

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, 3RD JUNE, 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.B.E.

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Carter (Georgetown South).

The Hon. E. M. Gonsalves (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, 28th May, 1948, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following:—

The Report of the Government Analyst for the year 1947.

The Report of Wortmanville Housing Scheme for the period 1st January to 31st March, 1948.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to give notice of the following motion:—

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Council approves the continuance of the Social Welfare Services initiated under Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes—D 212 and D 443, and of the establishment on a permanent basis of the existing Social Welfare Organisation.”

May I state that if there is time I shall ask leave of the Council to take this motion later in the day.

HOSPITAL FEES REGULATIONS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to give notice of the following motion:—

“That this Council approves of the Hospital Fees (Amendment) Regulations, 1948.”

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

TRADE UNION LEGISLATION.

Mr. ROTH: I beg to give notice of the following motion:—

“WHEREAS the recent growth of multiple Trade Unions purporting to represent identical industries and occupations is militating against the best interests of Trade Unionism and to the detriment of the economic life of the Colony.

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable Council recommend to Government the immediate enactment of legislation confining one Trade Union to each branch of industry and occupation, the choice of such Unions to be made by the Legislative Council as representatives of the people.”

CONSTRUCTION OF AIR STRIP.

Mr. FERNANDES: I beg to give notice of the following motion:—

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommend to Government

(a) The immediate investigation of the possibility of constructing an air strip in close proximity to the City.

(b) If constructing this Air strip is possible, it be constructed without delay.”

PAYMENT OF FAMILY ALLOWANCES.

Mr. CARTER: I beg to give notice of the following motion:—

“WHEREAS security of family life is the most important if not the only foundation on which a strong British Guiana can be built; and

WHEREAS it appears to be the policy of the Government of British Guiana to encourage the increase of the population;

AND WHEREAS—

(i) The recently published statistics on cost of living show an overall rise to the extent of 93% on the figure for 1938 for urban working class fami-

lies and 127% for East Indian families on sugar plantations;

(ii) Notwithstanding the recent increase in wages of lower income groups, and efforts to control prices, this great rise in the cost of living continues to devalue earnings to an alarming extent; and

“(iii) Out of a population of 73,541 for Georgetown and 9,578 for New Amsterdam there are only 5,000 and 1,350 property owners respectively, the majority of breadwinners having consequently to rent houses in which to live, at rates currently out of proportion to their earnings;

“BE IT RESOLVED that a Committee of this House be appointed forthwith (co-opting the Economic Adviser, the Commissioner of Labour, the Commissioner of Local Government and such other persons as are necessary) to consider the practicability of preparing a scheme for the payment of family allowances modelled generally on the Families Allowances Act of the United Kingdom but commensurate with the financial position and productive capacity of the Colony.”

INCREASED COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE TO PENSIONERS.

Captain COGHLAN gave notice of the following motion:—

“WHEREAS by Resolution No. IX passed by Legislative Council on the 22nd of April, rates of cost of living allowance to Government pensioners were approved; and

“WHEREAS with the steady rise in the cost of living, it is considered that these rates are far too low;

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommends for the favourable consideration of Government that the following rates should be adopted:—

40% on the first \$360 per annum
20% on the next 3360 per annum

and a fiat rate of \$144 per annum on pensions exceeding \$720 per annum but not exceeding \$1,440 per annum.

Provided that —

(a) No pensioner shall receive less than \$10 per month inclusive of the increased cost of living allowance;

(b) any pensioner who is in receipt of a pension from the public

funds of any other Colonial Government shall receive as cost of living allowance a sum calculated *pro rata* on his entire pension.

ORDER OF THE DAY

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (OFFENCES)
BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With regard to item 1 on the Order of the Day — the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) (Amendment) Bill—I would ask leave to withdraw it as I desire to give the Bill further consideration as a result of representations which have been made.

Agreed to.

Consideration deferred.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT BILLS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do propose to proceed further at the moment with the Bills relating to corporal punishment in view of the fact that one of the Bills has been referred to a Select Committee. It is proposed that the two other Bills, although not referred to the Committee, might be dealt with at the same time. In other words, when we are dealing with the Bill before the Select Committee we can deal with the others which relate to the same subject. I therefore ask leave to postponed items 5 and 6 which relate to corporal punishment, and also item 7—the Interpretation Ordinance (Amendment) Bill.

Agreed to

Consideration deferred.

CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT
No. 2) BILL.

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Customs Duties Ordinance, 1935, with respect to the Customs duty on bottles and bottle stoppers."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This Bill has been before hon. Members for some little time and I am sure they will appreciate the reasons for its introduction. As will be seen from the Objects

and Reasons, no bill of entry tax is payable on bottles suitable and intended for bottling preserves, honey or milk, if they are imported solely for the purpose of packing goods of local manufacture or production; and such bottles are liable to import duty, *ad valorem*, at the rate of 2 per centum British Preferential Tariff and 5 per centum General Tariff. It is considered that such provision should apply to all bottles and bottle stoppers when imported solely for the purpose of packing goods of local manufacture or production. The question as to the operative date of this Bill has been considered and it has been decided that the Bill should have retrospective effect. It was at first considered that it should be retrospective as from January 1, this year, but on reference to Ordinance No. 10 of 1948, it will be found that section 4, (2) (a) states:—

"(a) Where prior to the thirtieth day of December, nineteen hundred and forty-seven any such goods were entered for consumption in the Colony but the duties payable in respect of such goods were not paid or secured prior to such date;...."

Consequently, it is proper and desirable that if a retrospective effect is being given to this Bill it should be in keeping with what is set out in that Ordinance. Following on that, therefore, I propose to insert a new clause — clause 3 — which will read:—

"3. Section two of this Ordinance, and paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1) of section two of the Customs (Amendment) Ordinance, 1948, shall be deemed to have come into operation on the thirtieth day of December, nineteen hundred and forty-seven."

With those comments, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to second that, and in doing so I wish to explain that this Bill is really in pursuance of a suggestion made in the Council by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central at the time variations in taxation in the last budget were being considered. I undertook then that the matter would be considered, and now I think the hon. Member would be pleased

to see it before the Council. I think it does meet the point which the hon. Member requested should be considered at that time.

