

# SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 4th March, 1959

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

**Speaker**, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

**Chief Secretary**, Hon. M. S. Porcher (acting)

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

**Financial Secretary**, Hon. F. W. Essex.

} *ex officio*

The Honourable **Dr. C. B. Jagan**

*Member for Eastern Berbice*  
(Minister of Trade and Industry)

„ **B. H. Benn**

*Member for Essequibo River*  
(Minister of Community Development and Education)

„ **E. B. Beharry**

*Member for Eastern Demerara*  
(Minister of Natural Resources)

„ „ **Janet Jagan**

*Member for Western Essequibo*  
(Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)

„ „ **Ram Karran**

*Member for Demerara—Essequibo*  
(Minister of Communications and Works).

„ **W. O. R. Kendall**

*Member for New Amsterdam*

„ **R. C. Tello**

*Nominated Member*

„ **F. Bowman**

*Member for Demerara River*

„ **L. F. S. Burnham**

*Member for Georgetown Central*

„ **S. Campbell**

*Member for North Western District*

„ **A. L. Jackson**

*Member for Georgetown North*

**S. M. Saffee**

*Member for Western Berbice*

**Ajodha Singh**

*Member for Berbice River*

**R. E. Davis**

*Nominated Member*

**H. J. M. Hubbard**

*Nominated Member*

„ **A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.**

*Nominated Member.*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

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

ABSENT

Mr. R. B. Gajraj

Mr. B. S. Rai

Mr. Jai Narine Singh

Mr. A. M. Fredericks—on leave.

The Clerk read prayers.

## MINUTES

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held yesterday have been duly printed and circulated. The question is, that they be taken as read and, confirmed.

**Mr. Hubbard:** As regards page 4 of those Minutes I think there is one inaccuracy. I think the Motion Mr. Burnham moved and was speaking on was for the reduction of the sub-head vote—"Public Printing by Contract"—not by \$1, as stated in the Minutes, but by \$15,000.

**Mr. Speaker :** Yes.

*Minutes amended accordingly.*

**Mr. Speaker:** I therefore declare the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 3rd March, 1959 duly confirmed as amended.

## ORDER OF THE DAY

## APPROPRIATION BILL

## BUDGET DEBATE

**Mr. Speaker :** We will resume consideration of the Appropriation Bill in Committee.

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

"An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current Session of the Legislative Council."

**The Minister of Trade and Industry** (Dr. Jagan) : I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

## COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

*Schedule.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

## PUBLIC PRINTING BY CONTRACT

**The Chief Secretary** (Mr. Porcher, acting) : I think I was on my feet when we finished last night—in the course of my reply to the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, who moved that a reduction of \$15,000 be made under this sub-head. I had just finished dealing with his first point which was that, had Government accepted the offer by the Argosy Company to do the Government printing at a certain figure, \$15,000 for the year would have been saved.

I had pointed out the fact that the offer which was made only covered the Contract for printing and that it would have cost the Government \$360,000 a year, and on top of that over \$100,000 would have been spent on non-contract printing, giving a total of \$460,000; but under the present arrangements that all the Government printing—with the exception of \$15,000 to \$20,000 worth—was being undertaken at a cost of \$375,000 a year. So in fact, at least \$60,000 a year was being saved by the present arrangements.

Now the second point which the hon. Member made was that the Government was unmoral and possibly immoral—

**Mr. Burnham :** . . . if not . . .

**The Chief Secretary:** . . . if not immoral in making the present Agreement for having its printing requirements undertaken. In my Oxford dictionary I was unable to find the word "unmoral", unless the hon. Member meant "amoral", and that means that Government did not care about the rights and wrongs of the matter. If the Government was immoral it means the Government knew quite well the wrongs and rights of the matter, but it did the wrong thing, it was vicious and it was dissolute. I propose

to tell what the Government did do and to prove that the Government was neither immoral nor amoral.

For a long time—for several years this Government and other Governments before have been considering setting up a printing establishment because the cost of Government printing carried out by private firms was increasing each year, and successive Governments were becoming alarmed about that.

We always seemed to be nine months or one year behind in considering the matter. The termination of one contract was always catching up with us before we were ready to do anything about it, and so the previous Agreements with the Argosy Company and the Daily Chronicle Ltd. were renewed from time to time.

I think it was in March, 1957 that Government decided it would set up a small Printery to take up part of its work and for the time being the balance of its work would be undertaken by a private company. That information was conveyed to all the Printeries in Georgetown. At the same time the decision was taken to appoint a Controller of Government Printing and Stationery, and an officer experienced in printing was appointed in October, 1957.

Six months later, after this officer had had an opportunity to make a preliminary survey of Government's printing requirements, we were able to invite tenders for a new Printing Contract commencing on the 1st of January, 1959. I may say that the Government Printing for the previous 18 months was undertaken by the Argosy Company and the Daily Chronicle Ltd. on an extension of their previous Contract—an extension which meant an increase in cost.

Tenders were invited for the Government printing contract on the 16th April, 1958. That invitation covered a certain portion of the Government printing requirements which we were advised were valued at \$230,000. The remain-

ing portion, valued at approximately \$100,000, was intended to be done by a small Government printery which was to be set up. The closing date for the tenders was the 14th June. I should have mentioned that the contract was divided up into five different divisions—A to E—and there were certain conditions attached to each division. Some divisions were for four years and some for one or two years, but there was nothing to prevent any company tendering for all the divisions, or just for one or two.

Two tenders were received—one from the Argosy Company for divisions A and D, while the Daily Chronicle Ltd. tendered for the other three divisions, so that the two companies were not competing against each other. The B.G. Lithographic Company was invited to tender, but wrote saying that it was unable to do so at the time, but asked to be kept in view for any other work which Government had to do. The tenders submitted were sent to the Tender Board in accordance with the accepted procedure. The Tender Board reported on the 8th of August. They advised that one tender for division C, which was from the Daily Chronicle Ltd. was acceptable. They said that two other tenders from the Daily Chronicle Ltd. were on the high side, and it might be better for Government to try to do that part of the work itself. They also said that two tenders submitted by the Argosy Company were quite exorbitant—one in particular being over 200 per cent. more than the estimated cost.

They pointed out that Government appeared to have two alternatives; they could call in the two companies and attempt to negotiate to reduce the cost, or they could decide to set up a Government Printery to undertake all their requirements. The setting up of a Government Printery is not something that can be done in a day or two, or even a week or a month or two; it takes time. We were advised that if we were to start there and then, that is to say in August, it would be possible to set up a Government Printery by the end of the year in order to undertake Government's requirements.

[THE CHIEF SECRETARY]

Any further delay would make it impossible.

It has been suggested to me unofficially by some people since we took our decision, that we should have called in the two companies to negotiate. Had we done so, and had we failed to reach an agreed price, we should have lost not only valuable time but vital time. We would have put ourselves in a position where we had no alternative but to get those companies to go on doing the printing requirements, as we would not have had time to set up a Government Printery.

Another point is that in the tenders submitted by the Argosy Company (as I said before the two divisions for which they tendered represent the bulk of the work, valued at \$390,000) they said that they would undertake those divisions according to the terms and conditions set out below in their letter, and not otherwise. Those words are recorded in their letter. So that the prospects of inducing them to lower their tender in any marked way seemed to be remote. Government therefore decided that it would reject all the tenders and set up a Government Printery. . . We then started to make extensive inquiries about setting up a Government Printery.

There were several courses open to us; we could try to acquire part of the plant of the Argosy Company or we could acquire new plant from elsewhere. . . I do not claim to be an expert on printing but I have had to read a lot about it in the last few months, and most of the experts agree that the process called the offset lithographic process is now coming into its own, and is a cheaper and more efficient method of undertaking at least certain types of printing than the conventional letter-press system. So, obviously, one of the things we had to consider very carefully was whether we should go in for offset lithographic machinery in preference to letter-press; if so, to what extent, and so on.

It may interest hon. Members to

know that in Northern Nigeria, for instance, 1,200 copies of the Hansard of the Legislative Council are produced the following morning after each debate, and that is largely achieved by using a battery of six Rotaprint machines. This is a wide field, and the more we went into it the more we discovered that there was a lot to learn. We were in touch with two different manufacturers of offset lithographic machines, one of which offered to set up a printery with their machines entirely by the 1st of January, and to train the necessary operators. We were also in touch with the Barbados Government which has a Government printery which works largely with offset machines.

