

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Thursday, 5th 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).

Mr. 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

B. S. Rai

Member for Central Demerara

S. M. Saffee

Member for Western Berbice

„ **Ajodha Singh**

Member for Berbice River

J. N. Singh

Member for Georgetown South

„ **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. A. M. Fredericks—on leave.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 4th March, 1959, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT

ABSENCE FROM AFTERNOON SESSION

Mr. Speaker. I have to announce that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, has asked to be excused this afternoon. He hopes to be present at this evening's session.

ORDER OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL

BUDGET DEBATE

Council resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Bill intituled:

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

POST OFFICE

CONVEYANCE OF MAILS

The Chairman: At the adjournment yesterday afternoon we were discussing the Head, Post Office. The hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) was speaking on his Motion to reduce sub-head 5 by \$1.

Mr. Jackson (resuming): The hon. Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran), in reply to my observations on his policy with regard to the conveyance of mails, said he would have been willing to listen to a lawyer's opinion on the accusation I made that the weight carried on bicycles by Post Office employees is a breach of the law. One would have thought that the Minister had at his disposal all the legal brains which he could have called upon

almost momentarily. His colleague, the hon. the Attorney-General, is always in this Council and always ready to do battle on behalf of the Ministers, and it is certain that if he had consulted the Attorney-General he would not have had to make that observation here yesterday.

Layman though I am, I draw the Minister's attention to the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Ordinance, Chapter 280, Regulation 171, which reads:

"171. (1) A person riding a bicycle or two-wheeled motor cycle on a road shall not carry any article or thing which projects—

(a) more than 18 inches on either side of the centre line of the bicycle or motor cycle aforesaid; or

(b) beyond the foremost or rearmost parts of the bicycle or motor cycle aforesaid.

(2) A person riding a bicycle or two-wheeled motor cycle on a road shall not carry any article or thing in such a manner that he is unable to have proper control of the vehicle or any article, substance or goods exceeding 7 pounds in weight except in a properly constructed carrier."

As I said yesterday, while there are some indications of provision for carrier cycles, the Post Office Department is still encouraging its employees to commit a breach of the law. That is a situation which should not be permitted. As a matter of fact I think Government should set an example in matters of this kind, and it is because of that view which I hold, that I so often make this observation and criticism. Apart from the fact that it is an injustice to the worker, it is also a factor which can contribute to many a road accident.

In this Council we have debated at length measures which should be taken to reduce the growing number of road accidents, and I think this is one of the factors which should be taken into consideration. I know that the hon. the Attorney-General will agree with me on this point, in view of his position in the

Road Safety Association and the very active part he took in the recent debate in this Council on measures to be taken to reduce the number of fatal road accidents. I am certain that he will not on one hand condemn the faults of ordinary citizens and on the other hand uphold the inconsistencies we find in the Post Office Department.

Now that I have drawn the attention of the Minister to the relevant Ordinance and Regulations I trust he will go into the matter very carefully to see that an end is put to this kind of activity on the part of the Post Office Department.

I want to make it clear that in selecting this item I have not discharged my ammunition at the Post Office Department, because it is a matter of policy, and the Department is bound to fit its work into the policy of the Ministry. Therefore, if the Ministry would give this matter the consideration which it deserves the Post Office Administration would not depart from the policy set by the Ministry.

But the hon. Minister did not seem to have as full a grasp of the situation as he ought to have had, for he spoke of the delivery of letters and asked whether it was suggested that a jeep should be placed at the disposal of every letter carrier. Nothing said by me yesterday had any reference to the delivery of letters, for that would involve a house-to-house delivery with which everyone is familiar.

I spoke of the mails which are dispatched from the Post Office in Georgetown to other areas — areas between Georgetown, Atkinson Field and other Post Offices operating on the East Bank of Demerara as well as on the West Bank. With respect to that type of service we will see a number of bags being transported from Georgetown to different areas in the country.

I think it is time the Government realizes that, while it has taken the question

of cost into consideration, things should be done on a high level. The hon. Minister of Communications and Works says that Government should endeavour to get the job done at the cheapest price. That is the theme of this Government, but, when one considers that the Post Office is offering a service to the community, it is clear to my mind that it is worth the while expending more money in order to provide a more up-to-date service rather than continuing with this outmoded system of transporting mails.