Mr. FERNANDES: I desire at this stage to thank Government for putting this matter right because, obviously, it is something that should have been done long ago. As I said when I brought it up, it was difficult to justify discrimination in that way—in favour of one industry against the other. At the same time, with the object of getting these things in half the rate of duty was removed because it was found that another Ordinance had to be passed. I asked that this be done and I must say I am very grateful to Government for bringing it before the Council so as to have the situation put right.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 3—Operation of Ordinance.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move the insertion of the following as clause 3 at the end of this Bill:—

“3. Section 2 of this Ordinance and paragraphs (a) and (b) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Customs Duties (Amendment) Ordinance, 1948, shall be deemed to have come into operation on the thirtieth day of December, nineteen hundred and forty-seven.”

The CHAIRMAN: When these duties were introduced I think it was intended that they should come into effect from the date when the budget came in—on January 1—and this clause is to make up for an omission in the original Bill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The budget resolution as Members would recall, was taken on December 30, 1947, and from that date taxes became effective. Therefore, any amendment should be from that date.

New clause (3) put and agreed to.

Title and enacting clause :

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the title of the Bill be amended by the addition of the words “and in other respects”.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Council resumed.

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

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time and passed.

ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATION.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move that the relevant Standing Rule and Order be suspended in order to enable me to take at once the motion of which I gave notice at the beginning of this meeting—the one standing in the second schedule and dealing with the continuation of Social Welfare Services. It is a matter of some importance, and one important point is that Mr. Laing, the Commissioner of Local Government, will be leaving the Colony shortly and we would like to get this Bill through whilst he is in the Colony.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Rule and Order suspended.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I now beg to move the following motion:—

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Council approves the continuance of the Social Welfare Services initiated under Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes—D 212 and D 443, and of the establishment on a permanent basis of the existing Social Welfare Organisation.”

Hon. Members will recall that when this matter came up in Finance Committee

and subsequently in Council at the examination of the 1948 draft Estimates, many conflicting views and opinions were expressed with regard to the Social Welfare Organisation and its work in this Colony. I will not say that Members expressed opposition to the continuation of this important service, but it seems to me that there were many ideas as to how the work should be carried on and, what was more important, there was a lack of appreciation of what was the policy behind this organisation, and so I undertook to invite you, Sir, to approve of a motion being introduced into this Council in order that there should be a full-dress debate, if Members so wish, on this important matter. The Estimates for 1948 provided, on page 38, for an expenditure of \$18,316; that is the amount estimated to be expended for the half year—from July to the end of the year — on this Organisation. That amount had to be included in our main Estimates because the grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare from which this service was being maintained expires on the 30th of this month and, secondly, if the service is to be carried on provision has to be made from the main Estimates of the Colony and met from our own financial resources. The Organisation, as set up in those Estimates, comprises the following staff:-

Head Office Staff: Assistant Social Welfare Officer, Junior Social Welfare Officer, Clerical Staff, Child Welfare Officer, Youth Organiser, and Field Staff Co-operative Organiser.

Provision has also been made for various District Officers as well as funds for the Youth Council, travelling expenses and so on. When we discussed quite recently the question of the Co-operative Movement and made provision for the initiation of a Co-operative Department, I think it was indicated to Members that these two services would, in some degree, work hand in hand. I think it was explained that the Field Staff of the Social Welfare Organisation would, in some degree, act as Field Staff for the Co-operative Movement. I do not propose to go into that at all, because this is really an opportunity for Members to express their own views on the matter and for those views to be answered. At the same time the Resolution is worded, as I have said, so that Government will

know whether this Council is in fact prepared to carry on this organisation and will vote the necessary funds for it in the 1949 Estimates and in future. Mr. Laing is in the hall and, I am quite sure, he is quite prepared to explain the whole situation. Before going fully into details I would suggest that if Members have any views to express they should speak first and allow Mr. Laing to speak afterwards because it is not so much, as I have said, a presentation of this idea but it is an opportunity for Members to express their views on the Social Welfare Services in this Colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. FERREIRA: May I suggest that Mr. Laing should address the Council now and set out the points for the consideration of hon. Members? He is well versed in the subject and, I think, a lot of time would be saved if he were to speak and let us hear his views. We might agree with them.

Mr. LEE: I support that suggestion.

The PRESIDENT: I think, Mr. Laing will explain what are the activities of the Social Welfare Organisation, and how it started with the help of Colonial Development and Welfare funds.

Mr. M. B. LAING, C.M.G., O.B.E., (Commissioner of Local Government and Social Welfare Officer): Your Excellency and Members of Council, perhaps the best thing I can do is to read to hon. Members a part of Sir Gordon Lethem's Message to this Council when Social Welfare was first introduced. In that Message the Governor endeavoured to set out Government's policy in regard to Social Welfare. This is what Sir Gordon Lethem wrote in his Message. No. 4 of 1944, with reference to the duties of the Social Welfare staff.

"It is proposed that they should devote their time to rural reconstruction. The importance of wholesome recreation must not be forgotten — as a means of rendering the individual more fitted, physically and mentally, for the task of earning a satisfactory livelihood, but purely social activities will not be encouraged beyond a scale which each

district is willing to support for itself and can, in fact, support. The decision to work upon a severely practical basis is inevitable, since the community cannot bear the cost of adequate social services until the economic situation has been improved, and it is undesirable from many points of view that the services should be maintained on the assumption of continued assistance from the Imperial Treasury for an indefinite period.

"The chief concern of District Officers for the present will therefore be the creation of group activities aimed at greater self-sufficiency within the district, and united action over common problems affecting the living conditions and earning capacity of the people. It will be necessary for them to devise ways in which rural populations can employ themselves profitably between crops — with cottage or village industries and handicrafts. The promotion of thrift clubs, buying clubs, marketing co-operatives and co-operative housing groups will provide activity having both material advantages and an educational value."

I think it is necessary that Members should be reminded of the policy of Government in regard to Social Welfare, because some of the gentlemen who are now Members of this Council were not Members when Government outlined its policy, and there may be some misunderstanding of what is actually meant by Social Welfare. I think hon. Members will now understand that Social Welfare in this Colony has a severely practical basis, and one of its objects is to achieve greater self-sufficiency. In other words, Social Welfare may be described as self-help, and it will remain rooted in self-help.