At the same time we approached the Argosy Company and inquired from them whether they would be willing to sell part of their plant and buildings, or to rent them to us at least. We negotiated with them at the same time as we were negotiating with everybody else. They did not like our original proposal but proposed another offer of their own, to sell us a part of the portion of their plant which we had asked for. They were prepared to sell part of their buildings, but the price was, as far as we were concerned, quite out of the question. To give them their due, I think it is quite likely that the price they asked for the building was the price which they might have got on market value. The point was that we could put up our own building or acquire another building very much more cheaply; and the Argosy were agreed that it would not be worth Government's while to purchase the building.

On the question of plant the amount they were prepared to let us have was very much less than we asked for, and they asked a very much higher price than we were prepared to pay. The figure they asked was \$130,000, and we had had quotations for similar plant from abroad which worked out at about \$80,000. We tried to negotiate a reduction in price—and I may say it was not merely by exchange of letters; I myself had discussions with representatives of the Company. I asked them whether

they would be prepared to reduce their price, and they assured me they could not. At the same time they did offer to continue doing the contract printing at the figure referred to by the hon. Member, and I thanked them for the offer and said that it would be conveyed to the Government.

To get my chronological sequence right, the Company were informed on the 2nd September that their tenders were unacceptable. Later we wrote to them inquiring about purchasing their plant and buildings, and their final written offer was received on the 26th September. I met them on the 3rd October. In the meantime, while all these negotiations were going on with the Argosy Company and with the offset lithographic manufacturers, and inquiries were being made in the United Kingdom, Barbados, New Zealand and so on, the B.G. Lithographic Company approached us on the 25th September and said they were willing and able now to undertake all of Government's printing requirements. They explained to us that at the time the invitation for tenders was issued they were unable to tender because of lack of space. Since then the decision to allow them to set up a box factory had enabled them to acquire enough floor space, which previously had been used for making boxes, to set up a second factory, and they were now in a position to tackle the Government printing if we wished them to do so.

I asked them to make a written offer, and on the 29th September they gave me a written offer in which they undertook to do all of the requirements that we were able to list at the time for \$375,000 a year for three years. That, as I have said, was all of Government's printing requirements with the exception of the \$15,000 to \$20,000 worth of work. They also agreed to the condition that, if after the first year the Government was not satisfied that its printing requirements were being undertaken in the most efficient and economic manner, Government could thereafter terminate the agreement and set up their own printing press and

they would carry on at the contract price until the printery was in operation.

The various propositions were all put to the Government; the possibility of setting up the Government printery by using the off-set "litho" machinery; the possibility of setting up a Government printery by purchasing from the Argosy Company at their price or acquiring another building and machinery, and the other offer of the B.G. Lithographic Company. Government considered all of these possibilities, and it was quite patently clear that the intention to set up a Government printery by the 1st January would be a risky business. We were by no means sure that we would get the right type of machinery and equipment or value for our money, and we thought it would be very much better to take advantage of the Lithographic Company's offer which gave us a year's breather at less cost to make further investigations in order to find out exactly what sort of printery we wanted. Government therefore decided to accept the Lithographic Company's offer. Among other inquiries we made was a survey of other small printeries in Georgetown to find out how much work could be carried out by them. It was estimated that all of these printeries could only undertake about fifteen per cent. of Government's requirements and only certain types of work at that.

We informed the Argosy Company on the 23rd October of the decision that we were no longer interested in acquiring their plant and were making other arrangements to have our printing requirements undertaken. That is the story and the chronological sequence of events.

As to the hon. Member's last point, the question of unemployment, he himself says that it is a very difficult question to decide. Government is continually faced with the question of trying to achieve maximum efficiency and maximum services in order to get the best value for the money, and we have had to cut down on one or two posts here and there which, of course, result in some

[THE CHIEF SECRETARY]

people losing their jobs. As far as possible in the Civil Service one tries to send an officer somewhere else and, since there is a normal wastage every day, it is generally possible to do so without creating new posts.

In a case like this which was quite straightforward nobody mentioned the question of unemployment. The letters from the *Daily Argosy* did not say that, if they were not given the contract, so many people would be put out of employment. I believe the representatives of the company may have mentioned that at the meeting which was held on the 3rd October, but officially I have nothing on my file to show that, if the contract was not continued, about one hundred and fifty men would have been thrown out of employment. There was a lot of talk—one generally hears these things—and I, for one, did hear that if the printing contract was given to another firm, some of the men would be laid off.

I was, therefore, particularly careful to ask the B.G. Lithographic Company to give me a firm undertaking that all of Government printing work would be done in British Guiana and that none of it would be sent outside of the Colony. At one stage it was rumoured around the town that the B.G. Lithographic Company was going to send a lot of Government's work outside of the Colony and that there would be unemployment. I have had a firm assurance from the Managing-Director that all of Government's work would be undertaken in the country and, in the process, he certainly expected to take on at least fifty extra men.

I have no firm figures about how many men were laid off by the other printing companies. I have heard that it was about one hundred, one hundred and fifty and even as much as two hundred people. It seems to me to be extraordinary that if the work remains in the Colony, and the work is the same if not increasing, that one company can do it with one hundred or one hundred and fifty men less than another. I can only

conclude that their method of operation is more efficient and, presumably, that also is the reason why they can do it more cheaply.

Government was faced with the decision of either getting its printing requirements undertaken in the most economical and the cheapest manner possible, or going on with another company which is known to be uneconomical and spending an unnecessary amount of money. Government took the first alternative. The extra money saved as a result is available for doing other things, and those other things may very well mean further employment for other people. Was it right for Government to do that, or should we have kept on spending more money than was necessary for our printing requirements? I, personally, think that the Government was quite right to do what it did, and I think it would be wrong to continue spending more money than is necessary on printing simply because the retrenchment in a company will result in a small number of people being put out of employment. Some hon. Members may disagree with the decision, but I do not think it can possibly be said that the decision was either unmoral or immoral. Personally, I think Government took the right decision.

**Mr. Tello:** I have listened with interest to the very lengthy reply of the hon. the Chief Secretary. He certainly has enlightened us a great deal on the various procedures by which Government arrived at its decision. In this lengthy speech of his he has not made it clear what actuated Government to depart from its usual practice of awarding contracts by way of inviting tenders. He said originally that there was need for a tender, and he informed the *Argosy* that its tender was rejected. Normally a new advertisement inviting tenders would have been made, but in this particular case Government has introduced a new procedure and embarked on confidential negotiations.

As I understand it the present Government attaches a great deal of importance to tenders and awarding contracts

by tender. So much importance has been attached to awarding contracts by tender that this Government has appointed a special Tender Board so that everything will be above board and the award of contracts will be free from unqualified criticism. While on the one hand the Government has been meticulously careful we find that, in the case of this contract for printing, without any pressure from anyone, it has departed from what it considers to be essential to its own integrity and future public relations.

I am informed that, if Government had adopted the normal procedure, and there was a new invitation to tender there was a possibility and probability of a new tender being offered in competition with the new successful tenderer—that Government might have saved some money and those one hundred and fifty workers would still have been employed. But when Government suddenly changed the whole procedure, it left those workers at the mercy of fate.

There must be some sort of set policy with a responsible Government. Government cannot set as its objective the cheapest, regardless of human interests. I have been told that right now certain industrial enterprises could embark on further mechanization and dispose of hundreds and sometimes thousands of workers, but they, too, have some interest in human relations notwithstanding the present economy of the country. It is not how much you save, but how much money is circulated among the people so that, in turn, the economy of the country will be protected and unemployment may be less acute in the country.

I listened with interest to this lengthy address and I did not hear the hon. the Chief Secretary, who is responsible for Government Information, relate what we knew through the columns of the Press when the Argosy Company and the Daily Chronicle Ltd. continued the printing. We saw abundant information through the columns of the Press and the normal channels of publicity, but we did not see that the Lithographic Company

was offering us this facility. Does it not worth something in pounds sterling? When negotiating this Contract with the Lithographic Company did they not ask about the publicity they would lose by not renewing the Contract with the Argosy Company?

After all, this printing is not only for the internal benefit of the Government, but we must remember that it is taxpayers' money that is being spent and any form of decrease in Government business through the means of printing is a reduction in the amount of services rendered the taxpayer through the medium of printing.

