

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 30th SEPTEMBER, 1948.

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Campbell Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C.

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. Dr. G. M. Gonsalves (Eastern Berbice).

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. G. H. Smellie (Nominated).

The Hon. J. Carter (Georgetown South).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, the 24th of September, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

PAPERS LAID

The following reports and documents were laid on the table:—

The Report of the Department of Labour for the year 1947.

The Reports on the Poor Law Department for the years 1946 and 1947 — (The Colonial Secretary)

The Report of the Select Committee appointed to consider the Rent Restriction (Amendment) Bill, 1948 — (The Attorney-General)

The Report of the Colonial Treasurer for the year 1947.

The Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 23rd of September, 1948 — (The Colonial Treasurer).

ANNOUNCEMENT

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES.

The PRESIDENT: Before we proceed to the Order of the Day, I feel I should draw the attention of the Council to the fact that a Member at the last meeting gave notice of certain questions and, I understand, handed copies of two sets of questions to the Press and these

were published in the Press the following day. These questions had not been passed as in order by me and, in fact, as regards one set of questions I found it necessary to delete the preamble which was not in order. The purpose of a question is to seek information, not to give it. What I wish to make clear is that until notice of any motions or questions appears in the Minutes of this Council it is a breach of privilege by a Member to disclose them to anyone outside the House. A memorandum on the subject was circulated to all Members of the Legislative Council on the 24th November, 1945, and I am arranging for it to be recirculated for the information of Members of the present Council.

The past incident and another incident at the last meeting of the Council make it desirable, I think, that a Committee of Privileges should be appointed, and I have accordingly appointed the following Committee to deal with such matters —

The Hon. the Attorney-General,
Chairman;

The Hon. the Deputy President, and

The Hon. the Member for Demerara
River (Mr. Coghlan), Members.

ORDER OF THE DAY

AIRSTRIP NEAR GEORGETOWN.

The Council resumed the debate on the following motion by Mr. FERNANDES:—

BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommend to Government —

1. the immediate investigation of the possibility of constructing an airstrip in close proximity to the City;
2. if constructing this airstrip is possible, it be constructed without delay.

Mr. FARNUM: I was one of those persons who were approached by the sponsor of this project, but after having had the opportunity of getting the views of the Government and hearing the hon.

the Colonial Treasurer tell us what Government's proposals are in connection with Atkinson Field at a Finance Committee meeting and also hearing the hon. the Colonial Secretary at the last meeting of this Council, I do not see how I can join in voting in favour of the construction of this airfield. To my mind, Sir, the arrangements at Atkinson Field provide for international as well as internal freight and passenger service, and I do not think the Mover of the motion, if it was his business, would spend money in the direction in which he is asking that Government should spend it to provide this airstrip when we have Atkinson Field. But, Sir, what strikes me is, the complaint at present is that the East Bank road is in a deplorable condition—but that is the complaint made by everybody. It seems, therefore, that if that road is put in order that complaint would disappear. I understand that the distance from Georgetown to Atkinson Field is between 25 to 29 miles and with a modern motor car a distance of 25 miles can be covered in a half or three-quarter hour. The distance of the Base from Georgetown is, therefore, nothing whatever.

Another thing which strikes me very forcibly as being in the interest of the people is, if that East Bank road is made up properly and made into a proper highway not only would people be able to get to the Base quite easily and comfortably but it would encourage agricultural pursuit along that road, and I venture to say that quite a large number of our middle class people and people of the lower income class who are eking out an existence in Georgetown would be encouraged to go and live along that road under better economic conditions than they do at present. In fact two weeks ago I was on that road and I stopped in at one of the settlers there. The man had his family there and they all appeared quite happy. They had a little poultry farm, a few head of cattle, and a kitchen garden. The man said to me "I am perfectly happy; the only difficulty is that I am so far from Georgetown and the road is in such a bad condition. If we had a good road I would be able to go in for cattle rearing to a larger extent and be able to take my milk into Georgetown for sale. I feel,

Sir, that lots of other people would do likewise in such circumstances." Therefore I do not see the necessity for building an airstrip near Georgetown, especially after the hon. the Colonial Secretary pointed out the high water level that our country suffers from. I know it and, I think, most of us who go in for building operations know how high that water level is.

The next point is, I do not think the people of the Lodge District are going to welcome such a project. It is to be remembered if an airstrip is to be placed at Lodge, the road into Lodge Village is in a worse condition than that of the East Bank road and Government would have to put both these roads in order and maintain them. Government would also have to maintain two sites—one at Lodge Village and the other on the East Bank Demerara. Further than that, the residents of Lodge Village not very long ago approached Government to let them have the land on which the Government Live Stock Farm is situated because they are in need of land for agricultural purposes.

The hon. the Colonial Secretary predicted, I think last week, that helicopters would in the near future be flying about this Colony and then there would be no need for the airstrip. It seems a sort of prophetic statement by him, because only this week we had the privilege to see such a machine flying in our midst and we were told that it came down on a strip of land bordering the Sea Wall and rose from the same spot. That clearly shows it does not require an airstrip for such a purpose, and I understand the helicopter can do all the work we need for internal freight and passenger service.

Mr. PHANG : I would like to say that at the last meeting of the Council I listened to the admirable speech of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer opposing this airstrip, and what he said was exactly what I was thinking. I do not believe that the saving of a half cent per lb. on freight or the saving of \$2.50 per passenger for transport from Georgetown to Atkinson Field and, perhaps, the saving of time can justify the expenditure of a

half million dollars for an airstrip in the vicinity of the City. I feel that if we have a half million dollars to spare, I would prefer to see it spent on a supply of amphibian planes which can land you at any place on the Demerara River. I was told, I do not know if my information is correct, that the Dakota planes we have were bought against the advice of the Colonial Office. It would be very interesting to know what amount was spent to get those two Dakota planes. We have not sufficient traffic for one and yet we have to maintain two. I feel, Sir, that I should oppose this motion for an airstrip.