For example, newspapers printed in Georgetown can be delivered at Skeldon within a few hours after they have been printed because of the system of transportation. Why should a letter posted at Georgetown today take until tomorrow afternoon to reach the Corentyne? Would that not be a good service for Government to offer to the public? Is it because the Post Office has a monopoly in this particular matter and can do as it likes? Is it because there can be no competition for the transportation of mails that no new system will be put into operation? I am sure if someone was in a position to compete with the Post Office the hon. Minister would not have said that he was endeavouring to get the job done at the cheapest possible price. The hon. Minister speaks about economy, and he says that he cannot buy motor vans because Government has no money. In the circumstances he wants us to continue with the old system.

It is a disgrace and a burning shame to find that the Post Office has only three serviceable motor vans that can be relied upon. I understand that a motor van is on the Essequibo Coast; one is on the Corentyne Coast, and that of the three motor vans in Georgetown only one can be relied upon. I also understand that the mails for the East Bank of Demerara are invariably an hour or an hour and a half behind the scheduled time of arrival. Not only does this affect the condition of the workers because it disrupts their time for meals, but the people to whom the letters are addressed suffer a certain amount of inconvenience as a result of the delay.

[MR. JACKSON]

Certain people cannot depend on the delivery of mails because the Post Office does not have a reliable mail transport system.

I should like to remind the hon. Minister of Communications and Works that one of the three vans at the Georgetown Post Office was condemned by the Red Cross Society and given to the Post Office after which hundreds of dollars had been spent on it. I challenge the hon. Minister to deny this statement. I am sure he will not deny it because he knows that I am very familiar with several aspects of the activities of this Government. Why should the Post Office in Georgetown rely on a condemned van? I feel that it should have more than one van in order to run an up-to-date service. On several occasions one can see two or three persons pushing about this condemned van in an effort to start it. I merely mention this matter because no provision has been made in this year's estimates for the purchase of more vans.

I am certain that the quality of the vehicles which have been purchased by Government for the conveyance of inland mails is not the right one. It is true that the Post Office makes use of the Transport and Harbours Department. The hon. Minister of Communications and Works said that he has instructed the porters of the Transport and Harbours Department to assist Post Office employees with heavy mails. Apparently the porters at the Transport and Harbours Department have not yet received those instructions because they have not been put into operation. This is not good enough.

The Transport and Harbours Department has been reducing its staff on the stelling for some time now. I know that when the mails arrive on the stelling the porters who work with the Transport and Harbours Department are usually too busy with their own work to assist postmen with mails. That system does not appear practicable to me, and I do not think it is the solution to the problem before us. I believe that the

problem could be solved by providing more vans, and efforts should be made to re-organize the existing system in the Post Office Department with a view to increasing its efficiency in catering to the general public.

The hon. Minister of Communications and Works said that he has given a lot of consideration to this matter, but I do not think he has given enough consideration to the entire matter. He also said that large sums of money are not transported in mail bags. If the hon. Minister had a full grasp of the situation he would never have made that statement in this Council. Let him tell this Council how the money for the payment of wages in certain parts of the country district is sent to the various Post Offices. Let him tell us how money reaches the Land Settlement Department. If he can tell us that, then he will be able to realize that he made an incorrect statement yesterday.

I repeat that it is not the correct thing to expose the lives of young people to such danger. Everyone knows that a youngster was held up on the Corentyne Road two years ago while conveying about seventeen thousand dollars on a push cycle. Everyone knows that the Georgetown Post Office has to send money from one Post Office to another. Perhaps the hon. Minister wants to be reminded of what has taken place in the past. Maybe he believes in the wisdom of locking the stable after the horse has bolted. I think he should lock the stable before another horse bolts.

In other parts of the world the Post Office gives a great deal of consideration to the security of mails because of the importance placed on the mail service, but it seems to me as though that is not the case with respect to the Post Office Department in this Colony. I hope the hon. Minister of Communications and Works will realize that something should be done in order to improve the service offered to the public by the Post Office Department.

The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran): This matter was previously dealt with in this Council and the hon. Member has gone over everything again. It is not my intention to repeat what has been written in the debates on the last occasion when the matter was discussed, but I will endeavour to clear up one or two points and make a few observations.

On the question of the conveyance of mails by bicycles, I pointed out yesterday that it was done in conformity with the laws of this Colony. If some of the people at the Post Office transport mails other than by legal means the Post Office will have to correct that. It is known that the practice in the past was for postmen to carry mails on their shoulders, and no doubt that sort of thing still exists.