I must say that I learned quite a good deal from the hon. the Chief Secretary's speech, but as I asked on previous occasions, must we accept that when it is most convenient they will use the channel of tenders and when it is not so convenient they will resort to confidential negotiations? We must deal with a set policy if it is by way of tender. I think the Government could have sought in three new advertisements some expression of clarity on given points.

I am not satisfied at the methods employed in arriving at this Contract, as they were not in the best interest. It is a known fact that the newspapers, "The Daily Argosy" and "The Daily Chronicle", were continuous in their criticism of the present Government, and one cannot close one's eyes to the fact that the failure of Government to renew the Contract and the action of Government in doing something that was not the most honourable show that they did not use their normal channels.

I am not saying that the action was dishonourable or immoral, but it does suggest that appearance when these 150 workers are left in the cold, and then the hon. the Chief Secretary says that it is in our interest to get public printing done as cheaply as possible. How are we going to get revenue to run this Government if every means is used by Government to reduce costs of producing things, re-

[MR. TELLO]

ardless of the impact on the working-people. How will the indirect taxation be realized?

I am not satisfied at all with the explanation offered by Government, and like the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, I feel that whatever the firm awarded the Contract, the Contract was immoral. Government arrived at its decision even though it was aware that 22 per cent. of the unemployed lived in Georgetown. But so as to save a few cents, the unemployed population was increased by 150. Yet in his lengthy speech the hon. the Chief Secretary did not make it clear or even hint to us what means would be used to find employment for these 150 workers—or even for the other 22 per cent. I think Government's responsibility was greater than was appreciated.

**Government is sharing in the retrenchment programme with the view that "we wanted to save money, and we care nothing about those who went out of work, or whether it would affect the economy of this country as a whole."**

**The Minister of Communications and Works** (Mr. Ram Karran): Before we go further may I ask whether, in cases where Government is calling for tenders, it should advertise again where it is possible that only one or two people can tender?

**Mr. Jackson :** Unlike the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, I am concerned with where the contract went not because I have a personal interest in the printing companies, but because of the fact that so many people have been put out of work.

Mr. Chairman, the economics of a Government are entirely unlike the economics of private enterprise. In private enterprise there is the need for profit, and no one—at least those on this side of the Council Chamber—denies the right of an investor to earn profits from his investment; and it is the right of the employer in that field to go all out to increase his methods of production, so that

in all respects or in most, his profits would soar to a higher level.

But even that standpoint is now ancient, for the private employer no longer concerns himself absolutely with profit; he concerns himself with the welfare of the people who assist him to earn those profits, and therefore he shares his profits with his employees either by way of an increase of wages, improvement of working conditions or by incentives of various kinds, and because of that there is a greater degree of harmony between the employer and the employee in private enterprise than before.

Government has the responsibility of caring for the people who are its citizens; it has the duty of taking care of the life of the individual and, for that matter, to provide for services of a medical or social nature which are essential to the well-being of the community. Government is also in these modern days committed to the task of relieving unemployment in every field, and unless that is done the burden will be greater on the State in having to spend money on other charges. It is recognized that if money is not coming into the pockets of the people who are in need of work, crimes will continue to increase; so that the State, while adopting a measure like this in order to reduce expenditure, will have to spend money on the maintenance of prisons.

Only yesterday I was reading about the extent to which unemployment and under-employment in this country existed in the year 1956. Since then the situation has worsened considerably, and what is very disappointing is that it is not only in the field of private enterprise that you find this increase, but also with respect to the Government. On the other hand, I was also very disappointed to hear the hon. the Chief Secretary say that when they were considering the question of taking away the Contract, nobody mentioned there was going to be unemployment as a result.

That was simple enough to see, and one did not need an expert to come from



abroad to say that as a result many people would be out of work. As far as I am aware the Printing Contract was being carried out for years by Companies in which there was a great degree of coverage, and it would appear to me that because of the increase in the volume of work, these Companies bought machines to cope with the requirements of the work. If that is the case, Government ought to have given notice to the Companies that it would withdraw the Contract and add that the Companies should dispose of their employees in due time, so they could find work. That is what Government ought to have done; but to act within so short a time is something not expected of Governments.

It is not quite the same thing for the Government to say that because the Argosy Company had fixed such a high price, that it was not likely that there could have been any agreement if an attempt at negotiation had been made. It is very clear that the hon. the Chief Secretary in his explanation said that the B.G. Lithographic Company did not tender for the Government printing. He said here this afternoon that they were asked to tender at the time the invitation to tender was first advertised, and they said they could not make any tender because they had not at the time sufficient floor space to take on the job.

Let it be assumed that this situation had not occurred—that the B.G. Lithographic Company did not now have floor space — what would Government have done? Would it have taken away the printing from the then contractors? If it could not establish its own printery, what would it have done? It is very childish for the Government to say that because the B.G. Lithographic Company had acquired floor space and could now undertake the printing, it could without further consultation with the then contractors, and without re-advertising for tenders, offer the contract to the B.G. Lithographic Company.

The Tender Board is the proper channel through which tenders are con-

sidered. We have not heard from the Chief Secretary that the Lithographic Company's figure was submitted to the Tender Board. If Government had re-advertised for tenders it would not have been as doubtful a transaction as it now appears to be—that in the absence of a tender Government awarded a contract for its printing and put many persons out of work. Governments must see that all their actions are above board, so that no one can be inclined to the view that there was anything shady or suspicious about them.

If anyone is of the view that there was something shady about this transaction then Government has itself to blame, because it did not act in accordance with the principle that such contracts must be awarded by calling for tenders. It is usual in advertisements for tenders to state that Government would not necessarily accept the lowest tender. So that it would have been in Government's interest to re-advertise for tenders, in which case it might have realized that it would not have been the best thing to accept the lowest tender, as that would have meant putting people out of work.

For many years we have been accustomed to see in the newspapers, particularly in "The Daily Argosy", pages of information with respect to transports and mortgages, but I do not know whether the B.G. Lithographic Company is in a position to offer this type of service to the community. I have assumed that such publications were part and parcel of the printing contract, and that the cost of Government printing included the publication in the newspapers of that information, principally for the benefit of those persons interested in or engaged in property transactions. Will the Government now tell us what arrangement it has made to provide the public with that type of service? Will Government tell us whether the B.G. Lithographic Company has to publish that information in a newspaper, or whether it has arranged with one of the daily newspapers to do so, and whether the cost is included in the contract price?

[MR. JACKSON]

In the Deeds Registry there is such a large volume of work that it takes a long time before people can get their transports published, and we know that the only source through which such information can be got is the newspapers. So that unless Government can make other arrangements for the publication of this information this decision to award the printing contract to the B.G. Lithographic Company will not effect any saving at all, because it is denying the public a service which they have enjoyed for "donkey years." It is all well for Government to say that it is trying to have an efficient service. I stand up for efficiency in every field, but this is not efficiency at all. One will admit that the machinery used by the B.G. Lithographic Company is able to produce as good a job as that done by the Argosy Company or the Chronicle, and at a cheaper rate, but there is more to it than that.

In spite of the attempt made by the hon. the Chief Secretary to point out to us the steps taken by Government to have its printing brought up to a high standard, the point is that if Government established its own printery it will cost more. One would have expected that Government would have given this Council the authoritative opinions of the experts it had invited, but if we are to judge by the way in which Government institutions spend money it may be that if Government established its own printery it will do worse than the contractors. Government must convince us that a Government printery would be run in a businesslike manner and as efficiently as that of private enterprise, and that it would not be a burden on the taxpayers. I accept the explanation given by the Chief Secretary that Government endeavoured to get the best service for the money which has to be spent on printing, but taking everything into consideration I cannot see that Government was justified in acting as it did, and if it is said that it has acted underhand in this matter it deserves that accusation.

**Mr. Burnham:** I forgive the hon. the Chief Secretary for not having the

correct Oxford Dictionary and shall content myself with referring him to the 34th edition, at page 96, line 14. I hope he will be a little more accurate so far as this contract is concerned.

We are unable to understand or appreciate his explanations unless and until he can answer this question: what printing outside of Divisions A to F is now going to be undertaken by the new contractors, and what was the previously estimated cost of that printing outside of Divisions A to F, as published in the Official Gazette on the 26th of April, 1958? When that question is answered we can appreciate whether or not Government is actually going to lose money.

