matter of fact, I am fully aware that some explanations have already been given. I am also aware that in some cases covering authority has already been given by Council for the expenditure, but sir, this observation is made in order to show, what I consider, an apparent lack of scientific framing of

estimates on the whole. I have had occasion here to complain, and I still maintain I am justified in the complaint, that the tendency is to present to the Council in the first instance estimates of expenditure on the low side and even revenue for that matter on the low side, but if in the meantime a fairy godmother should step in and revenue receive a fillip, automatically expenditure goes up and in that way the excess revenue is immediately spent. I have no doubt, sir, that in framing estimates on the whole very often there are items that come up for consideration and are postponed either for a more convenient time or, in case the financial position warrants it, to the following year. That may be so, but I think you will find the complaint of Elected Members is that although they are called upon at some time or other to authorize or confirm such expenditure they have not been given an opportunity either of preparing the plans or considering them beforehand. I regard that complaint, sir, as one that is entirely justified. What the future position will be I do not know, but I have always deprecated it, and I will continue to deprecate Members of Council being called together, sometimes rather urgently, to authorize the expenditure of large sums of money without having had an opportunity beforehand of considering them in the minutest detail. I think, sir, that if those estimates were taken in detail it would be found that many of them are of a long range view and, what is more, I think it would also be found that there are still less of them that might be regarded as a profitable investment. I wish to say right here and now that these remarks cannot be applied and should not be applied to any expenditure on such matters as irrigation and drainage. I wish to make that observation perfectly clear at once because, unless Members feel I am catering for a place on the Canje, I do regard such expenditure in the nature of a profitable investment.

The remainder of the expenditure in respect of 1942, I have found, was utilized to maintain and even to expand—because it seems possible for some Heads of Departments to obtain easy expansion of their department—administrative services that are already heavy, most of them very top-heavy. I wish also to say that although I speak in this strain I have no intention whatever to minimize or even criticize the efforts that are being made to improve our social and welfare services. To my mind, expenditure of that kind is very valuable and, as a matter of fact, should be encouraged, provided of course they are within the limits of our needs and, incidentally very important, of our resources. I regret I have to repeat what I have said so many times before, that the final result of these revised estimates, when they are presented to Council in a form that can be easily understood, shows there is a continuous rise in the administrative cost whether in respect of one service or another, and very often far in excess of the benefits received.

Your Excellency has referred to the revenue position and I have indicated it was my intention to deal also with that question. There has been a corresponding increase in the collections of revenue during the current year and, I think, it would be correct to say this increase was even beyond expectation when the Budget was framed late in 1941, but of course the major increases as compared with the original estimates are to be found under the first three Heads of the Statement. I have disregarded for the purpose of my point the contribution that has been made to the Colony under the Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. Although I stated a moment ago that the increase is under the first three Heads, I would like to say that actually in the case of the first Head, "Customs," there is an expected "short fall" of some \$300,000. Under Head III., "Internal Revenue," the increase expected is over a million dollars (\$1,000,000), and that shows

where the money came from. I think it is important that these figures should be repeated over and over again for the benefit of those persons who may be faced with the task of adjusting taxation to fit in with our post-war problems. I think also that it will be of some benefit to a number of critics who make it appear that only a certain section of the community carries the burden of taxation in this Colony. It may well be that the time may come when that statement may be true if we continue to travel at this rate, but I feel sure that day will never come.

I would like to turn to the 1943 Estimates and to pause for a moment to express my personal appreciation and thanks for the manner in which the Estimates have been prepared on this occasion. I think, sir, it will be admitted that the preparation of the Estimates in this form makes very easy comparison, indeed, of our total recurrent and extraordinary expenditure, and I feel sure that this method will be of still greater advantage later on because it is not found practicable to fit in the various figures during the current preparation of these Estimates. I notice, sir, that the total figures of the recurrent expenditure for 1943, as presented here to Council, shows an excess of only about \$9,000 when compared with the Revised Estimate of 1942 and not the original one and, I must make this observation before passing on, despite the fact that there has been a reduction in the Public Debt of something like ten times that figure, or in round figures \$90,000. I have not been able to make an exhaustive examination of these figures or rather a comparison of these figures with the 1942 figures for a reason. (and here I would like to make a further suggestion for improvement). Under the Departmental Heads I notice that the old style of quoting what is described as "Approved Estimate" continues. I would suggest, a Revised Estimate be given instead,

if it is possible in future, of the Approved Estimate. I feel sure that the hon. Colonial Treasurer will see the wisdom of that suggestion, because if one wishes to make easy comparison of figures it is necessary and in fact essential to have the revised figures otherwise one may be talking in thin air. Although I labour under that difficulty I have been able to observe that, as a result of the removal of certain items of recurrent expenditure under the Departmental Heads, opportunity has been taken to increase the recurrent expenditure accordingly. I am perfectly satisfied in my mind with the justification of that remark. It may be a coincidence, and several increases may well be justified. I refer in particular to the increases in the technical staff of the Agricultural Department and the Public Works Department, the expansion of the Labour Department, and the increased expenditure under the Head of Local Government. As I have said, sir, these increases in expenditure may be justified and so I shall be content at the moment to make no other observation than to say that I regard them now in the nature of an investment, and I sincerely hope that we will receive good dividends.

It is strikingly strange that no estimate has been given showing the estimated cost of subsidizing foodstuffs during 1943, but I have observed that Your Excellency has indicated on page 3 of your Review that you "propose to invite Council to approve by Resolution of the allocation of a sum of \$600,000 for this purpose from surplus balances."

That sentence has been very carefully worded and, I am sure, when it was written Your Excellency must have been fully aware of the fact that the Budget as presented was just about to break even having regard to the fact that such a large sum will be required for this purpose and, unless our expected revenue for next year is increased, it

will become necessary obviously to draw this amount from surplus balances.

THE PRESIDENT: The insinuation is quite unjustified!

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It is only a deduction I have made. You will pardon me referring to it again. The deduction I made was that from the Budget Statement as presented the figures show that unless there was an increase in the Revenue figures as put down there—

THE PRESIDENT: The insinuation was that I deliberately did not put any figure for subsidization in order to be able to make the Budget balance. I repeat it is quite unjustifiable.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I regret exceedingly Your Excellency should interpret my remarks to mean that. I am quite sure you will accept my explanation. That is not what was intended. What I intended to say, and in fact what I still think I did say, was that if this amount would be spent next year, unless there was an increase in revenue the amount would have to be drawn from surplus balances.

THE PRESIDENT: That is quite true, but it is the way you put it. It was an insinuation of dishonesty in putting up this Budget. I do not think you meant that, but in making reference or comparison you should weigh your words more carefully. Government cannot function usefully if such insinuations are made. I do not think you meant it that way.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I did not, sir. Perhaps I ought to say this: If you had permitted me to proceed a little further, Your Excellency would have discovered that my following remarks would then have dealt with the Surplus Balances, in which case Your Excellency no doubt would have been satisfied that there was no insinuation whatsoever. I repeat that no insinuation was intended and I hope Your Excellency would accept the explanation because I intended to go on to deal with the

surplus Balances. My point at the moment is really leading up to what I consider should be the correct view to take in regard to the disposal of the Surplus Balances, and Your Excellency would then have observed that my criticism or suggestion was something different, rather than to utilizing the Surplus Balances for this purpose. It had no bearing whatever as to the manner, if I may use the term, in which the Estimates were prepared or even presented to Council. I am very grateful indeed to Your Excellency for accepting my explanation that no insinuation was meant. I ought to say at this stage, and I think Your Excellency should know if not I hope you will one of these days, that I am very careful indeed in the use of words in this Council and, as a matter of fact, elsewhere too.

Before I go on to this question of the Surplus Balances and whilst dealing with this matter of subsidization, I would ask that this Council be informed at an early date how it is proposed to spend or pay out this sum of \$600,000 which was referred to in Your Excellency's Message, because Your Excellency will appreciate that I find myself in some difficulty in making any comment on the proposal in the absence of details.

On the question of Surplus Balances I feel very happy indeed that we shall still be at the end of the year in the favourable position of showing an estimated surplus balance of about two and a half million dollars (\$2,500,000), and I welcome the suggestion, and indeed, would like to congratulate Government on its proposal that of this sum one million dollars (\$1,000,000) should be set aside as reserve. I may mention that when this figure was first uttered by Your Excellency I was hoping to hear the figure of \$2,000,000, but that might be too big a bite to make at the moment, and I feel sure that if the opportunity presents itself that reserve of \$1,000,000 will continue to



grow, at least I hope so. Whilst I welcome this suggestion and congratulate Government I do want to say this: If this reserve is being set aside without any definite plan of development or, to put it another way, if this reserve is to be utilized in the future (immediate or otherwise) for the purpose of balancing our Budget, as happened to us not so many years ago when we had to fall back on the Imperial Government for assistance, I can only say that our labours and the labours of the Government in accumulating this reserve would be fruitless. I have no doubt and I sincerely hope, that my fears are unjustified, that plans are already in being for the profitable expenditure of this reserve when the time comes.