Mr. McDOOM: After having heard the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and the hon. the Colonial Secretary I thought this motion would have been withdrawn, more especially as a report has been made and in that report the suggestion was made that such an airstrip might be examined and the possibility of having such an airstrip examined. As a businessman I consider it not sensible to invest in an airstrip just to save a few cents or a few minutes of time. I feel that is a proposition which needs very careful and very keen and thorough examination by experts — men who are qualified to determine as to whether or not such an airstrip can be built near to Georgetown and built at an economical cost. I happen to know that in this Colony there is varying surface of the land far different from that we have at Atkinson Field. Those of us who had to deal with machinery know that it costs an extraordinary amount of money to put up a boiler on account of the nature of the land. The average size boiler, one of 120 Horse Power, necessitates the driving of piles in the laying down of its foundation. At Atkinson Field you do not have to do that, but you will surely have to do something of the kind at any site near Georgetown. If you have to do that and if at Atkinson Field where you have everything there is the possibility of having its use without requiring any airstrip, I feel the suggestion of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer should be adopted. because that would not deny the possibility of the matter being fully examined. I think a lot of time is being taken up which can be saved if this

Council adopts the suggestion of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

Capt. COGHLAN: The motion reads:

“Be it resolved that this Council recommend to Government —

(1) The immediate investigation of the possibility of constructing an airstrip in close proximity to the City; . . .”

It does not say “Whereas it is necessary or that the people want it”. It simply says we must investigate the possibility of construction. It may be possible to construct a battleship and to have no use for it. Let us assume that it is possible. It may be too expensive. Then the motion goes on to say:

“(2) If constructing this airstrip is possible, it be constructed without delay”.

That leaves room for criticism. It is not because a thing is possible to be done that it must be done without delay if there is no necessity or urgency for it. The proposed site, I understand, is at the moment a forest of trees, and in order that a start can be made you will have to root out all those trees and that will take some time. Further the land is 7 feet below sea level, which means that it will take far more than some people think to make that site suitable even as an airstrip. Therefore the first thing about it is that the land there can only be effectively drained at the falling tide, and so the cost of maintenance will be great. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer, who went into the figures on this project, said that even at a minimum conservative figure it would take \$12,500 a year for the maintenance of this airstrip.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I did not say that. I said it would cost \$5,000 to \$10,000, but it was a mere guess.

Capt. COGHLAN: The next point is this: Experts always advise to take off against the prevailing wind which comes from the northeasterly direction. This means that having the airstrip at Lodge you will have to take off over the city of Georgetown or its suburbs. Apart altogether from the fact that the

noise and nuisance which will be created not only to the people of Lodge but the people of Georgetown will be very considerable, there is the danger of accidents. As we all know, accidents with planes happen whether in rising or landing. Therefore, if there was an accident with a plane over the city of Georgetown, it would not only mean there might be great loss of life but a part of the city might go up in flames. Planes will be always flying over the city of Georgetown, and it will be very difficult for commercial people to have the proper use of their telephones through the noise overhead.

The next point is, there is already an air base available and, as most Members have pointed out, if the East Bank road is put in order it would not be very difficult to get up to Atkinson Field by motor car from Georgetown, a distance of but 20 odd miles. Mr. Johnson did work on the air base in Dutch Guiana, but we have had no knowledge of what was the terrain in Dutch Guiana where that base was built. The best type of terrain for building an airbase is either sandy loam or clay. At Lodge Village I do not think, as far as I understand, it is either sandy loam or clay sand. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer has said that no airport in the world pays its way and the Town Planning Authorities will be against it. It is only natural that they will be, on account of the nuisance it will create. Reading from the reports of experts as to the sort of terrain that is necessary they say it must be a well drained elevated area with a well drained surface to permit of the operation of aircrafts under all weather conditions. The approach should be clear of all vertical obstruction. At Lodge we cannot say it is clear of vertical obstruction. Any obstruction 50 feet high adjacent to the airport will affect the landing of planes. Therefore I quite agree with the hon. Member who said it is far better to put the road leading to the existing airport in order and to abandon the idea of putting an airport at Lodge or near to Georgetown at the present time. I have a report here with regard to taking-off risk, and there is a report from an American, Wm. R. Crowther, giving a new twist to plane-wings which will enable the plane to land in 50 feet of space

at 15 miles an hour. I am not talking about the helicopter. Instead of lifting the wings through the air it is the reverse, you move the air over the wings.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: May I ask the hon. Member if he would like to fly in a machine of that type?

Capt. COGHLAN: The point is that I agree with those Members who have said that it is better to use what we have rather than start something which we may have to abandon in a very short time.

Dr. SINGH: I was inclined to agree with the suggestion that an airstrip should be constructed near Georgetown, since I appreciate the fact that it would be convenient and more comfortable for passengers to emplane or disembark there, and it would also be a time-saving factor. I realise, however, that the noise of the 'planes would surely disturb the peace and harmony of the people living in the immediate vicinity, at least for some time until they get accustomed to it. Since Government is considering the reconstruction of the road between Atkinson Field and Georgetown I think we should continue our local operations from Atkinson Field because everything is ready-made there. The only drawback, perhaps, is that it would take about 40 minutes for one to travel to or from Atkinson Field, but as soon as the road is put in order I think one would be able to cover the distance in about 20 to 30 minutes. At the same time, we know what the construction of the road would cost but when it comes to the airstrip no one knows exactly what it would cost. It is only a presumption that it would cost \$50,000 but, like other schemes such as the Bonasicka scheme which we have started, it might cost very much more than the amount originally estimated. The Demerara River is still navigable and for present purposes I think we can use one or two amphibian planes and save time. A great deal of research is being done as regards air transportation at the present time and we might benefit from it in the very near future. For instance, the hon. the Colonial Secretary has mentioned something about helicopters and we have to think about them also. The research workers are pro-

ducing far-reaching results and they are endeavouring to reduce distance as much as possible. On the whole, I think we should retain the base at Atkinson Field until the road has been reconstructed.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I am surprised at the speech of the last hon. Member. When I heard him speak about the noise that would be caused by planes if an airstrip is constructed near the City I thought he would have asked that electric fans in this Chamber be turned off. I am also surprised at the hon. Member for Demerara River who has admitted that he has not visited the site suggested for the airstrip but has expressed the opinion that it is not a suitable one.

Capt. COGHLAN: How does the hon. Member know that I have not visited the site?

Mr. DEBIDIN: The hon. Member said he "understands" and kept on saying he understands; therefore I can only assume that he has not visited the site. I am surprised also at the attitude of the Official Members of this Council—an attitude which, I think, is inimical to the interest of the Colony. I would rather they did not say anything until an investigation takes place, and I think it should take place. The motion asks for an investigation and then the second clause states that if it were possible to construct it — after the investigation has taken place—it should be done without delay. I am also not satisfied with the speech of the Colonial Treasurer. I am not at all satisfied that he has given us figures based upon good and scientific grounds. The very fact that he could have given figures, some of them puzzling indeed, is something which makes me pause and think, and I would ask hon. Members to consider this motion only as it stands before them. That this motion is timely there can be no doubt whatever, because at this moment we must not forget that the Colony of British Guiana contemplates building an airstrip at Atkinson Field and in the event of any change of the international situation it might be found very difficult to use Atkinson Field for both military and civil aviation.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I explain that there is no question of building an airstrip at Atkinson Field. What I said was that action is now being taken to finalise the selection and appropriation of a designated area; that is, part of Atkinson Field with buildings already erected, so that this Colony would have its own civil air port. The planes would still continue to use the existing runway, but everything would be done to enable the civil administration to set up business in its territory. That is what it means.