**The Chief Secretary:** I cannot give a detailed statement right now, but I can give one example of a saving amounting to \$40,000. If you look at the estimate for the Government Information Services you will find that the approved estimate for the printing of pamphlets, the B.G. Bulletin, etc. was \$42,000 last year and is only \$2,000 this year. The printing of the Bulletin is now being done under the contract, and the cost is included in the contract price of \$375,000 per annum. The total amount involved is about \$100,000, or slightly more. I will have a detailed list prepared of all the printing, and will let the hon. Member have the information he wishes.

Whilst I am on my feet I wish to withdraw my remarks about the word "unmoral."

**Mr. Burnham:** The hon. the Chief Secretary had full notice, at least unofficially, that this question of the printing contract was going to be fully aired and discussed by the "Opposition", and much as I accept his undertaking to give me the information subsequently, I am particularly disappointed that the leading Minister of the Government is unable to give a proper answer at this time, because last evening he stood up there and said categorically that it would have cost Government \$100,000 more, because of certain printing outside of the

contract. Now I assumed that the Chief Minister of the Government would not make a statement like that unless he had his facts, and it is very disappointing to see that Government is run in this fashion—that the Chief Secretary just makes a casual statement and when he is asked for details he has to seek it out.

In other words it is quite possible that the information will not bear out the statement he made last evening. Furthermore, not a month, but a night after, when obviously he was able to do a bit more investigation, he has to concede that the saving is going to be in the vicinity of \$90,000. That is typical of the whole Government — officials and everybody. They make statements and when you get down to examining them carefully you find that they cannot stand the light of day.

In the circumstances the hon. the Chief Secretary will forgive me if I am unwilling to accept his present statement that there will be a saving of \$90,000 on the tender by the *Argosy* and the *Chronicle*, but I accept his undertaking to produce the facts. I know he will produce them some time, and that he is the sort of person who, when he finds that they do not support his contention, is sufficiently large to withdraw his previous statement. I do not want to be misunderstood on this issue at all. I think I made myself quite clear when I moved the reduction by \$15,000, that if Government feels that efficiency is something to be sought after at the cost of putting people out of employment at this particular period of our history, very well, let us see what is going to be done with the money that is saved.

The hon. the Chief Secretary, once again the spokesman for the Government on this question, has failed to satisfy me. He says that, probably, the money will produce employment, possibly, for a number of people. That is entirely unsatisfactory so far as I am concerned. I would like the Government to understand that I have moved the reduction of this item by \$15,000 not for mere opposition, but because I want to hear from

them what they are going to do with the money that is being saved. I want to know whether they are going to admit their inability to find employment for the people at this particular time.

We have been disappointed on this side of the Table, because we find that certain facts have been withheld. Of course this Government is noted for that peculiarity.

**The Chief Secretary:** I object to the word "withheld."

**Mr. Burnham:** Certain facts were not made available to some of the Members of this Council. I trust that the Government will see their way to give us full information in future and to recognize their duty towards the unemployed. Unemployment in the urban areas where the percentage is about the highest in the country is serious. I do not know whether the hon. the Chief Secretary appreciates it, but I am sure his colleagues do. I trust that the Government will not continue to have "round-the corner" deals as on this occasion. I am saying that no proper reasons have been given for rejecting certain tenders. Incidentally, I may suggest to Government that, in future when they are advertising for tenders, they should delete the words "That there is no obligation to accept the lowest or any tender." It is real nonsense to insert those words; it is a waste of printing and a waste of space as well as time. I look forward to getting more information from the hon. the Chief Secretary later, because the cut in the G.I.S. Bulletin is merely a transfer but it is supposed to be an economy. The Bulletin will not be published as frequently as before, but we will have to be convinced that the whole of that \$40,000 representing the amount transferred from the G.I.S. Head to another Head is spent on people who are unemployed. I give that out to the hon. the Chief Secretary so that he will be forewarned.

**The Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan):** The hon. Member gave us figures in an effort to show that we were not saving very much in this

[DR. JAGAN] matter. He wanted to know how much work was involved other than that in the contract. I am sorry the hon. the Chief Secretary was not in a position to give him the figures immediately, but from what I have been told by the Printing Adviser to the Governor it was about \$115,000 per annum. Let the hon. Member consider that in relation to the cost which the Argosy Company submitted—not before but on the second round—because it was on the second round that the payments were made.

It should be noted that on the first occasion the figure which was given for both requirements, as the hon. the Chief Secretary has pointed out, was given without any element of competition but collaboration. They tendered for separate items and gave a figure of \$185,000 above the figure for last year. It should be noted that even these figures which were there before were very lucrative ones.

Perhaps the hon. Member has forgotten the days when he stood at street corners and shouted about the exorbitant sums we were paying for Government printing as compared with the rotten service we received for the money. Today times have changed and we are hearing a dialectical type of argument. It is unfortunate that the dialectical argument has not been taken a step further, because the hon. Member talks about equated savings on a Government level by the introduction of the most technical means in the same way as private enterprise.

He has failed to point out as he should that, in the case of private enterprise when technical means are used for doing work, the money saved is merely shown in the books of employers, whereas in the case of Government it is not a question of making profit. Any savings made by Government are used up in the implementation of the Development Programme and other spheres.

I remember that we had a terrible wrangle in Finance Committee when the Government was attempting to spend several thousand dollars more on minor industries in order to provide the employ-

ment hon. Members are now talking about. Hon. Members are now saying that a printing contract for \$115,000 extra is not a lot of money.

It has been shown that the Government can get the job done at a much lower figure than that offered by the people who were doing the work. When we consider the history of this matter we find that the Company over the past two years has been doing a lucrative business at the expense of the Government. In 1946 the Company was given a contract for \$280,000 and an advance of \$100,000 to purchase printing equipment.

Before the contract expired the Company was given a total of \$70,000 extra. The Commissioner of Income Tax carried out an investigation before the Company was given the \$70,000. He reported that it was making 50% profit off the Government Printing Contract, and recommended that an additional 25% should be given to it. Since then those of us who have been in previous Councils have been arguing that Government should set up its own printing press because of the large sums of money Government had paid out in the past.

An hon. Member mentioned that we, on this side, are peeved because the newspapers have been attacking us. I do not allow such things to interfere with my politics. I do not hold any spite against the newspapers, because I have always been saying that Government should set up its own printery. I still hold the view that Government could do the job much cheaper, than the present price which has been quoted. Anyway, this matter will be fully investigated.

The point is that the attitude I have taken is not due to spite. I have been consistent throughout the years; this is nothing new and it does not bother me. It seems to me that some of the hon. Members opposite who used to quarrel about the cost of Government printing are now champions of these newspaper companies. We are out to run this

Government as economically as possible in the overall interest of the people of this country. I do not see how any reasonable person can get up and criticize the Government for saving a substantial sum of money which can provide employment for a number of people in this country.

**Mr. Burnham:** Certainly the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry does not follow my argument and, like those who rush in where wise men fear to tread, he says that \$115,000 will be saved when the hon. the Chief Secretary within whose portfolio the item falls tells us that he cannot give me the amount offhand. He talks about \$90,000 and promises to give me more information later.

**The Chief Secretary:** The hon. Member is getting confused with the figures. The \$90,000 which we talked about yesterday and today is in connection with the first offer from the Argosy Company.

**Mr. Burnham:** According to the hon. the Chief Secretary we will save \$85,000. According to the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry who will not deal with the work in his Ministry, but is quite prepared to talk about the work in another Ministry, we will save \$115,000.

**Dr. Jagan:** I did not say that Government would save \$115,000. I said that the Printing Adviser said that the amount was about \$115,000.

**Mr. Burnham:** I was saying, before the irate Minister got up, that the hon. the Chief Secretary, who ought to know, said that it was \$85,000.

**The Chief Secretary:** Approximately.

**Mr. Burnham:** The Chief Secretary must not stand there and say approximately \$85,000 when the person who is supposed to advise him can advise the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry that it is \$115,000. Is that person incapable of advising the hon. the Chief Secretary? The point I am making is not

a question of how much extra printing work will be done. If the statement that Government will be saving \$115,000 is wrong, when we investigate the matter further we may well find that other things are wrong.

The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, an adept in generalization, has brought figures to impress the idle multitude that Government is saving \$115,000. We want to get the details so that we can compare them with those categories (A) to (F) that were published on the 26th April, 1958. I am not interested in whether the Argosy Company, the Daily Chronicle Ltd. or any other company gets the contract.