The first duty of my organisation was to try and ascertain the best lines that could be pursued in the rural districts to give effect to Government's policy, and after some time a decision was reached that the establishment of the Co-operative Movement would provide the best results. It was further decided that the development of Home Industries should also be encouraged. Proceeding along those lines, as Your Excellency and Members of Council are aware, we laid very carefully the foundation of the Co-operative Movement, and in Your Excellency's Message to this Council on Co-operation you praised my organisation for the

results we had achieved in laying the foundation of the Co-operative Movement — results which Your Excellency considered of sufficient importance to ask this Council to vote a further sum of money to provide for a Registrar of Co-operative Societies and a small staff to form a separate branch to further develop the Co-operative Movement — I think, I may then justly claim that the Social Welfare Organization has succeeded in establishing the Co-operative Movement.

In regard to Home Industries, Members are, I think, aware that we have endeavoured to establish straw work — that is, the manufacture of hats and bags and other useful articles out of local material. If Members look around the streets of Georgetown and the Country Districts they may be surprised to find that a large number of our ladies in the towns and the rural districts are at present wearing hats and using bags of local manufacture. We certainly have made progress in the development of that line and it is achieving satisfactory results, inasmuch as one group of some seven young women made during last year a net profit of \$1,000 for themselves.

In addition to the activities mentioned, the Social Welfare Branch has to develop other social services. The development of the reformatory system was a matter that we considered very important and one that should be developed along modern lines. A Probation Officer has been appointed and the probation service is being developed: the approved school for boys in Essequibo and the approved school for girls at Belfield are now organised on modern lines. An After-Care Officer has been appointed for the Boys' School to see that the training that the boys receive at the school is not lost when they leave the school. An After-Care Officer also takes care of the girls from the Belfield School when they leave that institution. And it is now proposed, to appoint very shortly an After-Care Officer to take charge of adult prisoners on discharge from the Georgetown Prison and the Prisons at New Amsterdam and Mazaruni.

A further matter that engaged the attention of the Social Welfare Organisation was the care of children who had been placed under the guardianship of foster-

parents by our Poor Law Commissioners. Previously there was no follow up to see that those children were given adequate attention in the homes of their foster-parents. This work is now being carried out by our Woman Welfare Officer. There are many other things, Sir, that should be undertaken. There is, for instance, the development of the Friendly Societies. There is also the question of the inspection of the charitable organisations which benefit under the Ordinance dealing with the distribution of the sweepstake money.

The Social Welfare staff, which I suggest is a very humble one, is required to carry out all of those and many other duties. Should this Council feel in its wisdom that it is unnecessary to retain the Social Welfare staff, then all the work I have referred to and all the endeavours that we have made to build up, improve and modernize the Social Services in this Colony will be lost and we should have to return to the point we were at when Social Welfare started three years ago. I would like to emphasize that Social Welfare has only been in operation three years and had to be made and to start from zero. We have built up this organisation. We have achieved success in the various matters to which I have referred and, although I am saying it myself, I think great credit is due to the Officers of the Social Welfare Branch of my department for the very remarkable success they have achieved in so short a time. If there are any questions Members would care to ask in connection with the many matters with which Social Welfare deals I shall be only too glad, Your Excellency, to give any explanation which Members may require.

Mr. LEE: There is no doubt in my mind, as I have said at the commencement when this was being introduced by Sir Gordon Lethem, that Social Welfare is required in every advanced community, but at that time I also said that we have to carry this Social Welfare on the expenditure side of our Budget and unless Government can see its way to obtain revenue to cover that expenditure it will be and will remain a burden to this Colony. I feel, Sir, that is still my opinion. Social Welfare is a good thing, but can this Colony carry the responsibility of the expenditure? I was hoping

that at some time or other Government would ask the Imperial Government to carry it a little longer until the revenue of this Colony had improved. I have been an Official Visitor of the Girls' Home, and I have at certain times visited there with Mr. Laing, who is Chairman of the Committee. I can say to this Council that there has been very great improvement in those girls who were sent to that Home, and I can assure hon. Members that if this Colony could afford it we should continue it. The feeling I have at the back of my head is whether we can afford it. If we can get an assurance from Government that we can afford to carry on these things without imposing an extra financial burden on the community or in no way the workers will be taxed, then I say it is good.

There is no doubt that in the Courts the Probation Officers are doing their best, and in the districts—I know at La Grange and Bagotville on the West Bank Demerara—they have instituted the making of straw hats which has become a useful industry helped by the Social Welfare Officer. As regards the co-operative side, together with the Government Produce Depot they have attempted one or two things which in time will prove of benefit to the community. But it costs money, and that is my fear. I really cannot tell you how much I feel in respect of this money, because I know there must be capital to launch all these household or local schemes for the benefit of the people in the several villages. The capital is not yet provided here and, as Your Excellency and Members of this Council are aware, for Bartica I tried as much as possible under the Ten Year Plan to get \$10,000 for expenditure on Social Welfare. Bartica is one of the villages in my constituency and, I can assure Members of Council, it has done a lot of good there. You meet people there at certain times, and you can feel that the association brought about there by Social Welfare among the men and women and children is broadening their views. At the present moment there is on foot a scheme for the establishment and expansion of Social Welfare in Bartica. I had to speak to the Bartica Sports Club in respect of permitting the expansion of it. Your Excellency or hon. Members of Council can enquire about it.

You have a very excellent officer, Mr. Angoy, who is pushing it as much as possible and is getting the people of the district to understand each other and to understand advancement in the modern way of Social Welfare. There is established a Thrift Union and by that the people have saved some money and it has been expended, I believe, in the right direction, but they need further help. As I have said on more than one occasion, this small beginning wants enlarging and that needs capital, and that is where I am concerned.

For instance, let us take the Grow More Food Campaign in which you have poultry-rearing. A family may want to embark upon that but have not the means to buy the required stock — two hens and a cock — to start with. I know several people in the villages have not the means to do so. I feel that in providing this Social Welfare, if Members are satisfied with the establishment, some provision must be made by Government in respect of financial advances to certain members of the Social Welfare Movement in order that they can better their position in the community. I have no doubt, Your Excellency will hear the views of Members of this Council and, if an assurance can be given that we can meet this expenditure, then there can be no trouble about it. That is my view. At the same time there is also the rumour that certain of our local men are being overlooked and some are being promoted in preference to the other. I desire that some assurance be given in respect of that.