The hon. Member indicated yesterday that so far as the West Bank and Cane Grove districts were concerned, it was dangerous for postmen to carry mails on bicycles. I do not agree nor do I see the necessity for providing a van to distribute letters from house to house in these areas. The postmen take the bulk of the letters from the general office and distribute them. In the case of the East Coast and West Coast Berbice the mails are sent up by motor vans to their respective Post Offices because of the bulk. In the circumstances, if Government followed the hon. Member's suggestion, it would be necessary to provide a van for each postman. Government can only provide vans when it is economic to do so. Nobody would expect Government to provide a van to carry mails weighing a few pounds.

In the case of the West Coast, we have made a very thorough examination of the position and find that the average weight carried in mail bags is about thirty pounds.

The hon. Member has compared the delivery of newspapers to Springlands with the Government postal service. That is not an apt comparison to make, because newspapers are run by big business which can afford to provide such a ser-

vice. The Government postal service is not able and does not necessarily have to do that. Obviously the hon. Member has not taken into account those districts where you have only one or two letters for delivery in a whole-day—places like Charity, and places in the Interior. You have to put the limit somewhere. If money is to be spent to provide a faster postal service to all points in the Colony, from Georgetown to the remote areas it would take up the money provided in the whole Budget.

As I said yesterday, the amount of money taken on delivery by Post Office employees is very small in comparison with the amount of insurance the hon. Member wants taken out. I do not know exactly what the hon. Member wants: whether he wants Government to post a gunman behind every letter-carrier who has with him \$5 in cash; it would appear that he wants Government to spend more money on this than the country can provide.

At the moment we are subsidizing not only the Post Office but other Departments whose services are essential.

In connection with the carriage of newspapers to Springlands, the hon. Member made an odious comparison with the postal service of the Government; as he will not for one moment stand the poor salaries and conditions being given to employees providing a service of that type. I do not blame him for his efforts, as I was once on his side of the Table, but my friend should think before making comparisons.

Mr. Jackson: I am all the more convinced now that the Minister does not know what he is talking about. I never made reference to the delivery of letters on a house-to-house basis.

Mr. Ram Karran: I did not say that.

Mr. Jackson: I said that mails are being despatched from Georgetown areas and areas including the whole of East Bank as one area, for the purposes of

[MR. JACKSON]

mail. When you are dispatching mail for the West Bank, for instance, you do not send the mail for Bagotville by one bearer and for Wales by another; one person does it. Even if you accept the argument of 30 lbs. weight, is he saying that one person does not carry mail for more than one office at a time?

Mr. Ram Karran: What I was saying was, if you are going to argue that because one man dispatches mail on the West Bank for several Post Offices you must provide him with a van since he also carries valuables, then you are going to make provision for a van to be provided for the man working on the West Bank of the Berbice River also because, as the hon. Member says, many of these people carry valuables. You will have to give each one a revolver or put a policeman behind him, or give him a van.

Mr. Jackson: I think the Minister thinks in terms of revolvers. I am a man of peace and I do not envisage the use of revolvers at all. If the Minister understands my complaints he would not use that argument. Mails are sent throughout the length and breadth of this Colony and you cannot give a van here and give a van there as you like. All he has to do is to sit down and re-organize the way of dispatching mails. If he would sit down with his advisers and discuss Post Office work he would not come here and give lame answers — as he has been doing today.

The poor people he represents are the ones who are suffering the most. Even when the mails are late those people with private boxes can get their mail the same night. The poorer ones cannot get these facilities and they suffer as a result.

If the Minister were to sit down and analyze this whole situation he would find that two or three additional vans can help to give better postal service, and that in the long run it would be more economical.

But what have we to be content with? We tell him that he must analyze this matter in far greater detail; he is supposed to have done that, but he comes here making statements that are of little value.

I am not saying that every officer must have a revolver but that every area must have a proper service. We have the means at our disposal to prove that the method I am talking about can be worked out without much cost.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am very willing to hear that the hon. Member is willing to concern himself with the other side of the picture. I wish to make it clear that if the hon. Member has any suggestions to make we are quite willing to examine them in the interest of improving the services of the Post Office Department. However, from the suggestions made by the hon. Member and his organization, they appeared to be interested only in one side of the matter of running the Post Office Department.

Mr. Hubbard: Mr. Chairman, in Finance Committee we went through all of this, and I suggested to the hon. Member for Georgetown North and to the Postmaster-General, who was present, that the wide grasp of the Member for Georgetown North might well be put into service if a joint Industrial Council can be set up. Then Post Office matters, both the Staff side and the Management side, could engage its attention. I do hope that when next we hear from the Member for Georgetown North on this subject this Council would indeed be already set up.