The PRESIDENT. I hope that is quite clear to the hon. Member.

Mr. DEBIDIN: It is known that it is intended to build an airport at Atkinson Field.

The PRESIDENT: There was never any question of building an airport there; I do not know where the hon. Member heard that. I do want hon. Members to know that there was never any question of building an airport and I do not want the public to get that impression. It is nothing of the sort.

Mr. DEBIDIN: At any rate, we intend joining with the Americans in the use of Atkinson Field. That is something to which I am entirely opposed and which I shall continue to oppose. Apart from reasons personal to me I have very good reason for saying that. If we are to have a part of Atkinson Field for use as a civil airport it seems to me that we would still have to enter the airfield along the recognised route. There is a gateway to the airfield and as soon as one leaves Soesdyke and is about to enter the airfield one has to pass the military guard and be examined, questioned and so forth. I am not saying that these things should not be: as a matter of fact, they are necessary as far as the American authorities are concerned and, moreover, if one wants to go to Atkinson Field he has to get the necessary permission from the United States military authorities in Georgetown. He has to get not only a permit for the individual but also one for his car to enter the airfield, and if perchance there is some slight error as regards the number of the car it would not be allowed to enter. That actually took place with my car; a slight

mistake was made when the number was telephoned to the American authorities in Georgetown and, as a result, the car was not allowed to enter Atkinson Field. That was an occasion when a prominent Indian gentleman in the person of Professor Shastri, a representative of the Government of India, was on a visit to this Colony. In Trinidad about 200 persons met him on his arrival, but in the case of British Guiana only 12 persons were permitted to enter Atkinson Field in order to meet him while permits were granted for three cars only. At the entrance gate all of the 12 persons for whom the permits were issued did not attend and although there was room in the cars for others to take their places, these being prominent persons in the community — one a Barrister-at-Law and another the wife of a prominent individual — they had to be deposited and left at the gate. They were not allowed to act as substitutes for any of the 12 persons originally named. Those are some of the conditions which the inhabitants of British Guiana would have to endure if we are to have our airport at Atkinson Field, and there are other things which should be considered as being unfavourable to the proposal. For instance, if war should break out I do not think the United States military authorities would permit ordinary people to enter Atkinson Field. That is to say, civilian passengers would not be permitted to use the base and that section of its operations would have to close down. There is an airport at Mackenzie but I think it has been stated that it is only intended to be a landing ground on certain occasions. That means that all the buildings and so on there would not be utilised while others would have to be erected at Atkinson Field.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: To a point of explanation: No building would be erected but money would be required to purchase the buildings already erected there.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Whatever it is, money would have to be spent. Moreover, it would cost the inhabitants of the Colony more than \$1,000,000 to reconstruct the public road in order to use Atkinson Field as an airport, and in spite of this expen-

diture we would not be able to use the airport in the event of war.

Mr. RAATGEVER: To a point of explanation: The road passes through fertile land and whether it is used in connection with the airport or not it would be used by farmers and other people.

Mr. DEBIDIN: In other words, the hon. Member is saying that we must spend \$1,000,000 on the road in order that a few donkey carts should run over it and bring produce to Georgetown, when there are other roads in the Colony which are much more important and should be given priority as far as expenditure is concerned. I am sure it would cost the Colony quite a lot to maintain the road between Atkinson Field and Georgetown. We know from experience that half the trouble as regards our roads in this Colony is due to lack of maintenance. I know that a fine piece of concrete road was put down on a section of the East Coast some years ago, but ruts were allowed to form in it and get bigger and bigger until the whole road got into a very bad state. We would be faced with the necessity to vote a large sum of money for the maintenance of the road to Atkinson Field.

I know that a fine asphalt road was constructed in Trinidad within recent years and although I could not see anything wrong with it the engineers pointed out that there was a slight declivity and unless it was rectified immediately the entire road would go bad. It seems to me that if we are thinking about the development of British Guiana we must not think of something which would carry doubts and fears and restrictions, but rather of something which we would be able to use at all times — something which would be useful not only to the British Guiana Airways, Ltd., but also to the poor people who work in the interior of the Colony and so on. I am looking forward to the establishment of something which would grow into an airport. It seems to me that private air lines should come into this Colony and operate, and by competition the people who work in the interior would be able to get cheap travelling facilities. Before hon. Members think of jettisoning this motion I want them to realise that this is the only British country in South

America and if we have an airport which is near the capital of the Colony it would be used very much by air services from other countries which pass this way. If we establish an airport at Atkinson Field it would be subject to dual control since Atkinson Field is the property of a foreign nation.

I would like to say that I took an opportunity to visit the suggested new site and from what I saw there I think it is an excellent site indeed. Before coming to a decision in any important matter I make it a point of duty to weigh the pros and cons; and I have done so in this case. I went aback of Le Repentir Cemetery to the proposed site and I am satisfied that the ground is hard and that if properly made up it could carry an airstrip capable of accommodating fair-sized planes and perhaps even of the D.C. 4 type. I am satisfied also that if an airstrip is put down on that site it would be a tremendous incentive towards the extension and development of Georgetown in that direction — eastwards. If this site is found to be unsuitable I think it would be easy for the Committee, if appointed, to consider the question of an alternative site. I have heard of such a site being discussed before — during the war — and it has been said that an area of land between Bel Air and Turkeyen which is now being used as a cattle pasture is excellent in that respect. Houses, etc. could be built on the site which was formerly being used by the Demerara Golf Club. Anyone who drives along the East Coast road and looks across on that area can see the tops of houses now being built on a part of Campbellville and these are not far away from the site which offers such excellent possibilities. I do not know who owns the land but if it is required for use as an airport I think it can be acquired by compulsory acquisition or otherwise.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I can tell the hon. Member that consideration was given to the lands he has referred to and they were discovered to be too small in area. Furthermore, they are under water for at least one-third of the year.