Mr. FARNUM: I have heard Mr. Laing and I would like to congratulate him on what he has done for Social Welfare in the Colony up to now. I think, I am one of the oldest Members in this Council associated with village life, and I can say this: Since Social Welfare has been undertaken by Mr. Laing and his officers there is an entirely different outlook for the youths and adults of the country districts. That is a very desirable feature. Not very long ago the cry was "We cannot keep our children in the country districts from going into Georgetown to swell the ranks of the unemployed and make conditions difficult." Today Social Welfare has provided

recreation for those children, started clubs whereby they make articles. I think, Your Excellency has seen the type of handicraft that the children are doing. It is certainly very good and it is improving. I do not think I am incorrect in saying that handicraft is certainly coming into popularity, and the clubs are certainly getting a large sum of money from the sale of those articles to carry them on. We have women's institutions which have been fostering Social Welfare. I venture to say, Sir, that years ago life in the villages was very dull in the evenings for the reason that the people did not know what to do with themselves. The women's organisations started to form some sort of club where the women go and exchange their knowledge and, I think, every village community, benefits by that.

The next thing is, Sir, I may be allowed to read an extract from a pamphlet which came into my hands termed "Social Welfare in the Colonies": I think it tells exactly what is the object and aim of Social Welfare in the Colonies. The portion of the pamphlet I desire to quote reads

"The concern of the social welfare worker is so widely extended that the exhaustively catalogued. It may, however, be helpful to represent them as falling into four groups, notwithstanding that really the groups freely overlap.

A. The promotion of community life and the use of the village hall or other community centre; music, drama, study and recreational groups for people of all ages as well as pre-vocational associations.

B. Activities auxiliary to the work of specialist departments in, e.g., the promotion of cottage industries, horticulture, improvement of small stock breeding, and domestic management including diet, cooking, sanitation and house planning; encouragement of co-operative and other beneficial social movements; the development and co-ordination of character-forming organisations for adolescents and young adults.

In Great Britain these activities are largely entrusted to unofficial organisations, such as Boys' and Girls' Clubs, Scouts, Guides and other uniformed bodies, Women's Institutes, Young Farmers' Clubs, the Mothers' Union and sports clubs.

C. Activities undertaken for classes of the community who specially require care: expectant mothers and infants; children whose mothers are at work; the sick, including particularly handicapped children and those suffering from chronic diseases; mental defectives and the insane; the aged and the destitute.

Much of this work in Great Britain is now a statutory obligation or is undertaken by local authorities, and in some cases is supplemented by the work of specialist voluntary organizations. This is particularly true of services for the blind, the deaf, the crippled, tubercular cases and the care of the mentally sick.

D. Activities connected with the work of the law courts, such as the treatment of juvenile delinquency, including approved schools and the organization of a probation system, the care and protection of neglected children and the prevention of cruelty to children, welfare work for prisoners and ex-prisoners, prostitutes and those in danger of falling into prostitution.

The official organizations which promote these objects in Great Britain are probation services for adults and juveniles, approved schools, Borstals, residential hostels and remand homes; on the voluntary service side are the prisoners' aid societies and various types of special homes for children and young people."

I think that fully describes what has been done and what Mr. Laing's department is trying to achieve and has achieved in a great measure, and I say again I feel and know that the villages are very much better off today. Not very long ago the problem arose as to what to do with our children after they leave school. I know some of them are always clashing with the Police Authorities, but since Social Welfare has been started they have found valuable occupation and that has decreased considerably. This work should continue, and I am voting for its continuance.

Mr. DEBIDIN: This is another, what I may term, "Colonial Development and Welfare Baby," but I have come here today with an open mind and I am satisfied that if we have got a foundling we must nurse it and make it grow in proportion and become a vigorous and useful adult in the community. If I had to choose two points with which to oppose

the motion I would refer to two which seem to embrace everything required to throw this motion out, and those are: First of all I feel that this Colony has not reached that stage of economic stability where it can sufficiently establish a proper department and carry out Social Welfare work. One Member referred to Imperial help. We may consider that at some time or other. I do believe that after we have done some effective work certainly some amount of Imperial help can be of very great advantage to the Colony, but that is another matter entirely. The second reason is this — I have said it once before and I will repeat it — the present Social Welfare Department has failed and failed very badly indeed. I will not go into all the details of the failure, but I venture to say that one of the more important reasons is — they have not appointed men sufficiently qualified who have certainly had a knowledge of the people and their needs to comprise the staff of the Social Welfare Department. In this I make a complete reservation in so far as Mr. Laing is concerned. This gentleman knows the people of this Colony. I do not think there is any Officer of Government who knows the people of this Colony better than he does, but I am afraid that he has had too much to do and with his manifold duties this Department was left languishing in the hands of an incompetent staff. I will give full marks to Mr. Laing for village administration. He has done a wonderful job of it, but I do feel that this Social Welfare Department, constituted as it is, can serve no useful purpose in the future, and I am going to make this request or suggestion which I do hope will be given some weighty consideration — what we need most at this time in this Colony is a Social Welfare Adviser, a man who has technical knowledge, so that what he may not have in the knowledge of the people he will make up with his ability to advise along the lines of recognised Social Welfare work. We have not had the benefit of that. We have had casual visits from Mr. Simey and others who have come to this Colony and shown they can give a great deal of advice.

I want to think that is why Jamaica has prospered so well in social welfare work. There are certain difficulties in

this Colony which must be regarded as obstacles in the way of proper social welfare work, and they must be overcome. I have mentioned economic instability, but there is also this factor to be considered—that we are a highly cosmopolitan community, and a cross-section of the people will show a great deal of variation in culture and social conditions. Those are things which have to be studied, and provision has to be wide enough to meet the needs and demands of each component part of the Colony. I am afraid that as far as my knowledge goes no genuine, no visible attempt has been made to deal with this aspect. As it is, we have seen in the first years of social welfare work in this Colony concentration on Youth Councils, and I have been nauseated by the number of Committees of the various Youth Councils, of whose functions we heard no more.