**An Hon. Member:** Is that so?

**Mr. Burnham:** The point I am interested in is the unemployment that has resulted since the award of this contract. It was a member of the Majority Party who started asking questions as to whether Government was aware of the fact that awarding the contract to another company was responsible for decreasing employment. The point I have been pressing all along is not whether the Argosy, the Chronicle or the Lithographic Company gets the contract, because those are "big boys." There is an old saying "*When fowl got party, cockroach got no right there.*" What I am saying is that the unemployment situation in Georgetown has worsened. I am not interested in whether the Argosy Company robbed the Government or whether it made 50% profit on public or private printing. That is not the issue now. If you want to save all this money, show us how all this money will make a direct contribution to the amelioration of the worsened conditions which the switching of this contract has caused.

Urban unemployment, may I repeat, has worsened in this country. Now to throw another 100 people out of work is a terrific strain in Georgetown.

I am not interested in the dialectics

[MR. BURNHAM]

of the situation — every contract thus switched means more money in the pockets — that is for the dialecticians of the Council, not for simple me. I am discussing a situation that has cropped up in Georgetown: that is all.

Do not confuse the issue and mention figures that the Chief Secretary could not give us.

**Dr. Jagan:** The figures I mention the Chief Secretary and other advisers of Government can give as well. The hon. Member was adding up the figures just now. He mentioned the fact that the Argosy Company was prepared to do it for \$360,000. The original estimate which was given, I understand, by the Argosy was \$470,000. There was certainly a big climb down just because somebody else came into the picture. I suppose Government should have taken the two tenders as they were and accepted them, and then Members would have been very happy. The Government has made a substantial saving in this matter. Whether it is \$60,000 or \$80,000, it is a lot of money.

**Mr. Burnham:** What about unemployment?

**Dr. Jagan:** I mentioned the other day that thousands of dollars were going to be used to expand minor industries scattered in Georgetown, and I do not see why we have to dot the "i"s and cross the "t"s. Everybody knows there is some dislocation of employment, but if provision is being made for employment in the whole economy, that will help. That is what we are concerned with, and any sensible person would be concerned with that. But to say that something must be done at once — that is not possible in any society.

**Mr. Burnham:** The hon. Member for Trade and Industry has a *penchant* for harking back to the distant past. We are not discussing at the moment whether the tender between the Argosy Company and the Daily Chronicle Ltd. was reasonable or exorbitant. It is their business if they charge too much. I am not con-

cerned with that. For Guianese' sake I ask Members of the Government, especially the Minister of Trade and Industry, to understand that my interest is in the social problem that has been created.

The hon. Member talked about technological advances. I agree, but why did he criticize the Sugar Producers when they rationalized? I will remind him of Mao Tse-tung's words:

"It is no sense industrializing until you find employment; until you have the means of employment for those whom you throw out as a result of industrialization."

Book Two.

**Mr. Jackson:** The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry has sat here taking full cognizance of the unemployment situation and said he will provide money for things which will in themselves relieve unemployment; but neither he nor his other Ministers has been able to tell us how many people were going to be employed—how many in "A" project, and how many in "B" project. Whether the minor industries are going to give employment to 10 or 20 more people, nobody knows—and that is typical of the Government.

What we have said here is an indictment upon the Government. Even the Minister of Trade and Industry who went to London the other day and talked about the situation said it would explode if they did not get money, and has admitted today that there is a serious dislocation in the switching of the Contract, and there are people out of work and cannot find any employment. That is what we are concerned about.

It is all right to talk about efficiency. What a progressive Government does in a period of serious unemployment situation is to embark upon public works. We are yet to see this Government embarking upon any work at all which will provide employment for people who are unemployed. We know that the Government has in hand some schemes and some resources in the Development Programme, but nothing will be done about

these until it pleases the Government. Let them tell us how many people will find work.

**Dr. Jagan:** If the hon. Member will read his Budget Statement properly, he will see that it was put down there that Government does not want to start certain works yet because there is no money for those works.

**Mr. Jackson:** Good! and money has been found for what they are more interested in.

**The Chairman:** I shall put the question, that sub-head 2 be reduced by \$15,000.

**The Chief Secretary:** Just before you do that, Sir, there are two points with which I would like to deal. The hon. Member, Mr. Tello, insisted that we did not follow the correct procedure in awarding this Contract. I do want to say that that is a wrong assumption. The tenders were put before the Tender Board who suggested that Government could do either of two things: negotiate, or set up its own Printery. As I said, on the tender submitted by the Argosy Company, were the words "the terms and conditions herein contained and not otherwise." They had stated categorically they were not prepared to do anything else. It is perfectly in order for Government to make whatever arrangements it can, and to make the best arrangements possible; so Government sought the second alternative and the tender procedure was not infringed.

The other point deals with the suggestion that there was something shady about this business—I think that was expressed by the Member for Georgetown North. I have said exactly what happened, and I cannot see anything shady in it whatever. If people think there is anything shady about it, then they must have very suspicious minds. It is perfectly open and above board, all along.

The Argosy Company did come back with a second bid, but even this second bid was way up above that made

by somebody else. It seems to me that one can never be right in what one tries to do. Sometimes we are criticized for wasteful expenditure, and then we tighten up and get the criticism that we are putting people out of work. Whichever way you do it, you are wrong. I can well remember the remarks of His Excellency the Governor on the tendency always to criticize destructively. I would suggest that it is a good deal easier to destroy than to construct. We have tried to do it the best way possible, to get the most efficient operation and to save taxpayers' money. I cannot say how every dollar will be spent, but we are short of money and every dollar saved means it will be possible to do other things.

**Dr. Jagan:** The hon. the Chief Secretary failed to mention one thing—the G.I.S. Bulletin. The G.I.S. Bulletin has not been reduced in number or in size. The frequency of its appearance was reduced since last year, and this still applies. Another point mentioned on this side of the Table was that several Legislators in the past complained about the lateness in the printing of Annual Reports of Government Departments and other reports and documents. This has been a bone of contention, aside from the actual costs, for a good many years, and we hope in the future we will have expeditious printing of Government work.

**Mr. Tello:** It came as a surprise to me that the Tender Board advised Government either to negotiate or to start its own Printery, and I think if my memory serves me right, in an answer to a Supplementary Question put by the Member for Georgetown Central—arising out of Questions by the Member for Demerara River—the Chief Secretary said at that time that a new tender was not invited because of the matter of time; but now I am informed it was the advice of the Tender Board. If I had known that originally, I would not have spoken of a departure because I would have regarded it as something done in pursuance of a decision made by the Tender Board.

**Mr. Tasker:** I hesitate to rise on this matter because I am well aware that

[MR. TASKER]

in some quarters I shall be regarded as being biased, but I would like to make it quite clear that I am not, and in any case the only point I wish to add to the debate is that I find myself at serious issue with hon. Members on this side of the Table over our whole attitude to the very serious problem of unemployment and technological advance. Nobody with any sense of responsibility minimizes the terribly frustrating effects of unemployment we are seeing today, but it is quite untrue and grossly dishonest to suggest that unemployment is the result of one single factor, such as technological improvement. Obviously, the biggest single factor in British Guiana today is our healthy population, thanks to the eradication of malaria and our rising birth-rate, and I defy anybody to suggest that without technological advancement we would not have had this serious unemployment we have today. Consequently, I cannot see how, if we recognize this problem of unemployment, we can seriously recommend that Government, or any other organization, should deliberately apply uneconomic methods to its solution.

Two hon. Members who represent trade unions have pointed out that technological improvement results in redundancy. It is true that it may, but it is not true that it always does, and I think they would be the first to admit that they are pressing and will continue to press for the maximum wages they can get for employees. What is the answer for the employer? He, too, is anxious to improve standards of living and standards of wages, but how is he to do it without increasing productivity? How else is he to pay better wages, if he is not to make use of every technical advance that comes his way? That seems to be the problem facing every employer today, whether Government or private enterprise.

It has also been suggested that the fruits of technological advance go solely, or for the most part, in additional profits to the employer. I hope that hon. Members will go some time to see the premises of the Company which has been awarded this printing contract. I think they would be interested to see how,

alongside the technological advances have gone improvements in welfare arrangements, including a medical service and the provision of a subsidized canteen for all employees. I mention this because harsh things have been said this afternoon which, I think, cannot be applied to progressive and liberal-minded employers.