Mr. DEBIDIN: The hon. the Colonial

Treasurer is speaking as though the whole Colony is never under water sometimes. For many years the whole of Triumph district was constantly under water, but now that a pump has been put down there is hardly any pasturage in the area since the lands have become too dry. In any case, there is a great necessity for an airport near the City of Georgetown and that fact should not be overlooked. Why should passengers and others have to land 26 miles away from the City when they come to this Colony. Not only that, they have to drive through an area covered mostly by dense foliage and not particularly cool, and in the hot weather particularly they arrive in the city practically half dead. I do not think that is a good advertisement by the Colony, especially to persons who arrive here for the first time, and I think every effort should be made to examine the possibility of an airport being constructed near the City. It seems to me that since we are considering the question of putting down airstrips in various parts of the Colony — and up to recently the Colonial Treasurer asked for a vote in this respect — there is no reason why we should not find the money to build one near to the City.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: To a point of order: It is not a question of having no money to put down an airstrip. Several airstrips have been built throughout the Colony at a cost of \$50,000 but what the hon. Member is asking for — an airfield — is something that would cost about \$2,000,000.

Mr. DEBIDIN: A recognised contractor has stated that he can put it down for half a million dollars. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer should not come here and give figures which are mere guesswork; after all he has opened himself to the remarks made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara. We have to think about the day when other airlines would come and use the airport in our midst and if someone undertakes to build it for half a million dollars I think the project should be carried out as it would be of tremendous benefit to the City in particular and the Colony as a whole. If we put down airstrips in the interior surely it is not intended that planes

should fly from one airstrip to another. Therefore we must have a proper receiving ground in the City where the advantages of those airstrips would be better used, and where produce could be landed in Georgetown within two minutes. For instance, a shipment of gold might arrive and the Commissioner of Lands and Mines could receive it within two minutes. We want to have everything accelerated to correspond with whatever development activities are taking place in the interior. This is a matter which should precede that development.

I am asking those Members who have already indicated the way they propose to vote, to consider the fact that the motion merely asks for an investigation, and despite their views in the matter they should vote for an investigation. In weighing the pros and cons I feel that there is much in favour of an airstrip near Georgetown.

The fear has been expressed that the construction of an airstrip near Georgetown would give the Rupununi Development Co., an undue advantage over the cattle owners on the coastal belt, and that if the price of beef drops as a result it would kill the cattle industry on the coast. I have been speaking to some of the cattle owners on the coast, as I happen to represent a district which is very largely a cattle and milk-producing area, and I have told them that what we are thinking of is the interest of the whole Colony, and that whatever development along those lines is achieved would be to the advantage of everybody. I cannot see that the cattle industry in the Rupununi would be so highly developed that it would affect the cattle industry on the coast to any considerable extent, or at all. Personally I think it would be an incentive to the cattle owners on the coast to do better. Nevertheless, it is an aspect of the matter which has to be considered.

If it is decided to use helicopters it seems to me that the expense incurred by the use of Atkinson Field would be avoided, because helicopters could land in any backyard. I am taking a long-

range view of this matter. In supporting the motion I am thinking of the development of British Guiana and its hinterland, and with that in view I think Government should consider the possibility of the construction of an airstrip near Georgetown. I support the motion as it stands.

Mr. LEE: I do not wish to discourage motions being put before this Council for consideration, but the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) confused his argument when he referred to an international airport. and in the same breath he spoke about the interior and an airstrip. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer rightly pointed out that an airport is distinct from an airstrip, and that the upkeep of an international airport would be beyond the financial capacity of the Colony. The hon. Member also referred to the development of the interior, and said that an airstrip near Georgetown would reduce the cost of transport, but he forgets that an airstrip near Georgetown would require a staff to operate it, and Government would also have to keep a staff at Atkinson Field to deal with international traffic.

There is no doubt that at the present moment the U.S. military authorities have the right to exclude any person from entering their base at Atkinson Field, but if they propose to grant this Government civil aviation rights that concession would give citizens the right of entry into private property. Therefore, if I was booked to travel by plane from Atkinson Field no American authority could prevent me from entering the Base, except I was an escaped criminal.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Would the hon. Member permit me to help him by quoting precisely from the Base Agreement which has been signed? It is provided in that Agreement that:

“The United States military authorities shall permit to have convenient access to and egress from the area or areas so designated of **bona fide** passengers and air crews, and all other persons whose presence is certified by the Government of

the Territory to be necessary for civilian aviation purposes.”

That means that all **bona fide** passengers and air crews have the right of ingress and egress, and other persons who produce permission cards from the Administrative Department of Government have the right of ingress. It does not mean, however, that everybody would have free entry. That is not so even on ordinary steamers, but those rights are guaranteed.

Mr. LEE: This Government subsidizes the Canadian National Steamship Co., but persons cannot go on board those ships unless they produce a ticket or a pass. If the United States Base authorities restricted the movement of citizens of this Colony on their leased property in an indiscreet manner this Government could also restrict the entry of U.S. citizens into our territory within certain limits, but I do not think that situation will ever occur. Instead, we have to think of the protection the Air Base would give us in the event of war.

For several years we have been clamouring for the East Bank road to be properly made up. Instead of spending \$500,000 on the construction of an airstrip wouldn't it be far better to use that money for the improvement of the condition of that road? It is only 25 miles by road from Atkinson Field to Georgetown. Can any Member of this Council say that that is the longest distance from an airport to the principal city in any part of the world? In the case of Jamaica you have to travel in a circle quite a long distance from the airport to Kingston. Is our interior sufficiently supplied with airstrips, and can those airstrips be used by the type of planes that are being built? In my humble opinion the amphibian planes which at present operate from the ramp at Ruimveld adequately serve the present needs of the interior with its airstrips. We want free and cheaper access to the interior, and better roads. Let us extend the boundaries of the City, and with better roads we could live outside the City away from the traffic.

Mr. PETERS: I must confess that

when the hon. Member presented his views in support of his motion I could not but think that it was a very happily untimely motion. Happily untimely I say, because we certainly need to know that we have in this Council men, like the hon. Member for Central Georgetown, who have the interest of the community very much at heart and would not leave any stone unturned in making suggestions and moving motions which point in the direction of ameliorating the condition of affairs in the Colony. I say the motion is happily untimely, first because we do need access by air to the interior, but the hon. Member's views might have been sufficiently cogent to charm me if we were living in the pioneering days of air traffic. If we had not Atkinson Field, or amphibian planes operating from the ramp at Ruimveld, one might have been moved to say that the motion was indeed necessary. It is not that Atkinson Field is so far away from Georgetown, but simply that the road connecting Atkinson Field with Georgetown is so disgracefully forbidding and uncomfortable. If we had a road such as that from Port-of-Spain to the Piarco airfield in Trinidad one would have snapped one's fingers at the time it takes to travel by car from Atkinson Field to Georgetown. That is the big reason for the tendency on the part of some of us to feel that we should have an airstrip near Georgetown.