There is one further comment I would like to make on the general question of these Estimates of Expenditure, and that is with reference to the vote under the Colonial Emergency Measures. I may mention I do not propose, although I quote the Head, to deal at any length with the several items under this Head. I would like to make this brief reference that it seems to me that every Department of Government has chipped in on this vote, as from the information that was given in Finance Committee it looks to me that there may have been some rivalry among them as to who should get and who should not. It is all in the War effort and there is nothing to be said about that, but I am a little bit disturbed about the expenditure of the new Commodity Control. I know Your Excellency has intimated the need for greater expansion of this organization having regard to the fact that a system of control is most desirable in the War effort and more particularly in view of the possible expansion of the Bulk Purchases system. I am not in the confidence of the Government and do not know how far matters have reached at the moment but, as an outsider looking in, I am in-

clined to the view that a little too much haste is being practised in the expansion of the organization. I think, sir, that expansion, however desirable it may be in the future, should be brought about a little more gradually. I am inclined to think that we are likely to face expenditure, too early to say the least of it, which may not be warranted. I have every regard for the Senior Officials in charge of this branch of important work, but I repeat that I do think they should make haste a little more slowly. A criticism I have heard outside is this—that very soon the services of a Traffic Cop may have to be requisitioned in order to direct the staff of that organization where they must go and what they must do, or to use a very common expression used everywhere, they are simply toppling over each other at the moment. If it is not too late and if the urgency is not at hand, I do recommend and suggest very earnestly that the expansion of that organization should proceed a little more slowly.

The picture on the whole, as I have seen it, is one which, I think, is full of optimism, and this observation should not be regarded by the Government as an attempt to criticize or condemn entirely the efforts that are being made to maintain a balanced position. If what I have said is of some use to the Government and to Members of this Council I shall feel the effort I have made in making these comparisons worth while.

Mr. JACOB: Sir, before speaking on the motion before this Council I would like to refer to your very exhaustive and interesting review which was delivered on the 18th November to this Council. I want to refer more particularly to three matters therein—the Constitution, Finance and Education. With regard to the other matters raised in your review I will either criticize or support the views expressed under the various Heads. Regarding the Constitu-

tion, I think, everyone in this Council and nearly every responsible individual in this Colony agrees that Your Excellency has done all that was possible to get the suggested change of the Constitution of this Council but, sir, unless this Government and those abroad realize that the people will express disapproval or dissatisfaction from time to time I am afraid we will not get any further. It is generally agreed, and I think it has to be accepted, that the Constitution will be changed. The Constitution of the entire British West Indies. I cannot understand what is the reason for the delay. Your Excellency has endeavoured to explain, but Trinidad has had its Constitution changed and, I think, the people are fairly satisfied with the change and are asking for a greater change. Jamaica has had its Constitution changed, and Jamaica has even got a little more than that. It has had its franchise very liberally changed. I do not think they can get anything better than Adult Suffrage.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is not right. I do not think any change has yet been made in the Constitution of Jamaica.

Mr. JACOB: I think there has been a change.

THE PRESIDENT: Proposals have been made but nothing has been done. It is like here.

Mr. JACOB: I do not like to disagree with Your Excellency but, I think, their Constitution has been changed. Several Members have been appointed in the places of old Members.

THE PRESIDENT: The personnel!

Mr. JACOB: Your Excellency says "The personnel" of the Constitution has been changed. There may be a distinction, but it is without a difference. What I am saying is that here we have a Council to-day very depleted. There are five Nominated Members but

one unfortunately is no longer with us; two are absent and only two are present. Your Excellency has had numerous deputations pointing out that certain people in this Colony require better representation. They have been clamouring for this year in and year out, but nothing is done. We are leaving things as they are. If certain responsible people and particularly Members of this Council do nothing it may be understood that the people of this Colony want nothing. I am sorry my hon. friend, the Member for Essequibo River, (Mr. Lee) is not here, but I would like to place on record here a cable which the hon. Member for Essequibo River and myself sent to a Member of Parliament for the attention of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies. The cable was sent on 31st October after I made the point very clear to Your Excellency in this Council a few days before that it was very desirable that this Budget Session at least should be postponed. Your Excellency has explained in your address that by law you are compelled to prorogue the Council and have a new Session. While that is so, this Session can now stand adjourned until January. Your Excellency has the power by special warrant to carry on the business of this Council without the Council being in Session. It has happened in the past and under this present Constitution, and I see no reason why it cannot happen again in view of all the circumstances to the matter. That cable which was sent to Mr. Creech-Jones reads:—

" B.G. Labour Union and Guiana Trade Unions request you to make urgent representation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to instruct the Governor to postpone the Budget Session until the new Constitution comes into operation. The present constitution continues to work unsatisfactorily. Social and labour requirements are being unnecessarily delayed to the detriment of the workers.

(sgd.) Lee and Jacob "

Those are the reasons why I propose to deal with only two aspects of Your Excellency's Review—Finance and Education. I do not share the views expressed by the hon. Member for Central Demerara as regards the financial position of this Colony. I could not understand what he was getting at. Now that the finances of the Colony are in a better position and I have no doubt that it will continue to improve, I think steps ought to be taken—in fact steps should have been taken—to improve the social and other conditions among certain classes of people in this Colony. It was announced early this year that there was going to be a satisfactory surplus. According to Your Excellency's Review on page 1 it is stated:

"At the commencement of 1942 the surplus balances, as Council is aware, stood at \$2,440,000. Accordingly we shall end the year with this fund still in hand

Here we have two and a half million dollars in hand and, when I look at your remarks under Education, what do I find? Your Excellency has made this statement:—

"While on this subject of Attendance Officers the question of the attendance of pupils at school arises. Each year shows a rapidly rising increase in number on roll and average attendance."

Frankly, that statement has a very peculiar ring. It is well known to Your Excellency and to this Government that there is a Compulsory Education law in this Colony and that three out of every ten children at the present time are not in school. While strenuous effort is being made to place those children in school, Your Excellency makes the statement that the attendance at school is rising. Your Excellency further states:—

"These figures will clearly indicate the demand for—

- ( i ) additional teachers.
- ( ii ) addition and extension of school buildings,

(iii) additional equipment.

(iv) increased staff in the Department.

All of which tend to raise the annual expenditure on Education just for the bare necessities."

Your Excellency has left this brilliant address just at that point. I think you may have gone on to say that in effect provision is being made in the Estimates to spend money for those things. But nothing is stated. No provision has been made, but some reference was made to Mr. Hammond, the wonderful expert. Is Mr. Hammond going to tell Government not to educate the children, not to extend primary education, not to have all the children of school-going age in the schools. I wonder? I have very little regard for experts who come here and after going around advise us to keep this country back. This is the eighth year I have been in this Council. I have taken an exceedingly keen interest in my own way in the affairs of the Council. I had been associated with a gentleman who had served here for 24 years and taken an extremely keen interest in the affairs of the Colony while he was a Member of the Council. So I had an intimate knowledge of affairs before I joined this Council. Frankly, I deplore the attitude adopted in this country for the last 30 years. I speak with a clear and keen understanding of what goes on in the Council as regards general progress and advance. I am ashamed to be associated with a government that can be associated with this kind of thing and to see the state of affairs that exist in this Colony particularly in regard to Education and Social Services.

Now that money is there, statements are being made about creating a reserve fund, investing money, etc. Government, no doubt, has its expert financial advisers and I am not going to say anything about that, but I hesitate to think that we will continue to pay interest where we have borrowed money on interest and that we

will invest any small sum of money that we may have. I am waiting to see what definite proposals will be put forward. Maybe it is too early to refer to that at the moment. On page 3 of Your Excellency's Review it is stated very clearly what we all expected and hoped to see:—

“The £1,000,000 Sterling 5½% Loan of 1922 has been redeemed and replaced by a new issue at 3¼% with a consequential reduction in the Public Debt of \$912,000 and a saving in debt charges of \$90,768 per annum.”

Maybe there is no opportunity now to call in certain Loans, in fact to pay off certain people who have invested with the Government. I advise strongly that if Government has any opportunity to redeem Loans or repay investors that should be done and that immediately. I notice that reference has been made to the establishment under the authority of Resolution XXV of the 20th August, 1942, of a credit through the local Banks of \$1,000,000, guaranteed by the Government. I hope no actual provision has been made. I hope no interest has been actually paid to the Banks in regard to this \$1,000,000. In the Budget Speech reference has been made to the fact that the surplus of \$2,440,000 is held in cash and investments. Now I hope that this cash is not kept aside and no interest is being earned on it. I hope that those investments have been made in such a way as to collect the interest and offset the interest we are paying, and I do hope that due regard is being paid to this matter and it will not be left in the state it is this year.