I have had occasion to make serious complaint that when social welfare work started in this Colony Government and the Social Welfare Department failed to recruit the help of the recognised social organisations simply because the rules of those organisations did not conform to their requirements. I think Members will know what I am driving at. Just a few bodies got together and started this social welfare work. At that time I was connected with one institution which was doing real work. I refer to the Y.M.C.A. As I said at a previous meeting of this Council, if this Social Welfare Department had the right amount of enthusiasm, determination and organising ability, the 4-H movement should have been put on a better basis in this Colony. Instead, the Department selfishly wrested social welfare work in this Colony from the voluntary organisations, and after a time they became stifled.

What have we seen for the expenditure of a huge sum of money on this Department? Large sums have been spent in sending two students to Jamaica. I heard Mr. Laing say that co-operative societies were within view, but I would say that the co-operative movement really started with the launch service recently inaugurated in the Mahaicony river, which did not require so great an impetus for its formation. We are yet to see the development of the co-operative movement. When we take stock we find

that after spending a considerable sum of money from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund this Department is unable to show results commensurate with that expenditure. There may have been isolated efforts at basket making, but to what extent has that been pushed in the rural areas? I venture to say that long before social welfare work was started in this Colony I saw girls in the country districts making hats from coconut palm leaves and "bizzly-bizzly."

Mr. LEE: I would like to inform my friend that wherever there was a Social Welfare Officer stationed in a district he will find that there has been great improvement in basket making and other domestic work.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I would like to ask the hon. Member how many are in his district, and what are they doing?

Mr. LEE: There is one at Bartica, and as my friend has been to Bartica I would like him to tell us where the Social Officer—

The PRESIDENT: I am afraid I cannot allow this cross-argument between two Members. The hon. Member will proceed.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I am glad that a period has been put to that argument because my friend has missed the point I was making. I am not saying that it is not social welfare work as I regard it, but it must not be confined to just a few. I would like to read a passage from the pamphlet on "Social Welfare in the Colonies" which clinches some of the points I have been making. On page 3, par. 9, it states:

"9. The function of the "social welfare" worker may be described as three-fold:—

(1) To assume direct responsibility for certain types of service which are not covered by the existing professional departments and to encourage and help in their development.

(2) To assist the administration and the specialist departments in those aspects of their work which have a particular bearing on the welfare of the people, so that the latter may be attracted and persuaded to take full ad-

vantage of the facilities offered, and that the former may have available advice to assist them in adapting their services to the particular needs of a particular area or social unit.

(3) To encourage and to integrate with the general programme the work of Churches and voluntary bodies in these and similar fields; in particular to develop the social welfare activities of Native Administrations and of native organisations and societies, to encourage the development of voluntary organisations which provide scope for the activities, as full members, of indigenous persons, both men and women, and to promote their training in leadership."

As far as I have seen, most of the social welfare work is being done in the cities and in one or two of the villages—Bartica is one of them — but very little in the rural areas of the Colony. I know that the Sugar Producers Association has set aside a portion of the increased price for sugar for social welfare work on the sugar estates, but I cannot say that that work has started yet. I hope that with the integration of that work with that of the Social Welfare Organisation social welfare work in this Colony will be undertaken on a much wider and general scale. The paragraph I have quoted certainly emphasises the point I have been making—that we must have proper economic conditions in this Colony, and I will take this opportunity to say that my investigations within the last few weeks of conditions prevailing on the sugar estates show that the wages being paid to the workers are far from being living wages, much less saving wages. When I pointed out to several persons the amount of forking work a man has to do on an estate for 8 cents it was remarked that it was really worth 8 shillings.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. Member to confine his remarks to the debate. We are discussing social welfare.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I respectfully submit that the point is not irrelevant since it shows that the wages of the people, an index of our economic system—are far from being something upon which true and proper social welfare work can be based. It is very relevant when I read here about good health, good housing and good water. We all know what the

housing conditions are in the rural areas. How are the people to appreciate the benefits of social welfare work under such conditions? How is this expenditure which we are now considering to bear fruit and benefit every class of people in the Colony unless they are in a position to be receptive of what good the Social Welfare Department can produce? When they are provided with good living conditions and proper wages then we can talk about establishing community centres, debating societies and clubs for their social uplift. My stand at this moment is that I am certainly anxious to see social welfare work developed in this Colony. From what I have read it is a colonial policy, and we must consider the most effective way in which the work can be carried on.

It is therefore very important and very relevant that we should consider the usefulness and the proper functioning of a Department to which we want to give continuous life. We need a Social Welfare Adviser. In my opinion the entire staff of the Department should be scrapped. I am sure that if a Social Welfare Adviser were brought to the Colony he would be able to recruit voluntary help throughout the Colony. He would be able to advise and train the people, probably using some of the present staff. I have come to the conclusion that the Social Welfare Department has never placed any value upon voluntary work—at least not enough value. On this point I would like to read another paragraph from the pamphlet, which says:

"3. In Great Britain during the last forty years there has been a growing recognition that the community is an organic whole whose health and vitality depend upon the well-being of all its constituent members and on the good relations between them. This has involved a great development of social services; but it must not be overlooked that if the pioneer activities of the unofficial societies are now being progressively taken over by the public administration of the community, the recognition that something more ample and more consistent with the self-respect of the beneficiary than private charity is needed, is due in very large part to pressure from the very individuals and societies whose efforts are now being incorporated in a system at once more

highly organized and more broadly based. Indeed, it may safely be said that it is not the elimination of voluntary effort but its integration with the official organization which affords the best prospects of healthy development. At any rate in Britain the progress of the last twenty years has been marked by a steady growth of intimate co-operation between the amateur and the professional in a wide range of social welfare activities and between volunteer groups, the great organized societies and the public departments."

If we are to have this Social Welfare Organisation it must change considerably and drastically, not only in its staffing but in its outlook as well. Our social welfare work in the past has not been what was or should have been expected of it, and I venture to say that unless we do something drastic about it it will continue to be a huge expenditure on the Colony and a misfit in our midst. We have other Departments handling very effectively some measure of social welfare work, such as the Education Department and the Labour Department, and if this Social Welfare Department is to look after the rural areas particularly it has to be more vigorous, more enthusiastic and more helpful than it has been in the past. If this Department is to be continued as a permanent organization I would strongly urge that an Advisory Committee of Members of this Council and representatives of the rural areas should be set up so as to guarantee that its future activities would be carried out not only on lines acceptable to this Council but in consonance with the needs of the people of the Colony.