Finally, I would ask if we are seriously to consider deliberately subsidizing uneconomic operations or deliberately encouraging wasteful expenditure of public funds—even for so vital and important an issue as employment—where ultimately will our standards be? How can we attract capitalists from outside whose capital we want, whom we are wooing, whether we are in the Government or outside, to encourage them to invest here? How can we honestly say in this day and age that we want capital investment in this country when we are prepared to debase our standards in terms of the quality of production and what we hope to see in increased productivity here? It seems to me impossible to do so once we lower our standards and drop our sights. The future industrialization of British Guiana is in the melting pot, and I for one will not be a party to a lowering of standards.

**Mr. Jackson:** I do not think anything I said this afternoon gave any indication to this Council that there is no justification for profits to the employer. I went so far as to say that the employer today who uses technological methods and makes profits distributes some of those profits to his employees. I said so and I maintain that is what I said. I am not quite sure that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, grasped that point, if what he has said refers to my contribution to the debate.

I said earlier I agreed that the private employer has a right to his profits, but I said that the economics of a Government are different from that of private enterprise, and no one can dispute that. I would have thought that Mr. Tasker would have admitted that even today private enterprise does not feel happy when unemployment is increasing. If it did it



would not be acting in conformity with the best interests of the country.

Our contention on this side of the Table is that if Government is going to adopt measures of economy which will put people out of work, that is a wrong policy. It must provide alternative employment, but that has not been done. The situation is aggravated more and more because Government is increasing the number of people who are unemployed, and we are taking this stand because we know it. I think Mr. Tasker has admitted that people come to him often with this type of problem, therefore he must be concerned with the problem we are talking about, and I believe that he is worried about the situation as we see it, and as it exists at the moment. We are not saying that there should not be technological advancement. By all means let us have it, but if Government wants to do as the private employer is doing it must find alternative employment for those who are put out of work.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** This is the first time in my life that I have heard a trade unionist say that employers are happy when there is full employment.

**Mr. Jackson:** I am speaking in terms of our experience in our present day and generation. I am not looking back many years ago.

**Mr. Burnham:** I am slightly disappointed and alarmed at some of the remarks made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, about technological advance not causing disruption, or not contributing to unemployment. I should have thought that it was so patent that in the United Kingdom, when automation was to be introduced, there was a hue and a cry by the workers, and the technological advances threatened to put several of them out of work. It is a ridiculous statement for any intelligent person to make in this Council. Technological advances do create shortage of jobs, and what we are saying on this side of the Table is that technological advances and these economy measures are creating

more unemployment, and it is Government's duty to formulate schemes to provide employment immediately as the necessity arises, and nothing Mr. Tasker can say will change our view on this side of the Table.

**Mr. Tasker:** I refuse to be intimidated by the hon. Member. The answer, as he very well knows, and which I do not dispute, is that technological advances may well lead to redundancy. All I said is that they need not necessarily do so. In the United States of America, and to a great extent in the United Kingdom, the problems resulting from technological advances are now recognized by both sides of industry—trade unions and management—and are being tackled with vigour and understanding; and already those advances are providing an increasing number of opportunities for employment in other fields. I stand by that.

As regards the remarks of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson), I would like to put his mind at rest. Actually, the only reference to profits was made by the Minister of Trade and Industry. I still cannot understand the logic of the argument that technological advance or improvement is good for private enterprise but not for anybody else; that if we have certain standards in private enterprise, those standards cannot be applied by Government. If Government decides to have a Government printery I am sure that all Members will hope to see it run as efficiently and economically as possible.

**Mr. Tello:** What the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, has said has not moved me from my stand. He says that automation may create redundancy. I am saying that some employers have recognized their responsibility and such responsibility is greater on the part of Government. I maintain that employment is the responsibility of the Government and, if for technological reasons it is necessary to reduce the number of people employed, it will still be necessary to do something to assist the people who are unemployed.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Was it the responsibility of the Government in 1956?

**Mr. Kendall:** I was here from 1956, and I can assure the hon. Member that during that period we did not re-trench anybody. We even gave the new Government a surplus of \$2 million.

**Mr. Burnham:** There is certainly some misunderstanding here. Mr. Tasker has regaled us with certain information regarding industry, but my point is that I do not see this present Government tackling unemployment problems with energy and understanding. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, need not fear intimidation, because I am a man of peace.

**The Chairman:** I shall try again to put this question. The question is, that sub-head 2 of Head 32—"Public Printing by Contract" — \$375,000—be reduced by \$15,000.

Motion put, and negatived.

#### WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE

**Mr. Tello:** I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 17 — "Workmen's Compensation Ordinance", \$15,000 — by \$1 in order to ask a question. I would like to know why the amount voted this year is only \$15,000 when we voted \$20,000 last year, and \$17,451 in 1957? I wonder whether the hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing or the hon. the Financial Secretary will give me the necessary information?

**The Financial Secretary:** We usually take into account the rate of expenditure in previous years. In 1958 the rate of expenditure was lower than in 1957, and that is a very sound reason for reducing the amount this year. We hope the trend will continue.

**Mr. Tello:** I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion, withdrawn.

**The Chairman:** The question is that Head 32 — Miscellaneous — be carried out at \$1,837.61.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

#### MISCELLANEOUS—SUBVENTIONS

**The Chairman:** The question is, that Head 33—Miscellaneous, Subventions, Municipal, etc., be carried out at \$389,225.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

#### MISCELLANEOUS, SUBVENTIONS, ETC., OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL

##### GRANT TO EX-SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

**Mr. Tello:** With reference to sub-head 35 — "Grant to Ex-Servicemen's Association" \$1,200 and sub-head 36— "Grant towards running expenses of Georgetown Mariners Club" \$5,000, I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 35 by \$1 in order to find out what has become of our recommendation that the two votes be equally divided.

**The Financial Secretary:** The adjustment is included in the Report of Finance Committee; the recommendation has been accepted by Government and the necessary amendment to the sub-head will be made in the final approved Estimates. It is not necessary to alter the amount of the Head now because we will be dividing the money.

**Mr. Tello:** I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion, withdrawn.

**The Chairman:** The question is, that Head 34—Miscellaneous, Subventions, etc., Other than Municipal — be carried out at \$1,349,196, as recommended by Finance Committee.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

**Mr. Burnham:** I would ask that Head 34 be recommitted.

**The Chairman:** We cannot do that at this stage. Hon. Members must remain in their seats and follow the proceedings. I keep calling on Members to find out whether they have anything to say. You may have to move a motion.

**Mr. Burnham:** I beg to move that Head 34—Miscellaneous—Subventions, etc., other than Municipal, \$1,349,196 — be recommitted.

Question put, and negatived.

#### OFFICIAL RECEIVER

**The Chairman:** The question is, that Head 35 — Official Receiver — be carried out at \$17,990.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

#### PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES

**Mr. Tello:** I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 20 — “Cost of Living Allowance” \$330,000 — by \$1, in order to get some information. I am questioning whether it is possible to reduce this vote by \$30,000 in the light of the rising cost of living. Perhaps I will be given the reply that expenditure in previous years was taken into consideration.

I thought that Government would have taken every opportunity or precaution to prevent the submission of supplementary estimates during the year. As I see it there will be need for supplementary estimates to augment this vote before the end of the year.

**The Financial Secretary:** The answer is partly as the hon. Member envisages. The fact is that this vote covers a disappearing class of pensioner. There are two kinds of pensioners: those whose pensions have been calculated on the post—1953 revised salaries, and those who had retired before the revision of salaries which took effect from 1st January,

1954. Those whose pensions have been calculated on the revised salaries are not given a cost of living allowance. By the nature of things the class of people who drew or draw a cost of living allowance is gradually disappearing, and it is a fact that every year the cost of living allowance will be reduced.

**Mr. Tello:** I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

**The Chairman:** The question is, that Head 36 — Pensions And Gratuities—be carried out at \$519,070.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

#### POLICE

##### COMMISSIONER'S PERSONAL ALLOWANCE

**Mr. Jackson:** I beg to move the reduction of item (2), sub-head 1 — “Commissioner's Personal Allowance” — by \$1. I do this not to criticize the payment of this allowance on this occasion — for we have the assurance of the Chief Secretary that this matter may be adjusted when we get the Report of the one-man Salaries Commission — but to take the opportunity to bring to notice something which is happening in the Force and which, perhaps, neither the Commissioner himself nor the Chief Secretary knows anything about.