I notice, too, that reference has been made to the circulation of Government Currency Notes. I could not understand why this Government had not increased its Notes Circulation long ago. I think it is a mistake to allow the Banks to increase their notes circulation by \$500,000. I think that ought to be done by the Government and the Government alone. Maybe I do not

know what I am talking about. Maybe the Banks get nothing for doing that business. But when I look at the Banks' Balance Sheets I see millions of dollars as reserve profits. Maybe it is the business of the Banks to trade on the Government. That is what is happening all along this Colony and, I sincerely trust, it will not continue.

Turning to the Budget Statement of the Colonial Treasurer, as I said just now, it is stated on page 2:—

“We commenced the year with an accumulated surplus balance of \$2,440,933 which accordingly remains intact. This surplus is held in cash and investments, except for a sum of approximately \$240,000 advanced against works on progress in relation to measures initiated for the expansion of rice production, in terms of Resolution No. XVI of the 18th March, 1942, which authorised an advance of \$400,000 for this purpose from surplus balances.”

I have been looking at the report of the Rice Marketing Board for the period 1st October, 1941, to 31st March, 1942, which I received on August 9, and I notice in Appendix “A” on page 12 under “Sundry Creditors” the items “Royal Bank of Canada, \$183,845.06” and “Barclays Bank, \$223,895.89,” making a total of \$407,740.95. In other words, at the 31st March, 1942, the Rice Marketing Board owed the two Banks operating in this Colony a sum \$407,740.95. I am told in Your Excellency's speech and in the Budget Statement that there was a surplus in cash and investments amounting to \$2,440,933. When I look at the Income and Expenditure account I see that interest was paid to the two Banks in the sum of \$5,392.31. That is probably scientific financing, but I should like to be advised as early as possible what amount is owed now to the two Banks by the Rice Marketing Board as at the end of October or November, 1942, and at what rate of interest the Board is borrowing money from the Banks. I tried to get that in-



formation some time ago but it has never been supplied to me. I asked the Board itself and I think I raised it in this Council, but the information was never supplied. Why did the Board borrow \$407,740.95 from the Banks and pay \$5,392.31 interest when there was a surplus to the credit of the Colony of over two million dollars in cash and investments ?

It appears again on page 2 of the Budget Statement that it is intended to invest \$2,000,000 of the surplus and establish a reserve fund. I am asking Government to consider carefully what I have said. I think it would be unwise to invest this money when Government is paying interest on large sums of money and our Public Debt charges are so high.

I notice, too, that it is proposed to continue the Bill of Entry tax and the new Sugar Duty tax imposed in April last. The Bill of Entry tax might have been all right up to a point, but with the increased values now I think that tax ought to be reduced. The tax is 3 per cent. of the value of goods imported, and if it is the intention to give the consumer a certain amount of relief it should not be necessary, in view of the state of the finances of the Colony, to continue this tax and the new Sugar Duty. Why should a staple article of food produced in this Colony be taxed? It was necessary to impose the tax at a certain time when the budget could not be balanced, but I think it should be removed immediately. If it is found that Government needs additional revenue then I say increase the income tax and excess profits tax. ("Hear, hear"). I know that, constituted as this Council and the Governor-in-Council are at present, that is the hardest thing possible.

I will say that something has been done in the past but, as I have complained in the last few years, sufficient has not been done, and in view of what

is going on in certain places in the commercial centre of Georgetown, and in view of the circumstances, I think the business profits tax should be increased and the income tax as well. In fact I go a little further. It is not possible to ascertain the profits and income of certain trades in this Colony. Perhaps that is going to be disputed. It is definitely impossible, and I think some authority should be created whereby Government might ascertain the profits and income of certain traders, or traders generally. We know what is going on. At least I know, but I am not going to mention it in detail here. Perhaps this is a privileged place, but it would not be wise. If Government is not aware of how profits are made and hidden away then it is time that some attention be paid to that aspect of the matter. In view of what has been going on I think the profits tax and the income tax ought to be increased.

As regards the railway and steamer services I observe that the deficiency for this year is going to be \$528,902. I have said it already and I want to repeat it, that the Transport and Harbours Department is a bankrupt concern and will continue to be a bankrupt concern. What beats me is that if you look at the personnel of the Transport Board you will see that the best brains are on the Board, but it is amazing to see what is going on. It is amazing to see the kind of services we get and the congestion, but more amazing still is the deficiency year after year. There is something definitely wrong. I am amazed and surprised, and I think if a different attitude was adopted this Colony would not be asked to pay these huge deficiencies year after year.

I should not like it to be understood that I am in agreement with the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. deAguiar) regarding bulk purchases. He says that too much haste is exhibited there, and that there should

be a gradual expansion of the bulk purchasing system. I think there has been too much delay in the past, and I am hoping that it will not be a war measure but will be continued indefinitely for the betterment of this country. I thought I had a little knowledge of business methods (laughter), but recently I was amazed to see what was going on in some of the most reputable houses—they call themselves reputable and I repeat the word—and I think the time is long overdue when firm action should be taken by Government in the interest of the general community. Those reputable houses should not be allowed to do what they have been doing and are continuing to do up to the present time. While my friend thinks it may be communism I should like to refer to what is going on in Europe, and particularly in the United Kingdom. Call it communism or what you like, I think it is the best thing for the future. I conclude by saying that I am very disappointed that the composition of this Council has not been changed.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I think Your Excellency's review of the Colony's position is quite clear and exhaustive. Everyone of us is conscious of the untiring energy with which Your Excellency has thrown yourself into the public duties of the Colony, and your speech embodies a plain-spoken and well considered analysis of the prospects and problems of the Colony. I have listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) on the announcement made by Your Excellency with respect to the sugar situation. We all hope that nothing will be done to militate against the interests of the sugar proprietors in this Colony, because the large agricultural population of this Colony largely depends for its livelihood on the successful carrying on of the sugar industry. There can be no doubt about it that the sugar proprietors have done a great deal in the

past to improve social conditions on the estates, and they have done everything possible to accommodate the labourers. We cannot do without the sugar and rice industries.

I am rather pleased to hear that steps will be taken to proceed with the Bonasika-Boerasirie scheme. May I express the hope that similar schemes will be undertaken in other districts of the Colony where it is proved that the lands are capable of agricultural development. Steps have already been taken in certain parts of the County of Berbice, but we hope that not only drainage schemes but irrigation schemes will also be undertaken. Steps should be taken to tap the Canje creek in order to provide irrigation. I have read the notes of the experts on the question, but I think the sugar estates on the Corentyne Coast have for many years provided their own irrigation and drainage schemes. Why can't Government act similarly in certain specified areas on the Corentyne and provide its own permanent plant or, if need be, make some arrangement with the sugar estate proprietors who might assist in flooding the lands which are to be put under rice cultivation? I believe that one estate proposes to assist the farmers in an irrigation scheme. It is a very laudable act on the part of the estate proprietors in coming to the rescue of those people who have suffered for years.

It is only by providing the farmers with adequate drainage and irrigation when required that we can hope for a successful prosecution of the rice industry of this Colony. The East Indians particularly have laboured very hard indeed to build up that industry, and we hope that Government will do everything in its power to assist in the direction mentioned so that the farmers may be able to reap where they have sown, and make beneficial use of their lands.

The development of the interior by a railway will require a great amount of capital. Let us undertake schemes which are quite near at hand, and where we have a resident population. I would rather see the people who are settled on the coastlands given adequate provision in order to keep their lands beneficially occupied and contiguous to the sugar estates, so that they might be able to devote some attention to their farms. A land settlement scheme in the interior would be a difficult question.

With regard to the mode of taxation the statement has been made that we should increase income tax and excess profits tax. I think Your Excellency has your financial advisers, and I take it that they are the best persons to put before Your Excellency any scheme for raising money. There is no question that the present situation demands energy and resourcefulness, and Your Excellency should be placed in a position to be able to put your finger on the pulse of the Colony. In order to do that Your Excellency has visited several parts of the Colony to see things for yourself, and a good many of those projects should be gone into carefully by Your Excellency and steps taken to formulate such schemes as would benefit the peasantry of the Colony.

There is no doubt that we have placed our reliance on one industry—sugar. I think it has been a *sacæ* policy of Government to put all its eggs into one basket. While the sugar industry was in a flourishing position it was unfortunate that other industries were not taken into account with a view to having a happy peasantry. I would like to see a land settlement scheme under which well drained lands could be given out to the people of the Colony, either in lieu of return passages to East Indians, or sold at a nominal sum. There are certain settlements which have been drained and given to immigrants in lieu of return passages. Those settlements have proved a success, as for instance the one on the Corentyne.