MR. FERREIRA: I came here this afternoon with a perfectly open mind on this motion. The point at issue is whether or not we consider social welfare essential for this Colony, and I do not think anyone present would deny that it is absolutely essential. I do not pretend to know very much about it but as a visitor to the Prison I have seen the need for after-care work, and it has given me great pleasure to know that Government has appointed someone to that post. The sum involved in this proposal is not merely \$18,000 but really \$36,000 per annum, but I do not think it is an amount which we cannot afford to pay. I

feel that it would be better and more beneficial to the Colony to spend money in training the youth of the country to be useful citizens than to pay it out in later years in doles or crime prevention. That is the view I take.

One hon. Member has described the Social Welfare Officers as being failures. They have failed hopelessly, he said. I do not agree with that. The hon. Member probably has some particular officer in mind, but I know that those officers with whom I have come into contact on the Corentyne Coast have impressed me as being very conscientious, hard working, and very enthusiastic. The only complaint I have to make is that the work of the Department has not been carried far enough, but I daresay that is due to lack of funds.

I would like to make an appeal on behalf of the people in the district I represent, particularly those in the upper reaches of the Berbice River who have little to live for and to improve their minds. They have not even the educational facilities enjoyed by other people on the coastlands. They are a neglected people who should be taken in hand and given some light—something to live for. They should have all the attention of the Social Welfare Organisation.

I would also like to congratulate the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farnum, on what he said. As a village leader he is in a position to know what is what, and I think he has done a great service in speaking as he has spoken. His remarks have guided me very largely in supporting the motion.

I join issue with the last speaker when he says that the Y.M.C.A. is the only voluntary organisation.

MR. DEBIDIN: To a point of correction. I never said that the Y.M.C.A. was the only voluntary organisation.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member certainly gave that impression.

MR. DEBIDIN: The only voluntary organisation doing that work.

agricultural credit? Absolutely nothing. There is definite scope for the establishment of credit, marketing and consumers' societies, but though they may be very good Social Welfare Officers they do not know anything about those matters. Farmers' requisites, such as tractors, ploughs and threshers for joint use, have no relation or connection with the Social Welfare Movement.

The establishment, in time, of a Co-operative Central Bank is also envisaged, and the members of it will be the primary societies themselves. Again I repeat, not one of the things mentioned by Your Excellency has the remotest connection with the Co-operative Movement. In order to take over redundant staff from the Social Welfare Organisation you will be making the Colony pay \$18,000 odd for the services of those who will not be proficient and have to be trained from the outset. I do not say I will not vote \$18,000, or \$36,000 or, if necessary, \$100,000 for the Co-operative Movement. I say \$100,000 will not be too much for the Movement, but you must select the best officers that can be obtained for it and not take over *en bloc* the Social Welfare Officers.

The PRESIDENT: I desire there should be no misapprehension. There is no such intention whatever. The Social Welfare Organisation, it is true, is a department apart from the Co-operative Movement, but it can still render a lot of help in that direction. As I said in my Message, we want a separate department under its own head, but it does not mean to say the Co-operative Movement is going to take over Social Welfare work. The Probation Officer is doing very good work, but in addition there are dozens of volunteer probation officers working with him whose most valuable services are not known and, I fear, not appreciated by many. There are dozens and dozens of organisations, youth organisations, put under the Central Youth Council and I know from my own experience and knowledge what great good they are doing. That Council is a real live body and represents not less than forty organisations doing social welfare work, \$1,200 of this vote is for that purpose of supporting that Council.

I am afraid some hon. Members do not realize what social services are being done in this Colony, not altogether by this Department by any means but by private enterprise and by public-spirited people who are willing to sacrifice not only their time but their money, and they are giving the Social Welfare Department all the support they can. The Department is doing its part in helping along these services and helping them in a valuable way. I do wish that hon. Members would make a study of the activities of all these associations and what they are actually doing before deriding them as I have heard in some quarters today. With all my work I do find time to go and see these organisations, visit them and see what they are doing. I do find time to find out what the Social Welfare Department is doing, and I suggest to Members they do likewise. One hon. Member felt justified to say that he had the greatest respect for Mr. Laing as having greater knowledge of village affairs than anyone in the Colony, but what in effect he went on to say was that the opinion of Mr. Laing on the great value of the Social Welfare work was worthless. That is exactly what in effect he said. He had respect for the man but not for his opinion as to the value of the social welfare work that is being conducted in this Colony.

It is valuable work. It is still being done in a small way and by no means covers the whole problem. It is probably too early, as one hon. Member said, to judge the full value of it. It is new born, and it has only just got going with a very small staff and only for three years. British Guiana is a big place and there are certain sections of the community certainly not yet touched at all by the Social Welfare Department, for example our Amerindian community, and there are others. There are sections of people in which it is far more difficult to start Social Services and to get them going than in others. It depends on their own enlightenment, and progress may be slow with some communities and not with others, but, as a whole, it is progressing and good work is being done, and done with the full co-operation of the Churches and philanthropic associations of various kinds.

I do not want this work belittled, and I have heard it derided in this Council, as I have today, which is very disheartening. If you want people to come along and help in this kind of work and then you speak disparagingly of that work and say it is no good, then what is going to happen and where are we going? I ask hon. Members who oppose to reflect a little and find out for themselves what is being done. They will find that really very valuable work is being done. The Co-operative Movement, I agree, is really too big to be a part of the Social Welfare Department, and we want it to be a separate organisation, but apart from co-operation there are dozens of different kinds of social welfare work. If hon. Members want to know what the policy of Government is in regard to Social Welfare, you only have to read the Colonial Office pamphlet which one or two hon. Members have read from. That sets out precisely the policy of Government in respect of Social Welfare in this Colony. That sets out what we are trying to do, and we have had some success already in that direction. That is Government's policy, and that is what we have to ask ourselves when we are asked to support it or not. I am sorry to have interrupted the hon. Member for Demerara River.