We are all aware of the fact that the Police Consumers' Co-operative Society has gone into liquidation and that some of the people who owe this Co-operative Society are members of the Police Force. We know that they are also shareholders of the Consumers' Society.

Recently an order went to the Police Department saying that those people who owe the Society which has just gone into liquidation will be called upon by the

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Department to make payment towards their indebtedness when this indebtedness became known. But before this was ascertained there had been an unauthorized deduction from the payments of salaries to policemen in the month of February, and this has been admitted as an irregular procedure on the part of the Department — yet they have not refunded the money. It is against the regulations covering the payment of salaries, it is unfair and the Department concerned should be advised to refund the money which has been taken out of salaries without authority being given. I have been told that a number of people have not drawn their salaries because of that. I am asking the Chief Secretary to give this Council the assurance that the matter will be investigated.

**The Chief Secretary:** I will look into it.

**Mr. Jackson:** I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

#### ELEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS

**Mr. Burnham:** I beg to move an Amendment for the reduction of sub-head 1, item (6) — “11 Superintendents” — by \$1. There is provision here for 11 Superintendents and it cannot be denied that there are at least four vacancies, and on the other hand, further down at item (9) we find that there is provision for 5 Deputy Superintendents — and there are, I understand, about 9 to 11 Deputy Superintendents.

Actually, the position is this, that there are four vacancies on the Establishment for Superintendents, and there are four extra Deputy Superintendents. I do not know what this Government is doing. I do not know what the Establishment Officer is doing, and I do not know what the Minister in charge of this Department is up to.

Why do you do a thing like this? Is

it because you do not want to promote these Deputy Superintendents to Superintendents, because they are in the main recruited from local personnel? You come here and ask for 11; you have 4 extra but you keep 4 vacancies up there and keep the ones downstairs overcrowded. What is it? It is a serious matter, and it is the sort of thing that is happening in so many Departments that we must ask questions — and I am waiting to hear what explanation the Chief Secretary will give.

**The Chief Secretary:** There is nothing unusual in this at all. It is common practice to make additional appointments in lower posts as long as you do not exceed your total Establishment. In fact there are no actual vacancies in the total Establishment for officers although there are some vacant posts, but it is by no means unusual that sometimes you over-recruit at the lower level and under-recruit at the higher. In this case the Deputy Superintendents are not ready for promotion yet. You do not get promotion to the post of Superintendent until you are considered ready for it.

**Mr. Burnham:** Vague airiness would in other circumstances be irritating. But I refuse to be irritated in this Committee. ‘There is nothing wrong with it.’ There are vacancies in the officers establishment and there is nothing here about the officers establishment but there is something about the establishment for officers, and it would be sophistry to tell us there are no vacancies.

What I am going to say now is that you do not want to employ local people, because the bulk of the Deputy Superintendents are local people who have passed through the ranks. But their training has been seen and commended by the Deputy Inspector-General of Colonial Police. You have these vacancies waiting for what and for whom? ‘We do not appoint people until they are ready, and you are wrong to cock an eye on the appointments of the Superintendents already.’

**The Chairman:** No.

**Mr. Burnham:** I apologize. Mr. Chairman, it seems to me in the absence of any proper explanation, this is something deliberately aimed at keeping out local personnel from reaching the top. This is a matter of principle. The Colonial Empire is shrinking — Malaya and other places like that are going on their own. If you are not a technologist or technician you are in the same difficulty of finding a job, and jobs like these are important for those who are leaving the shrinking Colonial Empire.

It is a matter we must look very carefully into. I admit that because of a shortage of experts, scientists, specialists in different subjects we must continue to think of meeting our needs according to the system to which we are accustomed here, and we will have to bring people from outside; but for an ordinary post like Superintendent of Police, in the name of high Heaven, I cannot see us recruiting somebody from outside. But I am always suspicious that in the shrinking of the Colonial Empire those who have to find jobs in the open market and cannot find jobs will be brought here on super-scale salaries; and in view of the airy vagueness of the answer of the Chief Secretary I feel this is intended for the Empire not yet shrunk off.

**The Chief Secretary:** The hon. Member has displayed his ignorance of Establishment matters. In actual fact the position is completely the reverse of what he suggested. We cannot recruit any officer as a Superintendent from abroad at present; there are "X" numbers of officer posts and they are all filled. If there were real vacancies there might have been cause for his suspicion, but there is no vacancy into which somebody can be brought from outside to fill; there is a maximum number of posts for officers and we have that number of officers at present.

The suggestion that we are trying to stop local officers from getting promotion, I think, is quite scandalous. Our record over the past four years has been precisely the opposite. But most of these

men who have been promoted have spent a long time in the ranks and have had a start as Assistant Superintendents. That is why at present we have more Assistant and Deputy Superintendents than usual and fewer Superintendents.

**Mr. Burnham:** I understand from the Chief Secretary that there are no vacancies. Am I to understand that the two vacancies among the Senior Superintendents have been filled? The Chief Secretary knows that there have been appointments of two Senior Superintendents to the posts of Assistant Commissioners, yet we hear that there are no vacancies in the officer class. I may be ignorant of Establishment methods but I know that there are two vacancies for Senior Superintendents, and the Chief Secretary cannot conscientiously say that there are no vacancies.

**The Chief Secretary:** The difference is in the word "vacancies." The hon. Member was suggesting that there were vacancies to which persons from outside could have been brought. There are vacant posts for promotion purposes. Some of the Deputy Superintendents can be promoted as Superintendents. I think there are one or two vacancies among the Senior Superintendents, but the point is that there are, I think, 45 officer posts in the total Establishment, and we have 45 officers. So that there is no question of being able to bring in a 46th officer, or anybody from outside being able to get a post as Superintendent at the moment. That is my point, and the reason why promotions have not yet been made to those higher posts is because the men to be promoted are not yet ready. Being a police officer, and particularly a senior police officer, is not a simple job. Just anybody is not good enough.

**Mr. Burnham:** It seems to me that just any Guianese should not be good enough. Am I to understand that there are 19 Assistant Superintendents? Let us do a very simple addition. The Establishment calls for 6 Senior Superintendents, 11 Superintendents, 5 Deputy Superintendents and 17 Asst. Superinten-

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dents. There is an admission that there are two vacancies among the Senior Superintendents, and in order to have the full establishment of officers there must be 19 Assistant Superintendents.

**The Chief Secretary:** Actually there are 16 Assistant Superintendents and three Cadets.

**Mr. Burnham:** That is worse. If you have only 16 you are one short. When do Cadets become officers? Do I understand from the Chief Secretary that the Police Department can be efficiently run with two Senior Superintendents short? Do I understand that with two Senior Superintendents and four Superintendents short the Department can be properly run, because if it can then let us cut down the vote.

**The Chief Secretary:** If we had every post correctly filled the Department would be more efficiently staffed. But in order to fill the higher posts officers have to serve some time in lower posts so as to get experience.

**Mr. Burnham:** I am always worried about this talk about experience whenever there are Guianese to be promoted. You bring infants from abroad and they are good enough.

**The Chairman:** I am worried about the word "infants".

**Mr. Burnham:** You bring people from abroad who need not have experience, yet they come all the time. A Guianese always has to have experience. Is he an inferior being? It is time the elected section of the Executive Council take up this question seriously and not allow themselves to be bamboozled. It seems that they are being over-ridden in this partnership. I know that in spite of their smiles they feel like me in this matter.

I am seriously encouraging them to see that Guianese are no longer insulted. There is many a Guianese who moves right through the ranks, yet we are told that he has no experience, but we bring

someone from abroad who cannot prosecute and does not understand the laws, or how to conduct himself in the Court. I am asking the Ministers to take this point up in the proper quarter. It is not a matter on which there are political differences.

**The Chief Secretary:** There is a Police Service Commission which advises the Governor on the promotion of officers, and every single member of the Commission is a Guianese.

**Mr. Burnham:** Up to what point do they advise? They do not advise on promotions above the rank of Superintendents.

**The Chief Secretary:** They advise on any matter on which they are asked by the Governor, as far as officers are concerned.

**Mr. Burnham:** The Governor does not seem to have asked their advice recently about posts above Superintendents. They only give advice when the Governor asks for it. They have to wait to be asked to advise, and not beyond a certain point.