When I see the number of youths who apply for work at Government offices and commercial houses day after day I take the trouble to explain to them that those places cannot absorb the number of children who are being turned out of school. It is therefore the duty of Government to provide some post-primary or some technical education whereby those youths may become useful citizens. That is a problem which Your Excellency will have to face sooner or later in this Colony. There is also the problem of the young women of the Colony. Efforts should be made to train them in some particular direction. We have a Trade Centre in Georgetown, and we are trying to do the same thing in Berbice too. The Canadian Mission at Pln. Albion has also undertaken work in that direction. We are trying to help ourselves, and Government will give whatever financial aid that lies in its power. It is a very commendable effort on the part of the Canadian Mission Body, and Your Excellency has made reference to it in your speech in very complimentary terms which should be very encouraging to the Rev. Mr. Dickson.

We have lands suitable for rice cultivation and suitable for the Grow More Food Campaign. Your Excellency visited New Amsterdam and spoke quite plainly on the situation. It is clear that if we intend to proceed with the plan we have in view we must have the united support of the people of the Colony and also Members of this Council to go about, as I have been doing recently, instructing the people on the lines they should pursue. A very good start has been made, and land which had been lying idle for years have now been put into beneficial occupation.

We also have the report by the Committee of which Mr. Duke was Chairman, which is worth going into very carefully in order to provide security of tenure for rice farmers. The existing conditions do not encour-

age people to embark on any extension of the rice industry. I know of certain cases where lands are given out by estates at very nominal rentals, the estates providing irrigation for their tenants. The water comes from the Canje creek, and means should be adopted by Government under the scheme to see that those areas are irrigated. That would be a great inducement to the people to enlarge their cultivations. After all the rice industry is one which should be supported and maintained by Government because it is of immense value to this Colony, particularly at this juncture. This Colony should become the granary of the West Indies. We have fertile lands on the coast, and the population is there already. I do urge that great care should be taken to give every encouragement to the rice cultivators to extend their production. If the sugar estates can provide those people with lands surely Government should in some measure also assist them to extend their cultivation.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I desire to ask you, sir, in view of the bombshell you delivered to the Council with regard to the sugar industry, that you will keep Members fully informed of all the details of the situation. There is no doubt that this country depends upon agriculture and sugar above everything else. The situation you have disclosed this morning is an appalling one—that the public must look forward to a curtailment of expenditure on the sugar estates. A curtailment on production up to about 40 per cent. will mean—

THE PRESIDENT: I did not say so.

Mr. WIGHT: I am putting it at 40 per cent. I was told in the course of a conversation that that is the estimate. Some of the estates will not be affected, but the larger ones will have to curtail production to that extent. The position is not a simple one. You have travelled about the Colony, sir, and seen for yourself. If

the circulation of money in weekly wages on the estates is reduced, as it naturally will be if production is curtailed, it is going to be a serious matter. Apart from that there will be reduction of importation and reduction of staff. The estates will not be getting the necessary supplies such as bags and things of that kind. The position is serious, and I am asking you, sir, to let us have the full details as soon as they are available. You can quite understand the curtailment of work that is bound to result from a reduction of production. The position is far more serious than you have told us today. I can quite see that you are an optimist, and that you hope for the best, but I appeal to you to give us such details of the proposed curtailment of the production of sugar as are within your knowledge.

THE PRESIDENT: I prepared this morning a précis of the telegram I received over the week-end, amounting to some six pages of closely typed foolscap. I prepared that précis particularly for the sugar producers of British Guiana, and I am circulating a copy of it confidentially to Members of the Council, giving such details as I have. I think the hon. Member who has just spoken has not quite appreciated two things I did say this morning. One was that His Majesty's Government will continue to purchase the whole sugar production in British Guiana in 1943. Not only that, but the grinding of cane will go on in 1943 even if some of the sugar produced will not be shipped and, for all I know, may have to be thrown away.

That is a very generous concession from the Home Government in recognition of the serious social and economic effect of a shut down or serious curtailment of the sugar industry straight away from today. What I did say was that, following on that, there must be a gradual reduction of the acreage under sugar, and some degree of refraining from re-planting. There are other things hanging by



that, such as the inability to import fertilizers, but I should also add that in the telegram from the Secretary of State it is very specifically stated that this will in no way prejudice the rights of this Colony as regards world sugar production after the war. That is a very great thing indeed, because on that depends our future. I am perfectly certain that during the period of the war the Imperial Government will see us through.

Mr. WIGITT: I thank you, sir, for the explanation, and I am patriotic enough to believe that the British Government will see us through, but you must bear in mind particularly that cultivation will have to be curtailed next year. It is the curtailment next year for the year after that I am drawing special attention to.

Mr. SEAFORD: I should like to say that as regards 1943 it is admitted that there has been a very generous offer on the part of the Imperial Government to pay for the amount of cane already grown, but we would like to know what are the prospects for 1944. Is the Colony going to be paid for the same quantity of sugar as in 1943, or will there be a reduction in the quantity, which would mean a reduction in planting? If there is a reduction in planting in 1944 there would be a reduction in wages paid out as from January, 1943. If there is no planting the whole structure of the industry would be undermined. Although we are told—and we appreciate the fact—that our post-war industry will not be affected in any way it may take us about five years to rebuild that structure which will be destroyed by our inability to get fertilizers for re-planting and other essential requirements for a sugar estate.

THE PRESIDENT: I am entirely without knowledge of what degree of payment there will be in 1944, but that is one of the things we will have to settle by and large. I am perfectly certain that the whole question will

have to be worked out between Government and the sugar producers in order to produce the least possible damage to the Colony as a whole.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I gather from the speeches of one hon. Member and perhaps two, that there was some fear that during Your Excellency's regime here you may come up against vested interests. As I have a personal recollection of the circumstances I think it would be well if I mentioned what took place during the regime of Sir Alexander Swettenham. There was a manager of a sugar estate—Ph. Friends—which was then owned by the Colonial Company, and it was represented to the Government that certain conditions existed there as regards the personal relations of the staff with the East Indian women on the estate. It was well known that on every sugar estate there were those illicit relations, and on the initiative of the Indian Government through the Authorities in England (I do not think there was an India Office then) instructions were received by the Governor of the Colony, Sir Alexander Swettenham, that unless that condition of things ceased he should withdraw every immigrant from the sugar estate. In other words, the indentured immigrants should be withdrawn from the particular estate and every other estate where those conditions existed. It had nothing to do with the Government's policy towards sugar or the interest of the general public, or with economics. It was simply represented that those conditions should not be allowed to exist. Sir Alexander Swettenham did come up against the vested interests in a situation like that. In other words the Government of the Colony has frequently to act contrary, perhaps, to the inter-result of instructions from England. I do not think there were many such occasions.

Reference has also been made to an incident that occurred during the re-

gime of Sir Walter Egerton. It has been said that he came up against vested interests. Now the simple position was this: that Sproston had a contract with this Government for the steamer services. They were paid various subsidies from time to time, and when they asked for an increased subsidy it was thought that it should not be allowed. It so happened that the Chairman of Sproston was Mr. Laing who was a member of the Executive Government. Sproston were heavily indebted to the British Guiana Bank, and the Manager of the Bank knew perfectly well that unless those subsidies were maintained it meant perhaps a very serious state of affairs at the Bank. The younger of the Sprostons was at that time Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bank—a very enterprising man whose honesty was unimpaired. It therefore became a domestic situation in which the Governor had to act. Sir Walter Egerton refused to pay the increased subsidies and proceeded to make arrangements for a Government steamer service. In circumstances like those it cannot be said that the Governor should be afraid to act on his own initiative. Sir Walter Egerton took what we thought was a very proper decision, but when he went to England another serious situation arose.

It has often been said that there was a petition prepared here and signed by two Electives for the recall of Sir Walter Egerton because the representatives of the people were opposed to the construction of a railway to the interior. Sir Walter Egerton did himself visit the interior, accompanied by Mr. Bland, and make certain proposals in London for the construction of a railway from Georgetown to the frontier. The mistake that was made by Sir Walter Egerton was a mistake of judgment. I, as an Elected Member, would have been quite prepared to surrender whatever privileges we had under that Constitution if that railway

could have been built, but the situation was this: that Sir Walter Egerton never consulted with Members of the Legislature. He consulted no one in this Colony. No one was even aware of the proposal he was making to the Colonial Office, but it was intimated by a despatch that the only way in which the Colonial Office would consider the construction of a railway was if the people of the Colony surrendered their claim to the Constitution. It was the way in which it was done rather than the policy that was proposed by Sir Walter Egerton that brought him into conflict with the Elective Section.