Capt. COGHLAN: Your Excellency, if you consider that I have said one word derogatory of the Social Welfare Movement, I would ask to have the notes of my speech repeated, because I have not said one word that can be so construed.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is quite right. I never accused him of having said one single word against the work. I was not referring to the hon. Member, and I am indeed sorry if he gained that impression.

Capt. COGHLAN: What I am saying is this: It does not follow because a man is a good swimmer he must also be a good runner. A man may be an excellent Social Welfare worker but, according to Your Excellency's Message, there is absolutely no relationship between the Social Welfare Movement and the Co-operative Movement. Therefore what I would suggest is to let the Social Welfare Movement continue as it has

been doing and maintain what it has been doing so well, and let the Co-operative Movement, which Your Excellency says must be a separate movement, be so and not combined with the Social Welfare Organisation. I am not saying one word against the Social Welfare Organisation or the Officers of Government. All I am saying is that it works on different lines altogether from the Co-operative Movement, and the one has no relationship with the other. Furthermore, I say there should be no objection to voting \$18,000 for the Co-operative Movement. I would be equally inclined to vote \$100,000 for it. It does not matter how much is voted, I think, the Co-operative Movement is well worth it to this Colony. Rather than voting \$18,000 for the Co-operative Movement, Members will be much more satisfied if something concrete is put up to this Council showing who are the officers to be taken over, what are their qualifications for the Co-operative Movement, what are the salaries to be paid, and how this \$18,316 is going to be spent.

Mr. KENDALL: In supporting the motion for the continuance of the Social Welfare Services I would like to make a few observations. I would like to see the Social Welfare Services continue in one particular direction as suggested by Mr. Laing—the making of hats. I would like to see it stimulated by way of protective tariff introduced by Government so that hats of a similar nature should not be imported into this Colony. That, I believe, will stimulate the production of hats and will assist in reducing unemployment that exists especially in the rural areas. I urge that self-sufficiency is something that the Social Welfare Services should take into consideration. If we are to find employment for our youth, as suggested by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, there must be new avenues that the Social Welfare Services should try to seek. There is another aspect of this question in relation to the Prisons. I am of the opinion, Sir, that the inmates should produce certain articles which when sold would assist in their maintenance and also assist them when leaving that institution in becoming better citizens. I think those are aspects the Social Welfare Services should investigate and see to it that those things are

done for the good of British Guiana. That is all I have to say in support of the motion.

Mr. McDOOM: Supporting the continuance of this organisation I would like to make one observation. In the past, we know, the organisation has been working among a certain type or class of people. In my opinion it is yet too early to expect the organisation to be able to work at its fullest extent, but I will ask Mr. Laing, especially as he is going to leave this Colony shortly and I do not know how early he will be back, to make some arrangement whereby the organisation will extend among all sections of the people of this Colony.

Mr. CARTER: Sir, I feel I should record my approval of this motion on behalf of Social Welfare. I do not think any person who has the welfare of this country at heart can very well oppose this motion. I have experience of one branch of work undertaken by the Officers of the Social Welfare Department, and that is in regard to Juvenile Delinquency. Only this morning the hon. Member for Essequibo River and I appeared in the Court for three young men who had entered a shop somewhere on the East Bank, Demerara, and stolen therefrom a number of articles. One of those young men had been to Onderneeming, while the other two had no such experience at all or had never been in a Court before. The Probation Officers took charge of those young men. I have seen some of those Officers at work. I have seen them appear for young men in the Courts, and I have seen the good work done when the Probation Officers take charge of those young persons who happen to fall on the wrong side of the Law. I am not one of those who expect to see immediate results from the working of the Officers of the Social Welfare Department. I expect that this Department must necessarily have gradual growth, and we must wait to see what results are going to follow. It should be many years before we see the full effect and result of this Department, so this \$30,000 we are going to spend we must regard as an investment for the future of this country.

I was surprised to hear one hon. Member say this country has not yet reached economic stability in order to undertake Social Welfare work. I have always regarded the advancement of a country to be similar to that of an expanding tripod. That is, there has to be advancement along the political avenue, along the economic avenue and along the social avenue. If one or the other of those advances is out of proportion, then, I think, there would be a collapse of the structure. So I feel that political advancement and economic advancement must go hand in hand with social advancement. Therefore there can be no question of this country not being sufficiently stabled economically to undertake any Social Welfare work. I do want to say, however, I was very pleased when Your Excellency said that the Co-operative Movement will not necessarily go under the umbrella of the Social Welfare Department, but that the Social Welfare Department will no doubt stimulate and inspire the Co-operative Movement, as I think it ought to. I feel, as the hon. Member for Demerara River has said, that the people who undertake co-operative work should be specialists in their own field and should be allowed a certain amount of elbow room and freedom to carry out their own plans and to carry them out in a manner they know best.

I do want to say, however, I feel there should be some form of liaison between the Co-operative Officers and the Social Welfare Officers at all times, so that there can be one constructive control in regard to advancement on the social side. I want to say also that the Department should continue to stimulate self-help to the greatest extent, and the focus should be at all times on the economic advancement of the Colony, on the individual and on the community as a whole. I feel that the Department should go farther afield than the average undertaking, but possibly it does not have the resources to undertake a larger measure of improvement. I feel, for instance, the time will come when the Social Welfare Department will train enough persons in things like leather work, shoe-making and other handicraft, which will immediately result in the economic advancement of

our country. What we are thinking of is that here is an important work that this Social Welfare Department can do in stimulating certain secondary industries in this country.

Mr. PHANG: I rise to say that I support this motion for the continuance of Social Welfare, but I just like to remark that Social Welfare has been in vogue in the Colony for three years. I want to remind Mr. Laing that there is such a place as the North-West District. I would be glad if some attention is given to that quarter.