I must confess that I am more disposed to trust planes carrying petrol around about the water in the Demerara river than landing within close proximity of this matchwood City of ours. In other words I would prefer to see the development of the amphibian approach to the City rather than the construction of an airstrip within two or three miles of Georgetown. If I am persuaded that we need more and improved amphibian planes we might consider the expenditure of money on improving the road from the ramp at Ruimveld to the City. But on the question of expenditure I am disposed to feel that by making use of the facilities accorded to us at Atkinson Field we could avoid a great deal of expenditure which we would otherwise have to face in constructing an airstrip.

I said that the motion was happily

untimely because probably it is too early. In a way it may be too late, because we have the use of the facilities at Atkinson Field, and our Colony is blessed with innumerable waterways. The Demerara river can accommodate a number of ramps if we are not satisfied with the one at Ruimveld. Already we are well served as regards close proximity to the City if we would make up our minds to improve the approaches to the ramp and to Atkinson Field. While one has to commend the mover for the excellent gesture on his part, I feel that we are doing better as we are now, and, as suggested by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, I think we should go slowly in that direction.

Dr. NICHOLSON: Even if we referred to an investigation Committee the question of the practicability of constructing an airstrip within close proximity to Georgetown I would still support a programme of road building instead of an airstrip. There are other projects of greater urgency than an airstrip within close proximity to Georgetown—housing for example. I agree with other Members that we should rather improve the condition of the road from Georgetown to Atkinson Field, and as the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peters) has said, the motion is rather late, because we have the use of an airport at Atkinson Field. We already have many Committees, and it is no good having another because time is valuable. I would therefore suggest to my friend, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Fernandes) that he might very well withdraw his motion. The question has been very well debated during the past two days; the pros and cons have been gone into and I think the cons have it.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I am against the construction of an airstrip at Lodge village, because it would be a waste of the taxpayers' money which could be more beneficially spent in developing the Colony. The question was carefully considered by the Communications Sub-Committee of the Main Development Committee of the previous Legislative Council, and after carefully weighing all the factors it was decided to recommend that the

East Bank road should be rebuilt because it would serve a two-fold purpose. It would facilitate the people who reside there, and others who might possibly settle there, to bring their produce to Georgetown. The East Bank District has been noted in years past for the citrus fruit grown there. As a matter of fact the Stabroek Market was supplied by that District but, I understand, through bad road communication the people there have abandoned all their cultivation. If we encourage them to start cultivating again, I think, it would be of great assistance to Georgetown and to the Colony because we might eventually have an export trade in citrus fruit. I have always been one of the strongest supporters of an airport, and it was the result of a motion moved by me in the Chamber of Commerce that this Government appointed a Committee which went very carefully into the whole question and examined the area east of Kitty which was unfortunately found to be unsuitable. The direct result was, Major Crosse was asked to come to this Colony and he advised against building there, apart from the question of cost. Since then Atkinson Field has been thrown open to the people of the Colony, and the members of the Chamber of Commerce are in favour of using that airfield and abandoning the building of an airport at great expense near to Georgetown.

The PRESIDENT: I did not want to intervene in this debate which was most exhaustive and interesting and, I think, instructive to everybody. I do not want it to be thought for one moment that Government is antagonistic to the motion which the hon. Member has brought forward, but I do suggest to this Council that a question of this kind does require precaution—the precaution to which the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has referred. Before we embark on a large expenditure of this kind we must satisfy ourselves that we are doing the right thing, that we are doing something practical and which will serve us in the future. Atkinson Field is, as a matter of fact, 26 miles away from Georgetown. The average distance for an airport from the big cities is something around 15 miles. We should be extremely careful before

we put up even an airstrip as near to Georgetown as Lodge Village. It is no good our saying it will be just an airstrip. It will be agreed that as soon as you put it there will be demand for it to be an airport, and that does not cost a couple of thousands of dollars but millions of pounds (sterling). I do not want us, as the hon. Member for Central Demerara has pointed out, to spend $\frac{3}{4}$ million dollars on this airstrip, which is not more than what we have spent on the airstrip at Mackenzie which is still there. That was built on a firm and solid foundation without any complication. It was straightforward levelling and putting the necessary buildings, and all that cost us three-quarters of a million dollars with prices as high as they were then.

Labour is costly, and to put an aerodrome at Lodge Village or anywhere on the coastal belt, we know, we will be building on swampy land. I have been told the Committee for Communications and Interior has been informed that someone is prepared to put this airstrip up for \$500,000. That is to his specification but certainly not Government's or of any expert employed by Government. I do not know how far it goes. I do not know whether it is the bare estimate or it includes the building which has to be erected on it or the approaches which have to be constructed to it—and they will be done at considerable cost. As a layman I do not intend to examine the estimate, but I would say the cost of an airstrip is nearer \$1,000,000 than \$500,000. That is based on experience of airstrips and aerodromes which I have seen built elsewhere.

There is one thing in connection with this question which must be considered before you make a decision, and that is the possibility of using amphibian aircraft. There are some people who have said we should not build an airstrip in Georgetown when we have this natural waterway in the Demerara River which would take any number of amphibian aircraft. Not only that, but it is a fact that throughout the interior we have these natural waterways where amphibian aircraft can land. Only ten days ago when I went to the frontier I landed on water not less than six times and in

places where there are no airstrips or airfields. I landed on the top of Kaieteur; I landed on the Cuyuni River, on the Venezuelan border and at two or three other places, and all by amphibian aircraft. The trouble about the amphibian aircraft is, like the one we have, it is certainly not suitable for freight carrying. What, I think, we ought to find out is whether we can get a suitable passenger and freight amphibian aircraft for operation in British Guiana. As a matter of fact the Government is making enquiry at present as to that possibility. It is one, I think, which should be fully explored.