Those are things which are not likely to occur under the present Administration. I know of no Governor who has made so many speeches in this Chamber or to the public, disclosing to everyone exactly the intentions of Government, as you have done, sir. I personally question the wisdom of making a pronouncement of the kind you made this morning without preparing the public for it, but it is your responsibility. It has produced results, but I personally would like to see the reaction of the planters to it. If serious consequences do ensue it is going to be thought, unless it is corrected at once, that it is either the Government or the Governor-in-Council that is responsible for what might happen to the sugar industry. We all know it has nothing to do with the local Government, and I have risen primarily for the purpose of saying that this policy is not one initiated here, and I do hope that no one in this Colony will tell the labourers on the sugar estates that. That is the kind of thing that is likely to happen, and in one way I think Your Excellency's announcement is likely to do some good, but you have not said, and no one has emphasized it, and what I am anxious to do is to see that no mischief is caused among the people who are likely to suffer as a result of this policy being carried perhaps into 1944.

There is one other feature of the debate to which I would like to call attention. The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has deplored that he has to resort to devious means in order to seek an opportunity to reply to the Governor's speech, and under cover of his motion the Colonial Treasurer invited a general discussion of policy. That procedure, in my opinion, is undoubtedly wrong, and I hope it will not be repeated. I think you will find that even after the new Constitution what happened was that immediately following the Governor's address any Member who wished to discuss general policy would move the adjournment of the Council, which gave him the exclusive right to be the first speaker on the resumption. In the days before the 1928 Constitution I may remind the hon. Member that what happened was that a written reply by the Electives to the Governor's speech was prepared by them and read by the Senior Elected Member. That was the procedure under which the Electives outlined their agreement or disagreement with Government's policy, but on the consideration of the Estimates the debate would be confined more or less to questions of revenue and expenditure, and how far Government policy dovetailed with that. There was an opportunity for a general discussion, and Members cannot complain that no opportunity was given them by Government. They must take the initiative, as soon as the Governor has concluded his address, to move the adjournment of the Council.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I was the Senior Elected Member when the Council met for the first time under the 1928 Constitution, and Mr. Evan Wong came to me, instructed by the Colonial Secretary, and said: "You are no longer the Senior Member; Mr. Austin is now the Senior Unofficial Member and he is going to reply to the Governor's speech."

Mr. WOOLFORD: I have prepared many more replies to Governors' speeches than I care to remember. The point is that we are being asked to implement this new Constitution, and I am anxious to see the Elected Members get back some of the privileges they once had, but I am in very grave doubt as to what is going to happen to the constitution of this Council unless the members of this community are prepared to address themselves to the consideration of public policy. I have said before that very few people in this Colony take any interest at all in what happens in this Legislature. They do not read the newspapers, and have not the slightest idea of what is going on, but you find from time to time a few members of the community criticizing those people who become Members of this Council, yet they would not qualify themselves. As Chairman of the Franchise Commission I have not seen any—I would not say responsible person but responsible representative of the elements I am speaking of now. Not a single person has appeared before that Commission. Therefore, if the constitution of this Council is going to be altered, the material has to be found somewhere or somehow, and I very much doubt whether it is going to be the success that is anticipated by the more radical members of the community, unless men of some experience—not old men but men of mature judgment—found the time and leisure to fill the vacant seats in this Council. I look forward to the future with grave misgivings as to men being found properly qualified to sit in this Council.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): In view of what the hon. Member has said I would like to say that I do not think the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has any very great complaint. I think the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford), the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) and myself are three of the remaining

Members who were Members of the old Legislature when the Constitution was changed. I think the first sitting of the new Council occupied two hours. I think if reference is made to Hansard (I remember counting it at the time with some amusement) it would be found that the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) was on his feet on eleven occasions during the first two hours that the Council sat, which surely was sufficient for anybody.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I was not the only Member of the Council who spoke.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: There is one matter I would like to comment upon. I refer to the motion in my name. It seems to me that if we are going to pass the budget as laid before the Council it may be necessary also to consider the insertion of the sum mentioned in that motion rather than have a supplementary estimate. I say so because the motion as tabled is really a corollary to one I have previously moved in this Council, as a result of which a Committee was appointed and made certain recommendations. In Finance Committee I indicated that I proposed to table this motion. I endeavoured there to stress the point seriously and without any bashfulness, but with a certain amount of temerity I insisted then that perhaps Government would insert an item on the estimate and make the necessary provision for the sum I have stated in my motion.

With regard to the sugar situation I think I will await the opportunity of seeing Your Excellency's précis on the subject, because there is one question which rather agitates my mind, and that is whether the suggested curtailment will be confined to this Colony or there will be a general curtailment of production in the sugar producing units of the British Empire?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it will be general. In some of the American territories it will be even greater than in the British territories.

Mr. McDAVID: It is not usual for the mover of this motion to make any specific reply to the speeches made on the Budget and on Your Excellency's Address. Those speeches usually cover a very wide field, sometimes being rather vague and in general terms. On this occasion, however, I wish to make a few remarks with respect to some of the points made, and also make some comments of my own in regard to the Budget Statement itself. I did say at the opening of the statement that:

"We are fortunate in that this Colony has suffered so far no major disturbance with respect to its basic industries, certain of which have, in fact, progressed materially as the result of the war."

I much regret that within two weeks we should have had this announcement of what is a very major disturbance in regard to our most important industry which might have its effect on the budget. You have said, sir, that its effect on revenue may become apparent in the latter part of 1943. That may be so, and therefore to that extent my budget picture is not as happy as it looked when I presented it.

Secondly, I went on to say in the Budget Statement that no additional taxation was proposed for 1943. That is still true, but I think I ought to say that quite recently a telegram was received from the Secretary of State commenting on the budget, and one of his comments was a suggestion that we might have considered increasing income tax with a view to safeguarding our surplus. That matter is still under consideration, but I just make this statement because I must issue the warning that it is possible that we might have to come back to this Council with proposals for an increase in taxation. Income tax has got to a stage now when, if it is carried very much higher, we will have to consider the whole framework of our fiscal taxation. There is no doubt about it that this Colony and the West Indian Colonies have framed their fiscal system on in-



direct taxation, and if we are to adopt direct taxation as our main revenue basis we shall have to go into the whole policy and possibly revise the whole system with expert assistance. I can say no more on the subject of income tax, but it does answer the point made by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) with regard to income tax.

The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) dealt more specifically with Your Excellency's Address than with the Budget, therefore I am not going to try to answer any of the points he made. I would like, however, to say that as a citizen of the Colony born here, I deprecate the constant use of what I call *cliché*. We always talk about the "parlous condition of the Colony" and this "benighted country". After all we are not so badly off, in spite of the announcement which was made this morning. Things have not gone so badly with British Guiana as with other parts of the Empire. I do ask the hon. Member not to go on using those words. We will continue to believe ourselves to be benighted if those words are emphasized so often in public.

The hon. Member went on to criticize Government for not yet planning any post-war policy. I, as a public officer, have been unable to digest all the reports which are being poured out—huge printed volumes on social services, agricultural development, education, drainage and irrigation, and all sorts of reports by experts sent here by the Colonial Office and Sir Frank Stockdale's organization. I have not yet been able to even complete reading those reports which deal with extensive planning. I think the hon. Member should himself try to read and satisfy himself that those reports do deal with plans for the future of the Colony.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. deAguiar) did attempt to deal with the budget in a somewhat superficial manner. He merely deducted one column from another and arrived at a figure which showed an increase in the actual expenditure for this year, which he called the revised estimate, over the approved estimate. Then he went on to deplore the lack of a scientific framing of estimates of expenditure. In these days of rising costs, to ask us to plan our expenditure scientifically is something which I for one am unable to do. I doubt whether even in Water Street there is scientific planning of expenditure. He referred to the difference between the revised estimate and the approved estimate of something like a million dollars, but this increase is in fact spread over about four or five items only.

On Colonial Emergency Measures there is an increase of \$197,000, subsidization \$300,000 and on Transport and Harbours there is an increase of \$93,500, due almost entirely to the increased cost of supplies, materials and fuel. Then there is an increase in war bonus of \$156,000, and this Council very generously undertook to refund the temporary increases which were withheld from civil servants some years ago. There is also an increase in the dietary vote for the Hospitals of \$40,000, which is something entirely beyond control. These items alone total \$976,000. That is my answer to the charge of lack of scientific planning of our expenditure.

The hon. Member referred to taxation and he seemed to imply that there has been a growth of taxation during the last few years. The inference I draw is that on account of this increased expenditure there has been also a great increase in taxation. I would like to say that what has taken place since the war is that the increase in taxation has been an increase in Export Duty on Gold and Bauxite, an increase of five cents per gallon on Petroleum and two minor increases on the Royalty on

Timber, and Telephone Rents. Apart from that we have an increase of Income Tax; that has gone up approximately 100 per cent. Those are all the increases that have taken place in taxation. There is one point affecting Customs, which, I think, was mentioned by one hon. Member, and that is that the *ad valorem* duties on the higher cost of articles in themselves impose a higher burden on the poor. But to say there has been a great increase in taxation during the war is not correct.