**The Chairman:** I shall put the Motion.

**Mr. Burnham:** No, Sir, I withdraw my Motion.

**The Chairman:** The Question is "That Head 37, Police, be carried out at \$3,469,704."

Agreed to.

Head passed.

#### POST OFFICE

**Mr. Jackson:** I beg to move a reduction of item — 5 "Conveyance of Mails," \$203,200—by \$1, with particular reference to (a) — Internal, \$20,600. It is essential to do so because one has to distinguish between the local and the external conveyance of mail by ship or by air. Last year when I moved a Motion in this Council asking for the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry

into the administration of the Post Office Department I made special reference to the system of conveyance of mails between the several parts of the City and the country districts, and *vice versa*. I said also that there were several instances in which the Post Office had lost money because of a faulty system which required improvement.

When we examine the system of conveyance of mails in this Colony we find that it is in need of change. We find that the present system encourages breaches of the law, for the Post Office Department puts into a mail bag many more pounds of weight than is permitted by law for anyone to carry on an ordinary bicycle, and when one takes into consideration the fact that in some instances the distance to be covered by lads on bicycles between a railway station and a rural post office is more than a mile, and that mail bags often contain large sums of money, it will be agreed that the system is not good enough for our present day generation.

It is a fact which no one can dispute, that almost daily the Post Office Department despatches large sums of money between Georgetown and the country district, and *vice versa*, and very frequently we read of money disappearing from some Government Department.

In spite of this Government has taken no steps to ensure the safety of the dispatch of mails between one post office and another. If Government is not concerned about the safety of mails which contain valuables, it should at least consider the safety of the individuals who convey those mails from post offices to the railway stations, and *vice versa*.

When I was discussing my Motion last year for an inquiry into the administration of the Post Office Department the Minister of Communications and Works tried to amuse himself by making jokes about the matter. This is a very serious matter which should not be allowed to remain as it is at the moment. Every

two by two employer who has to transport goods from one place to another in this modern age has seen to it that modern methods of transportation are employed. Even the baker who has a small business in the country district finds it possible and necessary to use motor transportation in order to get his work done quickly.

However, in the Post Office Department the mails are conveyed in a manner which does not speak well for our Government. Everyone who knows the distance between the Mahaica Post Office and Cane Grove will realise that it is dangerous to have these mails carried on push cycles between that area. Everyone knows that there are lonely spots in that area and anything is likely to happen to the cyclist carrying the mails. It is also known that when a heavy rain catches the cyclist with mails in that area the cyclist as well as the mails will get a good soaking.

So far as the West Bank of Demerara is concerned, despite the recommendations of the hon. Minister of Communications and Works, a man has to ride every day from Vreed-en-Hoop to Wales with heavy mails. It is no wonder, therefore, that several post office workers frequently become ill. If you want to see what these people have to undergo you should watch them working when the ferry boat comes in and the tide is low. These men have to take heavy mails across the ferry to Vreed-en-Hoop. Sometimes one sees them working on mails for Bartica—it is a question of making tanks out of human beings.

Despite the representations made by an organisation over which I have control, the Ministry of Communications and Works refuses to do things to ameliorate these conditions. Not only have the Post Office workers tried to have this system changed, but the Association has written the Ministry asking that the conditions under which these people are forced to work should be replaced by a better system.

The Local Authorities on the West

[MR. JACKSON]

Bank of Demerara have written the hon. Minister of Communications and Works suggesting that this matter should be attended to as early as possible. I am sure that there is something wrong with respect to the conveyance of mails locally. These lads are conveying mails in a manner contrary to the laws of this country. I know that on certain occasions carrier cycles have been provided. However, the carrier cycle with a basket will not be the answer to the question of security of mails. That aspect of the matter should be given serious consideration by this Government.

The organisation has suggested to this Government time and time again that motor vehicles should be used for conveying mails from one part of the country to another. I think that Government should take this opportunity to provide a more efficient service to the community rather than using the present system upon which no one can rely. One need not wonder why there are so many complaints over the delay in receiving letters. The conveyance of mails between Georgetown and various parts of the country is causing the Department no end of trouble. That is due to the fact that this Government has not taken a positive approach to this problem which calls for an immediate solution.

I have brought up this matter because it is something that the public should know about. The public should know that the Post Office is not adopting the most efficient means of conveying mails from various parts of the country to and from Georgetown, and that it is using old fashioned methods for conveying mails in dangerous areas.

If the Government wants in this generation to carry on with the old system and encourage losses it can do so. I repeat that people should not be forced to convey mails on bicycles in certain lonely areas because there is no guarantee that their lives will be safe. Everyone knows that money is sent from the Post

Office Department to other branches and that people have been held up.

I feel that one motor vehicle could be used for conveying mails to and from the West Bank in a very efficient and expeditious manner. The same thing could be done on the East Bank of Demerara. I do not think they have any proper mail vans in operation at the moment. The public must know that the Post Office Department and the hon. Minister of Communications and Works are not giving proper consideration to the way in which mails are conveyed between Georgetown and the Post Offices in the country districts.

I am sure the people concerned will know that some Members are against this old system and are clamouring for a new system. This old system is placing the lives of many a lad in danger. I do not see why the Post Office Department should encourage young lads to break the law by carrying such heavy loads on bicycles. When a civilian breaks the law the police generally take action against him or her, but they might not want to take action against the Post Office Department for forcing these young lads to carry too much weight on bicycles.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I am surprised to find that the hon. Member, having lost his motion for an inquiry into the working of the Post Office Department, has taken the opportunity under this head to repeat once again the demands made by his union as well as certain other persons. The hon. Member has indicated that private enterprise is moving over from cycles to more efficient means of transportation, but it is obvious that those people who are moving over are not going to change from a cycle to a motor van for the transportation of between seven to thirty pounds of merchandise.

If the Government were to accept the suggestion made by the hon. Member for the conveyance of mails to the West Bank, Cane Grove, etc., it is obvious that the same system would have to be



introduced in other districts in the country. In some areas like the East Bank, Essequibo, East Bank Berbice and certain other areas postmen have to deliver letters. To follow the hon. Member's argument to its logical conclusion it would be necessary to give almost every postman a van or a jeep in order to implement what the hon. Member has in mind.

I should like to say that the Ministry concerned has given the fullest consideration to the representations made by the union and other interested people, and the cost of implementing the proposed recommendations and suggestions would be very heavy. The hon. Member for Georgetown North mentioned the fact that the existing motor vehicles which are now used for carrying mails to Atkinson Field, Essequibo and Berbice where there are no railways are in a bad condition and some of them need replacement. I agree with that, but the cost of replacing these vehicles will be heavy. At the moment Government is trying to give the best possible service at the cheapest possible price making sure, of course, that there is no exploitation or unnecessary burdens placed on the shoulders of the workers at the various Post Offices.

The hon. Member referred to the "donkey" work that is being done on the ferries. I would ask him to pay a visit as early as he can to one of the ferries and he will see that changes have been made. I have given instructions that assistance must be given to the postmen by the porters employed by the Transport and Harbours Department during the removal of packages, mails and other items across the ferry. I know that these instructions have been carried out.

We have gone over this question on several occasions. I do not know whether the hon. Member wishes us to go over the whole question of security

of the mails again. It has been made quite clear that money is not transported in large quantities by postmen. It is true that occasionally a few dollars have to be transported in mail bags, but if we are called upon to give protection to every postman his suggestion would be ridiculous. I think the hon. Member suggested on the last occasion that postmen who are carrying money in mail bags should be given a Police Guard to protect them. We have to take a realistic view of this matter and endeavour to run this service in the best manner in keeping with the materials at our disposal.

The hon. Member has repeated his arguments regarding postmen carrying excess weight on bicycles. I would prefer to obtain the advice of a lawyer on this subject. I admit that it would be illegal to carry excess weight on a bicycle without a carrier, but postmen carry their mails on bicycles equipped with carriers. This Government cannot agree to the ridiculous suggestion by the hon. Member that motor vans should be provided for carrying mails in the areas I have already referred to. I have already pointed out that the quantity of mails carried in certain districts is very small.

**Mr. Jackson:** I would reply to the Minister's comments if he wants me to start now. I shall take quite a while to talk on his observations.

**The Chairman:** You will have to talk another day.

Council resumed.

#### ADJOURNMENT

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

**Mr. Speaker:** The hours of sitting will be from 2 to 7 and from 8.30 to 11 p.m.

*Council adjourned accordingly.*