It is true—I think it is generally conceded by everyone—that the cost of operation of an amphibian aircraft is rather more than that of the land aircraft, and the next thing is to get the right type. I do not suppose that for many years to come we will want more than a half-dozen amphibian aircraft of the right type, but the thing is where are we to get them. If we were to get a designer to make a design for us, it is going to be a very costly idea because they will not make a new pattern specially for use in this Colony. They naturally will design for something approaching mass production. So if we are to have a special type to suit our own needs, it would be a very costly idea unless there is a big market for it. That is a problem which, perhaps, is not going to be very easily solved. I do suggest to hon. Members that we should explore the possibility of the amphibian aircraft and make up our minds as to whether it is not more practicable and more economical. As a matter of fact Members know we are running an amphibian aircraft service to Bartica at the present moment, and it is becoming so popular that the B.G. Airways are considering running a daily service. That cannot be done with land planes unless we have an airstrip at Bartica, and that we have not. But we have the Essequibo and Mazaruni Rivers at the one end and the Demerara River at the other, and it is becoming a very popular service, and there is no doubt also that other places will in course of time—I am thinking particularly of the North-Western District at the moment—be able to enjoy such a service. If it means that we will have to

build an expensive airstrip in the North-Western District, then doing something in that direction very soon is somewhat remote. You have your rivers there where the amphibian plane can land and has landed. The whole operation of the amphibian aircraft may be somewhat more expensive than that of the land aircraft, but with the saving given us on the construction and maintenance of an airfield we may well find that to suit our particular purpose it is the better form of transport

There seems to be the assumption that no investigation at all has been made into this question of an airstrip in Georgetown. That is not so. As one or two Members have pointed out, the matter has been ventilated and considered from time to time, and it is still under consideration. I do not want the hon. Mover or any Member to think that the Government is antagonistic to the motion. We want to do what is best for the Colony. I do not know what the hon. Member wishes to do with regard to his motion, but if he does withdraw it I can assure him that it would be on the understanding that the Government would make investigation into this very important matter. Aircraft development is taking place at the present at a tremendous speed, and what may be up-to-date today may be obsolete in five years. I would suggest to the Council that it is not wise to come to a hasty conclusion in a matter of this kind. I think myself that to build an airstrip near Georgetown would be far more costly than the approximate estimate which we have.

Mr. FERNANDES: In view of your remarks, Sir, I am going to ask, with the permission of my Seconder, to be allowed to withdraw the motion. I do so—I would not say against my better judgment but—because of your assurance that the matter will be pursued and is being pursued by Government and because of the possibility that we may be able to find an amphibian 'plane that would do for us. This is my first motion in this Council, and I have learnt a lot. First of all two attacks have been made on me, and I am going to refer to them now. One is, I was accused of not withdrawing

the motion after the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and the hon. the Colonial Secretary had spoken and I was wasting the time of this Council. I want to make it quite clear that all the time of this Council that has been wasted on this motion has been wasted because most of the Members who attacked the motion moved entirely away from the motion. Most of them took it for granted that my motion meant doing away with the road to Atkinson Field and doing away with the airport at Atkinson Field. I made it absolutely clear when I moved the motion that I was thinking only of interior development. If Members would insist on moving away from the subject of the debate then no Member has the right of accusing me of wasting time.

It was said by another hon. Member that I was trying to get Government to spend the people's money in a manner I would not spend my own. I want to say that if I owned British Guiana and had the money the Government of British Guiana has at its disposal, the first thing I would do is to go into this matter of an airstrip and, if possible, get it constructed immediately, just as I have moved in the motion, because I have very great faith in the development of the interior by aircraft. The only real argument that has been put forward is the possibility of the amphibian 'plane using the Demerara River which is a natural airfield or landing place, and also it is possible that we cannot afford it at the present time. Not being experienced in the matter of moving motions in this Council I tried to be as short as I could, and in doing that I left out a few words in the motion which might possibly have saved all the trouble, and that was in the second paragraph. Had I moved that "if constructing this airstrip is possible at a sum British Guiana can afford it be constructed without delay" that would have saved the criticism. But I am learning. I daresay if the occasion arises during my term of office here to move a similar motion I would take all these precautions.

I would just like to add, the motion seems to have been mixed up by some Members with the B.G. Airways. I am not thinking of the B.G. Airways. I owe

them no favour. I have never sat in their 'planes without paying my passage in the ordinary way. I have never been into their office to get any information for my motion. I refrained from asking the B.G. Airways for information. In today's newspaper article there is a terrific argument against the motion, but I must say that argument, with the exception of the point about the amphibian, is very unconvincing as far as I am concerned. I have moved this motion, as I say, because I feel it is necessary for us to have our interior communications stepped up by air which is cheaper and improved. I have also learnt quite a few other things—'planes taking off into a northeasterly wind must come over the city of Georgetown. I thought that took them away from the city. But that is, only when you have an objection to make you turn the point to suit yourself. I just had a trip to Rio. I referred to it when I moved the motion. I had the pleasure of standing in the Chamber of Commerce meeting-hall and looking down on an airport where 'planes were taking off on the average every five minutes, and I had the pleasure of seeing that done in ugly weather and in a country with obstructions a lot more than 50 feet in the air. In this city with the exception of the Lighthouse and a couple of church towers I do not think there are many buildings more than 50 feet high. All these things which have been brought in have absolutely no bearing on the matter in my opinion. All that has bearing on the matter is, can we afford it if it is necessary, can we spend the money to better advantage in improving our interior communication by air transport?

Your Excellency has stressed the point that we must investigate the possibility of the use of amphibian aircraft. When that was stressed, I must admit if it is possible for the amphibian aircraft to be used I cannot justify the expenditure of this \$500,000 for an airstrip. It is that argument that has caused me to ask with the permission of my Seconder that I be allowed to withdraw the motion in view of Your Excellency's assurance that this matter will be pursued by Government.

Motion withdrawn.

LICENSED PREMISES AMENDMENT
BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move that a Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Licensed Premises Ordinance, 1944, with respect to the opening and closing hours of licensed premises and for purposes connected therewith", be read a third time and passed.

Dr. NICHOLSON seconded.

Mr. LEE: Your Excellency, I desire that the third reading of this Bill be postponed for three months and that during that period Your Excellency forward the debates concerning this Bill and the Ordinance for 1947 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for his consideration. Your Excellency, the reason for that is this: The last Council, when this amending Ordinance was put forward, appointed a Committee which went fully into the details of the law then existing and made recommendations to the Council which then passed a certain amendment to the Principal Ordinance. Had that report been circulated to the Members of the present Council, I feel sure after they had seen and read it, they would not have voted as they did on the last occasion.

The PRESIDENT: That report should have been mentioned when the Bill was being debated. It is too late to bring it forward now. The hon. Member is late.