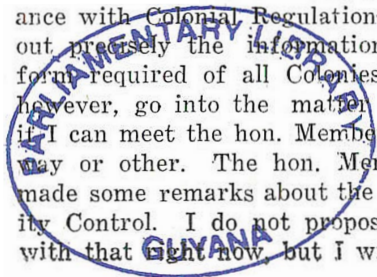
The hon. Member referred to Subsidization and, although he withdrew his remark that there was some disguised reason for not including it in the budget, I think I should refer to it. I had moved a resolution in this Council during the course of this year for the approval of an expenditure of \$300,000 for Subsidization and I gave an undertaking on behalf of Government that nothing would be included in the Estimates or any provision made for 1943 until the whole policy was put before Council again at the end of this year. That being the case, I think it is correct that no sum should be included in the Budget unless and until this Council has had an opportunity of debating and passing another resolution on the subject. That is the sole reason for excluding any item under the head of Subsidization from the Estimates for 1943.

The hon. Member made a small point in regard to the framework of the Estimates and asked for a change—that “approved estimates” be changed to “revised estimates”. These estimates are framed in accordance with Colonial Regulations and set out precisely the information in the form required of all Colonies. I will, however, go into the matter and see if I can meet the hon. Member in some way or other. The hon. Member also made some remarks about the Commodity Control. I do not propose to deal with that right now, but I will remind

him that when I spoke on the motion for the granting of a working capital of \$1,000,000 to the Commodity I pointed out that the whole trend of economic control abroad makes it essential that we should ourselves have an organization fit to take advantage of opportunities offered in getting supplies, as without such an organization we will not get them. I am very glad to be able to say that we in this Colony have advanced so far that in some respects we are farther ahead than other places. We are more prepared to-day to take advantage of the Colonial Supplies Commission which has been sent abroad for supplying the Colonies.

Coming to the remarks of the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob), he referred to two points—one was the question of redemption and conversion of public loans. If there is anything I have been very careful about since I came to the Treasury is to take every single advantage of an opportunity to redeem and convert public loans in order to secure a reduction in the charges. Within the last seven to eight years we have succeeded in removing a very large sum from the Annual Estimates by virtue of those operations. We have lost no opportunity whatever in effecting conversions. Obviously we cannot repay debt at any time. No loan is made in that way. There are always prescribed dates when redemption may take effect, and whenever those dates arrive this Government takes advantage of them. I am very pleased indeed to state that the last operation was so successful as to reduce our Debt Charges by \$90,000 per annum.

On the question of the use of surplus balances, the hon. Member was extremely critical and suggested that the surplus should be used to finance the commercial transactions of the Rice Marketing and Commodity Control Boards. That is a very controversial subject. My view is that the commercial trans-



actions of the Rice Marketing Board should be financial in a commercial way. There are Regulations providing for the raising of the working capital of the Board by hypothecating the rice in stock, and I am very doubtful about recommending the use of any part of our surplus for financing purchases of rice by the Board. After all, it is the Rice Industry which is involved and I cannot see why it cannot bear a fair interest charge on its commercial transactions. As regards the transactions of the Commodity Control, we have not actually borrowed any money but there are numerous transactions which have to be financed by the Banks. Letters of Credit have to be established, and these at present represent the debt of the Commodity Control organization. I do not think at the moment it would be wise for this Government to allow surplus balances to be used in that way unless it is absolutely necessary and unless proper financing arrangements cannot be made in the normal commercial way.

The hon. Member also referred to the question of Bank Rates. Perhaps I understood him wrongly. He wants to know why Government did not issue long before Bank Notes to the amount referred to now. Of course, it is a matter of demand and supply. Bank Notes are not issued unless there is the public demand and there must be sterling given in exchange for those notes. You cannot just issue Bank Notes otherwise there will be what is known as inflation. I will say this : I am very glad that the opportunity has now come for the Government Currency Notes to come into their own. I hope I am not telling any secret when I say they are rapidly taking the place of Bank Notes, and I sincerely trust they will continue to do so. With regard to one Bank at least, their notes are issued under Royal Charter and the conditions of that Charter will have to remain in force.

On the question of sugar duty, the hon. Member said that it should be taken off and, I think, his reason for that is that it now applies in the price. That is not so at all. The Excise duty on sugar was formerly part of the price but the Council removed that old Excise duty on sugar. We reduced the price by one cent per lb. and then reintroduced a new Excise duty which falls entirely on the sugar producer and has no relation to the price at all. Therefore nothing would happen if the duty is removed except that revenue would lose. It would not effect a reduction in the price.

I do not think, sir, it is necessary for me to deal with any other specific point made. I want to conclude by saying how grateful Government is to hon. Members of Council who attended the meetings of the Finance Committee and examined the Estimates so carefully. I hope that it will not be necessary in Council now to spend as much time as had been spent on previous occasions in going into the details. I beg to move that the Council go into Committee to consider the Estimates.

THE PRESIDENT: Before putting the question there are just one or two comments on the remarks made by hon. Members I would like to make. I must express appreciation of the hon. Colonial Treasurer for covering so fully a number of points on which I had made notes myself. I am sorry to hear that the hon. Member for Berbice River feels hurt that an opportunity has not been given for a more formal reply to my own speech, as he calls it, "from the Throne". I have been accustomed to such a practice in another Colony and I used to feel generally I was let in for another speech. I have no objection to the practice. On this occasion I had better make a confession to hon. Members that my address was not made in full a fortnight ago. Had I used all my notes I should have gone over the hour and as I saw

the hands of the clock creeping around towards 12 o'clock I thought I should drop something out and proceeded to do so. Had I spoken in full perhaps some questions made would have been answered there. If hon. Members think it preferable to follow the old practice it is a matter for them.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the comments of the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) on my speech. He found it provocative, and it was meant to be provocative. I am glad to find that it has stirred response in the hon. Member's mind. I would like to express my appreciation of the remarks of the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar), who started by expressing his own appreciation of one or two things in the framing of the Budget and the opportunity given to prosecute a detailed enquiry as to details. On behalf of the hon. Colonial Treasurer and myself I would like to express our appreciation to those Members who attended the meetings of the Finance Committee and, particularly the hon. Member for Central Demerara, for the intelligent and thorough interest shown in our Budget.

Not that I am going to object to one or two things said. He accused us of having framed an unscientific Budget and the hon. Colonial Treasurer accused him of being superficial. My note is that he was "schoolmasterly" lecturing us for not producing a scientific Budget just as if we were in times of peace and our main industries were going strong. He forgot that it is under conditions of war we are budgeting and there are numerous things which crop up that Government has to face, all of which mean financing of some kind. I understand he objects to our calling Members together at short notice to ask for a special vote. What else can we do? I can go on, as some one said, or endeavour to take Members into my confidence even at short notice and put up a case at short notice. I express my appreciation to

those Members who are able to attend meetings in Committee, I know, very often at short notice.

The hon. Member made some complaint about the Commodity Control going too fast and said it should be going a little more gradually. My grievance in this Colony is that in very few quarters I find the community ready to gear themselves up to the war tempo. I have complained bitterly about certain things in the Government Service and I wrote two bad-tempered minutes this morning before coming here, but outside the Government Service I find something of the same kind. We have got to gear our tempo right up. We simply have got to go on with these first things. We have got on the wrong foot more than once in the last six months. I much rather we went too fast than too slow. I did also try to catch out the hon. Member on two occasions insinuating or accusing us of dishonesty. I know very well he did not mean that. He said we had taken the opportunity to transfer deductions of certain expenditure on the recurrent side from some heads and at the same time to increase recurrent expenditure under those heads. That does sound a little dishonest, but he went on to say that was not what he meant. He made a perfectly good explanation. I know that was not what he meant and our honesty is not impugned, and I appreciate the real interest he has shown in our Budget.

The hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) indicated that I was, perhaps, premature in letting out a bombshell this morning about sugar production. I did so because I felt it a little bit unfair to go into a discussion on the general principles of the Budget without Members having some knowledge of what the position is. There is nothing new about it. It has been with us six to seven months, but now we do know there is no hope of early improvement and we have to turn around and make disposition accord-



ingly. I would be exceedingly sorry should there be any misrepresentation, either as to what this Government is doing about it or that it is going to mean that some serious situation will be created. You know perfectly well what the facts are. It is a matter of shipping. It says the American tonnage coming here will continue to load bauxite exclusively and there will not be very much either British or other National ships coming to Georgetown, and the maximum use to be made of that tonnage for shipping sugar is very likely to be limited. It is not a question of deliberate policy of this Government or the Home Government or anyone else, it is primarily a matter of shipping, and secondly that on account of the rationing on which the United Kingdom and the other Nations have placed themselves they do not require our sugar: we can use it ourselves if we can. It means planning between everyone concerned, and we will make the best of such planning so that such things as we have got to do will be on the footing, as far as possible to be, of long term benefit to this Colony.