Mr. PETERS: I desire to state that so far as I am concerned I am prepared to support the whole idea of furthering the Social Welfare proposition in our Colony. For my part I do not see any inherent conflict between the idea of the Social Welfare proposition and that of the Co-operative proposition. As a matter of fact, the idea of the co-operative proposition, so far as I view it, is a unit of the larger whole of the Social Welfare Scheme. Somehow or other that side of unit soul of our folk has been more largely developed than the social welfare idea as a whole, and that is the reason why I am afraid it seems to captivate our interest in such a large and highly extended manner. We have had a long history of the Co-operative Movement in our land, whether we pay much attention to it or not. We know something about the Friendly Societies established throughout the country; we know something about the specifically Sick and Funeral Benefits Societies, and we who practice in the Courts know more than anybody else of that dubious scheme, the scheme of the Box Money. The intention there is the implementing of the idea of the co-operative spirit among our people. It has a rather long history. Now that we are endeavouring to bring to light the larger whole and to exploit its potentiality, that of the social idea as a whole, there are some of us rather somewhat timorous as to whether those two ideas might be made to work harmoniously. For my own part I see no inherent conflict between them.

When it comes to Social Welfare, it seems to me that is one way we are called

upon to see whether we can stimulate the social functions of our people whereby we get them to develop the unit soul, taking the Colony parochially, and then we may develop the larger soul, the colonial soul. We have had in our various districts of the Colony, both urban and rural, a sort of single-handed idea as to one's interest as a whole. That has been the history of our land—folk working to develop themselves and thinking comparatively little of developing the colonial soul. If you take a village as a single unit and you are there able to foster the idea of co-operate group interest in matters of recreation, matters of industry, matters of a sort of quasi post-graduate educational course after the primary course of the boy or girl has come to an end, by this means we may hope to develop the urban group soul and in doing that move towards the larger issue of developing the soul of the Colony as such. I for one represent in a small measure a part of the Amerindian community of this Colony, and one of the problems I have been seeking to solve in the district of Caria-Caria on the western mainland of Essequibo where the folk live around the Mission Compound is this: How to develop a sort of group soul among those folk whereby they will rise to a larger status of their own individual interest in the light of forgetting for a while themselves, what they do for themselves by squaring wood, transporting wood or going to the gold fields, and thinking what to do to develop the group soul, not necessarily the spiritual soul, but along social and industrial lines in a sort of co-operative way. On the occasion of my last visit there a few weeks ago. I found that the young people of that district were absolutely without any means of developing that group soul which is so important for the development of any country. I am hoping that this Social Welfare Scheme will take root and bring forth fruit. Speaking like the hon. Member for North Western District, I hope the western mainland of Essequibo may not be forgotten.

Mr. THOMPSON: On the last occasion I spoke at length on this matter of Social Welfare. I am afraid that many Members have expressed the opinion they have, because they have not closely

associated themselves with the work that has been going on. I think, if there is one individual who Mr. Bayley does not want to see in that office it is T. T. Thompson. He thinks I am pestering him too much in respect of this Social Welfare. There are certain things I demand for the districts, and we always disagree finally to agree. The Department has done excellent work, and rather than criticise the officers I think Members should identify themselves actively with the work that is being carried on in the districts. Had they done so I am sure their opinions would have been different. We cannot expect results to be achieved overnight. The work is still in its infancy, and the whole field cannot be covered at the same time. There is a limited number of men in the field, and it will take some time for them to get around the districts. It is for Members to enter the field and give what assistance they possibly can instead of criticising what has been done and what has not been done. If we do not accept the motion and give the Organisation the support necessary I am sure that in a very short while we would have a different tale to tell. I started 4H work in 1934, and I have done my bit. If we want the country to progress we must not throw cold water on everything that is started. We have to benefit by our failures, and if there is any direction in which the Department has failed, and it is pointed out to the Officer, I am positive that we would have better results.

As regards basket making, I know that shipments have been made to certain parts of the West Indies where the people have clamoured for them. A few baskets have also been sent to Panama, and if the Department would explore avenues for the export of these articles I am sure that the industry would be developed. I am supporting the motion and I wish the Organisation every success.

The PRESIDENT: I would like to refer to the remark made by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Fernandes) on the subject of prisons and prisoners. I think he rather gave the impression that our prisons are filling up

so rapidly that there is no room for new prisoners. I do not know what has been happening this year, but the hon. Member's statement is contrary to the facts as far as 1947 is concerned. I quote now from the Report of the Superintendent of Prisons for 1947. He states:

"There were 2,618 admissions during the year, a decrease in actual number of 164 compared with the previous year."

Under the heading "Recidivism" the Superintendent of Prisons says:

"There has been a commendable decrease in the percentage of recidivism this year which was 44.9 as against 59.8 in the previous year and 68.9 in 1945".

He goes on to say:

"It is further hoped that with a full-time After-care Officer, for which post provision is included in the 1948 Draft Estimates, much more will be achieved in reducing this aspect of committals to prisons."

I will quote another passage from the report in which the Superintendent writes:

"Juvenciles were not received into prison on conviction during the year, and in this respect I feel the good work of the Social Welfare Department together with the Government Probation Officer deserves healthy praise."

In another paragraph on "Persons on Remand" the Superintendent of Prisons states

"There were 1,289 persons admitted into prison on remand during this year, as against 1,486 in the previous year."

That, I submit, is outside testimony of the value of Social Welfare work, or one aspect of it.

Mr. FERNANDES: I thank you, Sir, for those enlightening figures. I have not seen the 1947 figures yet. The figures I had were the 1946 figures, and that was about September or October last year. I am pleased to hear of the improvement read by you, Sir. There is no doubt about it that I did say that very good work is being done by the Social Welfare Department as regards probation. I made that perfectly clear. I said that the work

being done in that connection was helping to curb juvenile delinquency, but the figures which were supplied to me about August or September last year were in respect of 1946, and I am very pleased to hear that those high figures are not continuing.

The PRESIDENT: I only wished to make it clear because I did not want either the Council or the public to get the impression that crime was increasing at such an abnormal rate. There have been longer sentences during 1947 than in 1946, which means that the daily prisons population has been higher, and indicates perhaps that there was more serious crime. But the extracts I have quoted do, I submit, show good work by the Social Welfare Department.

Mr. FERNANDES: My information is that the cases before the Juvenile Court in recent months are on the increase, but of course the good work by the Probation Officers is helping to prevent our youth from becoming permanent criminals.

The PRESIDENT: I only wished to give the Council the latest reliable information that can be given. I will now put the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

At this stage the Council was adjourned until the following day at 2 p.m.