Mr LEE: I do admit that I should have done it then. I do admit that, perhaps, I was a little negligent in not getting that report brought forward to the Council during the debate. But in the last Council there were certain undertakings given that certain labour enactments would be enacted to meet certain cases. This Ordinance was one which was fully gone into by the last Council, and that is why I ask that these matters be referred to the Secretary of State, because it might be found that the law should not be enacted as it is now desired. I do admit, as an older Member of this Council, that I should have fully put forward all the relevant parts of the report and of the debate which might have influenced the Members of this Council during the

debate, and that is why I feel it is my duty now to ask that you postpone the third reading and refer the matter to the Secretary of State for a ruling. I cannot do otherwise than perform my duty in this Council. Sometimes we may be late and sometimes we may be wrong. I feel it is a duty I owe to my fellow Councillors and to Government to make this request.

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. Member suggest that the Bill is in conflict with any special Labour Law?

Mr. LEE: No, Sir; I do not say it is in conflict. What I do say is that the last Council went into the details as a Committee, took evidence and was satisfied. That report was not circularised to the Members of the present Council for their information when this Bill was being considered. If Your Excellency were to appoint a Committee of this Council to go into these matters they would, in my humble opinion, be satisfied that the last Committee which enquired into this matter was right in its recommendations and would advise Government accordingly. I cannot do anything more than call Government's attention to it. I do feel that the present Councillors were not seized of the details as were given to the last Council.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member was a member of the Committee to which he is making reference now. A majority and minority report of that Committee was presented to the Council some time in December, 1945, or the beginning of 1946. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, was also a member and the Committee was under the chairmanship of Mr. Critchlow, who was then a Member of the Council. The hon. Mr. Ferreira who was also a member submitted a minority report. The Bill which was subsequently passed into law was based upon the report of that Committee. Subsequently during the course of last year the Committee also considered the petition which had been sent in by, I think, the Spirit Dealers' Association following upon the passing of this legislation in 1947. Practically the same Committee considered the representations which were made by the Spirit Dealers'

Association, and if Members look at the memorandum of Objects and Reasons of the Bill they would see that that fact is referred to. So the hon. Member was in a position at the second reading of this Bill to express both the views of the Committee in the first place, on whose recommendations the Bill of 1947 was put before this Council and subsequently passed into law, and also his views on the Bill which is now before this Council. I think Mr. Roth will bear me out, that that is correct. But I take this opportunity to say I do not think there is any conflict at all between the Bill before the Council and any other Bill.

Mr. LEE: I do not say there is any conflict. I am saying that the present Council as constituted is not seized of the Report, because it was not circularised to the Members for them to know the pros and cons in respect of that report. This present Council was considering something done by a past Committee of the last Council and the Members did not have the recommendations of that past Committee save and except what was referred back to the Committee for its consideration—a petition by the Spirit Dealers' Association. As a member of that Committee I should have either in the second reading or the Committee stage put my views to the Council. I do admit that, and that is why I feel it my duty to ask Your Excellency whether it is not possible, if it can be so done, to refer the whole matter back to a Committee to see if there has been a change of evidence.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In answer to the hon. Member I will refer this Council to the memorandum of Objects and Reasons in which reference is made to that first Committee. Paragraph 2 says:

"In August, 1947, the British Guiana Licensed Spirit Dealers Association sent a petition to the Governor in Council asking that retail spirit shops in the city of Georgetown should be permitted to open on any public holiday (other than Sundays, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and Good Friday), and that the hours of opening and closing on other days be modified

The Association expressed itself as being in favour of employees being paid at the rate of time and a half when they worked on a public holiday

The petition was referred to the Committee whose majority Report formed the basis of the Licensed Premises (Amendment) Ordinance, 1947, (No. 11). The Committee, by a majority, made certain recommendations."

It was put before this Council; there was a Committee out of which arose the Bill which became the Licensed Premises (Amendment) Ordinance of 1947 and, as I have said, the hon. Member was a member of both committees, and so was the hon. Member on his right (Mr. Roth).

Motion put, the Council dividing and voting as follows:—

For: Messrs. Carter, Smellie, Phang, McDoom, Kendall, Dr. Jagan, Dr. Gonsalves, Fernandes, Debidin, Capt. Coghlan, Farnum, Roth, Raatgever, Dr. Nicholson, the Colonial Treasurer and the Attorney General—16.

Against: Mr. Lee — 1.

Did not Vote: The Colonial Secretary — 1.

Motion carried.

Bill read a third time and passed.

MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC
(AMENDMENT) BILL

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I beg to move that this Council resolve itself into Committee to consider the following Bill clause by clause in the light of the report of the Select Committee which was laid on the table last week:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Ordinance, 1940, with respect to the licensing of motor cars and hire cars."

Dr. NICHOLSON seconded.

Agreed to.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This Bill was referred to a select Committee in May last and that Committee has now submitted a report which I hope hon. Members have had an opportunity to study. As will be seen from the report of the Committee it is recommended that station waggons or utility cars should not be permitted to operate as buses except in cases where the Prescribed Authority allows their use as buses either as a "feeder service" to and from trains, steamers and planes, or in rural areas where there is no bus service. It was suggested that station waggons or utility cars should, if practicable, be defined as a specific type of vehicle, but the licence fees should be the same as those payable in the case of motor cars, as follows:

"(a) if the vehicle is to be used solely for private purposes—a licence equivalent to the "private car" licence;

(b) if the vehicle is to be used as a "bona fide" hire car — a licence equivalent to the "hire car" licence, but in that case, the number of passengers which the vehicle would be permitted to carry at any one time would be limited to seven, and the vehicle would not be permitted to stop to take up or deposit passengers except at its garage (or stand) or its destination."

It was not practicable to define "station waggon" as a specific type of vehicle. What has been done is to bring "station waggon" within the definition of "motor car" by the use of the word "adapted." Clause 2 of the Bill seeks to bring a "station waggon" or utility car within the definition of "motor car" and provides for its registration as such. As regards the statutory definition of "motor car", if I may refer hon. Members to the Principal Ordinance, No. 22 of 1940, it says: -

"motor car" means a motor vehicle constructed solely for the carriage of persons and their effects and used exclusively for personal purposes;"

It is proposed to insert the words "or adapted" after the word "con-

structed" and the definition will then read: -

"motor car" means a motor vehicle constructed or adapted solely for the carriage of persons and their effects and used exclusively for personal purposes."