Some remarks were made on the proposal to create a Reserve Fund. I appreciate the point made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara and the opinion of the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob). I am not guilty myself of this proposal. The Treasurer is. I like him to have his say, and he has put it in. I am not perfectly certain I am convinced that in our present position a reserve fund is such a valuable institution. It rather reminds me of a little boy putting his pennies in the Post Office Savings Bank. In another Colony with a larger revenue in which I served we had a reserve fund of £2,000,000. That was worth while, a large sum of money, but we were able to do it. Whether it is worth while in our case in British Guiana. I have an open mind at the moment. I sympathize to some degree with what has been said by the

hon. Member for North-Western District, in that under present circumstances we cannot afford heavy expenditure.

The matter of a possible revision of our system of raising revenue has been raised by the Treasurer. It has been raised, I think, to meet a suggestion from the Secretary of State. What I would like to say is, that whatever position we are going to find ourselves in as the result of our efforts towards meeting the emergency of war-time, we should not hold our hand in pursuing long view policies but take the opportunity to plan certain things for the future, which we must follow and on which we must expend.

I propose to put the question "That the Council go into Committee and consider the Estimates in detail."

Question put, and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

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#### ESTIMATES, 1943.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): In view of the detailed examination which has taken place in regard to the Estimates I propose that the whole of each Head be put as a motion. If that is approved I would move that the Head "Governor" be passed.

Question put, and agreed to.

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#### LEGISLATURE.

Mr. JACOB: I trust that the yearly privilege granted to Members of Council to speak on the Estimates will not be rigidly curtailed. It is necessary that something appears in the Hansard. I do not know if it is Government's idea that lack of paper is one of the reasons that there should not be the usual speeches in this Legislature when the Annual Estimates come up for consideration. For my own part I propose to exercise the privileges I have. I do not talk too lengthily. I think I always

speak to the point. I want to say as I had referred to it during the discussion of the previous motion that the Constitution of this Council should be changed very rapidly. An ideal thing for this Colony is that there should be a Legislature composed of 25 Elected Members, and the absence of certain Nominated Members here tends to show that too. We have always spoken here about this Legislature being the mouthpiece of the whole Colony. If the people's representatives in this Council are not here then it cannot be argued that an Elected Legislature composed of representatives of 3% of the population of the Colony is considered representative. It has been argued that the Nominated Members represent those persons who are not represented here by Elected Members. At the moment there are only two Nominated Members present and, I am certain, it cannot be disputed that the Members in this Council do not represent the people of this Colony. I just make those remarks to let them remain on record to show that as far as I am concerned I am not in favour of this Legislature continuing to be composed as it is.

#### AGRICULTURE.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I move that the total of this Head be increased by \$600 in accordance with the Report of the Finance Committee and the total be now carried out at \$169,629.

Mr. ELEAZAR: This Department is one which year after year comes in for sharp criticism, and it seems as if one intends to be personal in doing so but it is far from that. Here we have a Department whose expenditure has been increasing from year to year. It is now treble the amount it was on the Estimates when the present Head took charge of that Department and started to organize it, and I make bold to say that the Colony has not received benefit from half of that expenditure.

We have got all kinds of 'ologists in the Department. It is true that we have got some increased yield of Rice, but that is not due to the Department. I have not seen one item in the Department's estimates for the preparation of ricelands or for helping the rice-farmers in any form or shape. The sugar planters have taken their industry in their own hands and they have their own scientific method to carry them through and are pursuing it, but the Department takes credit for all. The Department knows it is not their own doing and, as a matter of fact, the general public is not satisfied but Government is gratified. It is only a case of knowledge of "subtraction" but no knowledge of "sheep". Anything one propounds that does not come from the Head of the Department, and there are very few things which come out of the Department, you are told "This thing cannot be." If it is something to grow you are told "It cannot grow in this country." If it is something to be manufactured, you are told "It will not pay." That is what we have been getting for the increase of expenditure year after year on this Department.

I must mention this matter here because it is something which is very largely in my mind. Not so very many years ago it was a criminal offence to attempt to grow tobacco in this Colony. If this country could not grow it why should it be necessary for anybody to be punished for growing it? After some agitation the ban was lifted but no one was permitted to plant more than a quarter of an acre. That ban was later lifted and at once people all over the country started to plant tobacco, but what was the difficulty they had? When they grew the plant and brought the leaves to market the market was glutted because they did not understand how to cure the tobacco. Some of them tried and ended up with dry leaves. It broke some of them completely. Those who went into

it largely lost all they had and had to give it up. Others are still struggling with it. Then it was argued in this Council and Government was asked to get a person here for the purpose and no other than of curing tobacco. Many people had grown the leaves but they wanted to know how to make them into tobacco that can be used. Representation was made to the Colonial Office and we had a grant given us to get a person to come here for a period of three years and teach us how to cure tobacco. Shortly after that a gentleman came here and naturally those persons who were doing this thing on their own before then rushed to him and enquired of him if he would help them to cure their tobacco. He told them he did not know a thing about curing tobacco and all that he knew was about the growing of it in the field. They were men of substance—one was the Director of a Limited Company in Berbice and another was the principal Director and owner of the Acme Ironmongery in Berbice. Those two gentlemen had been dabbling in tobacco-growing for a considerable time but were beaten by the curing of the tobacco. Although that report was made to this Government that gentleman was allowed to remain here.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): I must rise to a point of correction! Every year since the Tobacco Officer came here the hon. Member has been making that statement. It is absolutely untrue. The Tobacco Officer is one of the largest tobacco-growers in the Empire and he is fully versed in all stages of the cultivation and curing of tobacco. As a matter of fact the curing he has done here under difficult conditions is extraordinarily good. Hon. Members should not get up here and make statements which are not correct.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am bound to repeat them. Mr. Correga is there. I have come here and made the state-

ment time after time and I was willing to call the names of the persons concerned, but the hon. Director had not the courage to get up here and contradict until the Officer had gone. That Officer has come and gone and all that we have got is: Tobacco cannot grow anywhere in this Colony and it is therefore no use growing tobacco in British Guiana. That is what we have got. Where are his credentials as a tobacco expert, except that he comes from growing tobacco in Nyasaland, and that he can tell us we cannot grow tobacco here? When he made his report this Council knew nothing about it, but I see a document called a precis is sent out. I do not know from where. I do not know who is the author.

THE CHAIRMAN: The precis was done at my direction.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think Your Excellency did very well I commend you for it, but where is the report? But for that precis we would not have had a word of the report, thanks to your interest and candour. You do not agree to hide anything in these matters. Here we have a precis, but where is the report? There is not a man in the country who can say that the Officer taught him to cure tobacco, though he found it difficult on account of climatic conditions or otherwise.

Your Excellency, there is another thing I wish to refer to. It is something I know is very near to your heart from the energy I see you are putting into it, your determination that it should succeed and also your expression of opinion more than once that you hope it will continue and will be a blessing to the country after the war. I am referring to the Grow More Food Campaign. But Your Excellency will excuse me, as I think it is my duty to assure you that with very much less energy very much more can be achieved because the thing is progressing not entirely according to the conception of

persons who addressed their minds to it in the first instance. The farming community of this country, outside the sugar planters, have been almost in utter despair and have been so for a considerable time owing to the several difficulties which they have to encounter in order to get something from the soil. It was conceived in the first instance that attention would have been directed towards removing those difficulties as far as possible wherever they existed—and they exist almost all over the country—and that the increased prices brought about through the war would have been an incentive to increased production. I cannot say that nothing has been done in this direction, but I can say that not sufficient has been done. It is true that we hope to get very much more production all round by reason of the energy and effort which Your Excellency is putting forward now.

The sugar estates have during this emergency come to the rescue by putting in large areas of their property under food production, but that will only last until the end of the war. After the war what? Are the farmers who have been struggling all the time to be left in the same condition? Don't you think that money should be spent so that the conditions under which they have been suffering so long should be removed, their lands drained, empoldered and irrigated where possible? The people have only been told to go on planting and they will get prizes for the best field. This is not a criticism. What I am doing is more than that. I am asking Government to address its mind to that phase of the question—the improvement of the condition of the people generally, the small farmers generally. Before this anxiety to give prizes to the best farmer which alone will not produce the best farm, why not spend something more on the general improvement of the conditions of the farmer? Do not rest on the increased quantity of foodstuffs which will be

produced by the campaign, a quantity in which the sugar estates also play a part, because the estates are bound to give it up. It is not their business; they have only come into it through the emergency, but as soon as normal times return they will return to their ordinary business and the farmers will be left exactly where they were before. That is what I am asking Government to see after.

I see a large increase in the estimates of this Department for an increased number of Instructors. That is according to plan, but I do not know that having made that plan it is what it ought to be, because I see one or two youngsters, apprentices, are to be sent out into the districts. What has really struck me is that for the present at least some comparatively young men who had been working in that Department, men who know the districts and all the difficulties the people have been experiencing, can be employed to work among the people in the districts, who they know and among whom they had worked, so as to assist them in removing their difficulties and to instruct them as to what should be done. Those are things which should be done. I thank Your Excellency for the personal interest you have taken in this thing. It is a gracious act on your part to devote so much of your time in running around the country and encouraging the people to plant and get something out of the soil.

Mr. LEE: I would like to know exactly whether Your Excellency is fixing a time for the debate on each item.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member wish to discuss the whole Head? We have not put any particular time.

Mr. LEE: But is it the rule that the debate should be of a certain duration?

THE CHAIRMAN: I have power under the Rules to fix the time,



Mr. LEE: I would like to say that no time should be put because it would in a way force a Member to curtail his speech and many things which he intended to say, perhaps in his hurry to get through, would be left out and those things might perhaps be of great assistance to Government. Apart from that, I was looking through the Standing Rules of this Council and did not see where power is vested in Your Excellency to limit the time of debate. If it is so, I would not like it to be said that as President you have the power—

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, I have power under Rule 26.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to interrupt the hon. Member to inform him that I do not think the Rules preclude me from exercising my right to have the question put. Any Member sitting around this table has the right to ask that the question be put, so that the length of time anticipated by the hon. Member and his colleague to occupy this Council with unnecessary details can be curtailed. I just sound that note of warning. I shall use my privilege to ask that the question be put. The hon. Member may be right as regards Your Excellency putting the question.

THE CHAIRMAN: A motion is before the Council and I can fix the time to put it.

Mr. LEE: We are in the Committee stage. It is not a case that we are discussing a motion. The motion has been already moved and accepted by Council, and we are in the Committee stage to discuss it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will not suppress the hon. Member if he wants to go into details, but I want us to get on with the business and these Rules give me certain powers which I may use.

Mr. LEE: There is no Rule in the Standing Rules and Orders of this

Council to the effect that when a motion is in the Committee stage Your Excellency can fix the time of debate.

THE CHAIRMAN: Subject to what the hon. Attorney-General advises this Rule seems to cover it.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It seems to me that if Your Excellency has not got the power it can be easily be circumvented by the hon. Colonial Secretary on your right or the hon. Attorney-General on your left moving that the question be put. If that is done the whole thing collapses. Whether Your Excellency has or has not the power, that can be circumvented by the application of Rule 25.

Mr. WOOLFORD: The Rules are perfectly clear on the subject. It does not matter whether the Council is in Committee or not, the words "That the question be now put" are in effect a motion. If you look at Rule 13 (*j*) it says the motion "that the question be now put" can be moved by the President or any Member at any time and without notice.

Mr. LEE: What I am saying is that if you put on record something that is being done in the Council where Your Excellency has not got power I must try my best to see whether I am right in my view or you are right. I would like to be informed as the Committee stands now whether Your Excellency can fix a time-limit for a Member to speak on any subject.

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot limit an individual Member. That requires a limiting resolution by the other Members themselves. I can, however, invite them to do so. I can put the question at a certain time.

Mr. Lee: I am glad for the explanation.

THE CHAIRMAN: If any Member wishes to speak I can extend the time.

Mr. JACOB: I quite understand the position, Your Excellency. I did not quite like the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo that either the hon. Colonial Secretary or the hon. Attorney-General should aid you in circumventing the Rules of this Legislature.

THE CHAIRMAN: I need not accept their aid if the thing is within the confines of the Rules of the Council.

Mr. JACOB: I desire to speak on Head III—Agriculture. I did not attend the meetings of the Select Committee and, as I said when we started, I will endeavour to exercise all the privileges I have as a Member of this Council. I have in my hand a copy of the Hansard of the House of Commons of the 17th June, 1942. I notice there that certain questions were raised by Mr. Mathers in regard to the Colonial Development Schemes in British Guiana. Mr. Mathers.—

THE CHAIRMAN: I can take no notice of what you are reading. I require to see it.

Copy submitted and permission given for quotation therefrom.

Mr. JACOB: The report states:—

“Mr. Mathers asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware of the dissatisfaction in British Guiana regarding the smallness of the sums granted under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act: why the proposals of the Welfare Commission are not discussed in the Legislative Council, who wish to see progress made with land settlement and workers' housing schemes: and whether he will ensure that substantial advance is made in these directions.”

It is the privilege of Members to raise all matters in this Council at the Annual Session. My point is that we should not at this stage of our Constitution be restricted. I have various matters to raise under this Head.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you let me hear them I would not suppress you.

Mr. JACOB: Thank you. That answers my friend, the hon. Member for Western Essequibo. During the motion on the Budget I asked, and I have done so on several occasions previously, for the rates of interest that the Rice Marketing Board pays and I have not been given the figures.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Rice Marketing Board does not come under this Head at all.

Mr. JACOB: Is Your Excellency ruling that rice is not an agricultural product? I cannot understand what is the reason for not disclosing this matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you still on the Rice Marketing Board?

Mr. JACOB: Yes, Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will give you an opportunity on some other occasion to raise it.

Mr. JACOB: Very well, sir. I wish to make reference in general terms to Food Production and to place on record here certain data collected in regard to various items of food grown under the direction of the Department of Agriculture or the Director of Agriculture. I have got the prices of locally grown food on the 17th August and on the 1st December and the minimum prices fixed by the Food Production Committee, and I would like to place them on record also so that we can see what progress has been made in regard to the production of food and the prices. The facts are these:—

On the 17th August at the Government Produce Depot the price of plantains was four cents per lb., and on the 1st December it was three cents per lb. while the minimum guaranteed price fixed by Government was one cent per lb. The prices of the other articles were—

	17th August	1st December	Minimum Guaranteed Price.
Tannias	9c. per lb.	8c per lb.	2.1/7c. per lb.
Eddoes	6c.	6c. " "	1½c. " "
Buck Yams ....	12c.	12c. " "	3 c.
Sweet Cassava	4c. " "	3c. " "	½c. " "
Sweet Potatoes	8c.	6c. " "	2 c. " "
Dried Corn ....	32c. gallon	14c. " "	5 c.
Black Eye Peas	20c. "	30c. " gallon	16c. per gallon

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I do not want to interrupt the hon. Member, but is his list much longer than that?

Mr. JACOB: No, I am at the end. I cannot understand this uneasiness.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I want to know what is the point at issue, I know all those prices. I want to know what he is driving at.

Mr. JACOB: I have not been able to quite follow what the last speaker said. We are hearing every day about increasing production of food of every kind, but so far as I have been able to ascertain in Georgetown and various parts of the country districts there is very little increased production and prices are abnormally high. I would like to be assured as to when there will be normal production and prices will become normal. I think I have a right to speak on Rice under this Department.—

THE CHAIRMAN: I am going to adjourn the discussion now. There are two points to be dealt with before 4 o'clock—the next motion standing in the name of the Colonial Secretary about the Bishops' High School for Girls arising out of the discussion in Finance Committee on Monday last. We said then that the best thing would be to appoint a Committee of the Legislative Council to consider the numerous questions of detail which would crop up and that Committee would be able to advise this Council when we come to consider the substantive motion.

The Council resumed.

#### BISHOPS' HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the resolution standing in my name be postponed and that a Select Committee of this Council be appointed to consider the proposal that the Bishops' High School for Girls should be taken over by Government on the terms and conditions stated in the Governor's Message No. 2 dated 13th November, 1942, and established as from 1st January, 1943, as a Government School on the basis set out in the Message.

It this is agreed to it will enable hon. Members to get all the facts and figures as regards this proposed transfer which Government is able to put at the disposal of the Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

The President announced the personnel of the Select Committee as follows:—

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

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

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

The Hon. C. R. Jacob (North-West Essequibo)

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

## BONASIKA-BOERASIRIE SCHEME.

THE PRESIDENT: As regards the Bonasika-Boerasirie Scheme there is an announcement which should have been made earlier. I desire to state that in accordance with my Message of the 22nd October and with what I said in this Council on the 30th October, we have to take certain formal steps. The first is to put a provision on the Estimates under Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. The other is that we have to give that assurance necessary under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act that on any enhancement of value due to this expenditure some share of it shall

somehow be recoverable by some means from revenue. As I said, we will pass a resolution accepting that in principle with the intention of proceeding with some form of taxation on the enhanced land value due to this particular expenditure. We must also agree to control of rents on such areas. I have asked the hon. Colonial Treasurer to prepare a resolution in general terms to be put to this Council without putting a provision on the Estimates. The Council stands adjourned to 12 noon to-morrow.

The Council adjourned to the following day accordingly.