As regards the definition of "hire car", Ordinance No. 21 of 1946, in section 2 (2) it is stated that:

" . . . "hire car" means a motor car used or intended to be used for carrying not more than seven passengers for hire or reward under a contract express or implied for the use of the vehicle as a whole;"

The new clause 3 of the Bill provides that where an existing bus service is inadequate the owner of a hire car may operate a road service. The same clause also provides for the operation of a feeder service. I am sure hon. Members would appreciate the necessity for that because if we give an exclusive permission to anyone and then permit this vehicle to operate as a sort of small bus, it would be contrary to the spirit in which these licences are given. At the same time the recommendation has been made so as not to exclude these small waggons from operating in places where it is desirable that they should be permitted to operate in order to augment available transport services or in places where there is no transport service at all. It is further provided that where a special licence has been granted, the conditions subject to which the hire car shall be operated shall be endorsed thereon. In other words, we would not say "you are operating as a bus", but when the application is granted that it should operate as a bus then there will be an endorsement of the conditions under which it is permitted to operate. Discretion is given to the Prescribed Authority in granting a road service licence under sections 61 and 62 of the Principal Ordinance. Any person operating a hire car in the manner of a bus otherwise than in accordance with the conditions endorsed on the special licence shall be guilty of an offence. Where a special licence has been revoked, a right of appeal to the Governor in Council is given.

Clause 4 of the Bill provides that the Prescribed Authority may issue licences for hire cars subject to such conditions as he may deem necessary having regard to the co-ordination of traffic, the interests of existing bus services and the needs of the public. This provision is necessary, as station waggons may operate as hire cars without taking out the special licences provided for by clause 2. I think the Committee has made every endeavour to assist these utility waggons in operating in the country but, at the same time, due regard had to be given to existing bus service or services which have had an exclusive licence. I think, Sir, that the amendment which has been placed before hon. Members will meet the case so far as these vehicles are concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any Member wish to speak on the proposed amendment? We will therefore take the Bill clause by clause.

Clause 3 — *Amendment of section 71A of the Principal Ordinance, No. 21 of 1946.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I beg to move the insertion of a new clause 3 to read as follows:—

3. The Principal Ordinance is hereby amended by the insertion therein after section sixty-five of the following new sections —

65A (1) Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this Ordinance to the contrary, the Prescribed Authority may issue a special licence with respect to any hire car permitting such hire car to —

(a) ply for hire at separate fares stage by stage, and to stop to pick up or set down passengers along the line or route; or
or

(b) To operate a feeder service.

(2) In this section “to operate a feeder service” means to convey passengers for reward from any steamer or railway or aircraft terminus to their respective destinations at separate fares.

65B (1) In exercising its discretion to grant or to refuse a licence under the

provisions of the preceding section, the Prescribed Authority shall have regard to the following matters:—

- (a) the suitability of the routes on which such a service is proposed to be run;
- (b) the extent to which the proposed service is necessary or desirable in the public interest;
- (c) the needs of the area as a whole, in relation to traffic:

Provided that no such licence shall be granted in respect of any area in respect of which an exclusive licence has been granted to any person or body of persons to operate a road service as hereinafter provided, or where in the opinion of the Prescribed Authority the needs of the area are sufficiently served by the holders of road service licences.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this section, the Prescribed Authority shall specify by endorsement on the special licence any conditions he may think fit subject to which the hire car may be operated.

(3) Any special licence granted under the provisions of the preceding section shall remain in force for a period not exceeding two years as may be stated in the licence, unless previously revoked as hereinafter provided.

(4) Any person who operates, or permits to be operated any hire car in a manner or for any of the purposes specified in the preceding section otherwise than in accordance with the conditions endorsed on a special licence issued with respect to the hire car shall be guilty of an offence.

65C. A special licence may be revoked by the Prescribed Authority where any condition endorsed on such licence has not been complied with.

65D. Any person whose special licence has been revoked may appeal to the Governor in Council against the decision of the Prescribed Authority, and the Governor in Council shall after consideration of the matter, make such order as to him may seem just. The decision of the Governor in Council shall be final.”

Mr. LEE: I want it to be clearly understood that if these utility waggons are to be used in competition with the railway service on which Government has just spent \$500,000 and will probably spend another \$500,000 shortly, I am

against it. I think the Prescribed Authority should be definitely told that these waggons should not be permitted to operate in those areas where the train service operates. It is my duty as a Commissioner of the Transport Board to bring this point to the attention of the Council.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I may point out to the hon. Member that clause 65B provides that no special licence shall be granted in respect of any area in respect of which an exclusive licence has been granted to any person or body of persons to operate a road service, or where in the opinion of the Prescribed Authority the needs of the area are sufficiently served by the holders of road service licences.

Mr. LEE: I have seen the clause but as a Commissioner of the Transport Board I desire to point out the matter to this Council.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I should like to point out that this Bill only provides for these station waggons to be given licences as passenger vehicles and that if any offence is committed by the carrying of freight they would be infringing the existing Regulations under the Motor Car Ordinance.

Mr. LEE: I would like to ask my friend whether it would be an offence for me to take some things belonging to him in one of these waggons if I have one.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member would not be using it for hire.

Mr. LEE: I know what these waggons can do and I am just drawing Government's attention to the matter.

New clause 3 put and agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move the insertion of a new clause 4 to read as follows:—

4. Section seventy-one A of the Principal Ordinance as enacted by section five of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Ordinance is hereby amended —

- (a) by the deletion of the full stop at the end of subsection (1); and
- (b) by the addition to subsection (2) of the words "subject to such conditions as he may deem necessary, having regard to the co-ordination of traffic, the interest of existing bus services and the needs of the public."
- (c) by the addition of the word "or" after paragraph (b) of subsection (4); and
- (d) by the addition to subsection (4) of the following paragraph —
 - “(c) otherwise than in accordance with any conditions subject to which a licence has been issued under this section.”

Motion put and agreed to.

New clause 4 adopted.

Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With the consent of the Council I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Dr. NICHOLSON seconded.

Motion put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

RENT RESTRICTION BILL.

The PRESIDENT: The only other item which can be taken is the Rent Restriction Bill but I think hon. Members would prefer that it be deferred until we get the Select Committee's report next week. I am in the hands of the Council.

Mr. FARNUM: I ask that this matter be postponed; the report of the Select Committee has not yet been received.

The PRESIDENT: No one is more anxious than I am that the Bill should go through, but I am prepared to give hon. Members some time in order to study the report of the Select Committee. Council will now adjourn until Thursday next.