Mr. Jackson: My friend, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, has indeed touched upon a point that in my opinion is a good one. It can be part of a policy, but nothing can be initiated as policy by the Post Office Workers Union and the Department. Policy has to be established by the Government initiating Industrial Councils so they will function as other bodies of its kind function in other parts of the world.

I take his advice, and I know that he fully understands that you cannot establish a Council in the way he has suggested. I hope anyway that it will be brought about so we can have discussions. I await the time when Government will awake from its slumber and the best results will flow from the knowledge on both sides.

The Minister expressed the view just now that we are interested in only one side of the problem. If he intended to say by that that we are working for better conditions for Post Office workers, we say, 'yes, that is part of our function, and we do it without any hesitation.'

But the Post Office Workers Union has on more than one occasion looked at the other side. The Minister is in effect saying, 'how can we offer better service to the rest of the community: it cannot be done.' On the other hand, I am not asking for money for the workers, because the time has not arrived, but I am saying, 'the service which the Post Office runs by way of mails is not as good as it can or should be.' If he construes the position any other way, then I am sorry for him and his outlook.

Mr. Ram Karran: I said he was interested so far only in one side. I challenged his statement that more vehicles in the fleet of the Post Office, that is more vans, would be more economical than the existing system, and I would be very willing to listen to the hon. Member and/or his organization and to go into this aspect of the matter with them.

Mr. Campbell: The hon. Minister of Communications and Works said he is quite willing to examine any sound suggestions. There is a sound suggestion I would like to make and I hope he will make a note of it. It is about the distribution of mails in the North West District. The District Commissioner sent me an official letter dated the 13th of December, requesting me to attend an important meeting on the 19th of December, but that letter reached me

towards the end of January of the next year.

The scattered population in the North West District has to be served with mails from the Mabaruma Post Office. The Coomaka stelling is the terminus in the Aruca River for coastal steamers coming from Georgetown, and farmers converge there once a week for the purpose of shipping their produce to Georgetown on Wednesday mornings. There is need for a postal agency on the Coomaka stelling as the Mabaruma Post Office is about 1½ miles inland from the waterside and on Mabaruma hill.

There is a postal agency at Hosororo, which is quite out of the way, and many people have complained to me about the inconvenience of this arrangement, and suggested that a postal agency on the Coomaka stelling would be more suitable. Going inland to the Post Office farmers have to leave their produce unattended, and when they go there and find that mails have not yet arrived they have to make two trips. If the hon. Minister would look into the matter I would be very much obliged.

Some time last year I approached the Minister about the establishment of a mail service in the Waini River which is about 100 miles long. I told him that a certain Forest officer was quite willing to undertake to carry mails there once a month, provided arrangements could be made at headquarters. I was told by the Minister that the matter was being considered, but that reply does not satisfy me.

Mr. Ram Karran: I did not hear a good deal of what the hon. Member said, but I think that in his closing remarks he was slightly inaccurate when he said that representations which he had made about a mail service in the North West District were still being considered. The hon. Member is inaccurate in the sense that it was I who approached him in connection with an offer I had received for such a service which I thought was quite expensive, because the sum asked was \$60 per month,

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when there was a boat running in that area in any case. I told the hon. Member that \$720 a year was too expensive, as it would be tantamount to a subsidy for a service merely for the carriage of mails, and it was not Government's policy to do that. I told him that Government might contribute a reasonable sum for the carriage of its mails, and I invited the hon. Member to see if there was anyone who would do it at a more reasonable figure. I invited the hon. Member to the Ministry and after some discussion he promised to return, but he has not been back. I have approached him on several occasions, and on one occasion I told him that if it was not possible to get somebody else to carry the mails Government would have to reconsider the offer if the volume of traffic justified it.

With regard to Coomaka I think another Department may be able to assist in putting up a postal agency of a reasonable size to serve the community there. The hon. Member is aware that the Transport and Harbours Department is carrying out some development in that area, and we are examining the traffic in that district to see how we can improve the service, not only in the matter of transport but the postal service. It is inaccurate for the hon. Member to say that I said that the matter is under consideration after a number of years.

Mr. Campbell: The Minister suffers from a lapse of memory when he speaks about somebody writing and offering to convey the mails for \$60 per month. It was after that arrangement could not be considered that I contacted another gentleman. We discussed the matter and I subsequently received a letter from the Minister stating that nothing could be done about it. The first gentleman was Mr. Correia and the other was Mr. Beck.

Mr. Jackson: Having used a tape-recording machine once again, to use the words of the hon. Minister, and having brought to light again the lack of a proper transportation system for the

conveyance of mails, I ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 38—Post Office—be carried out at \$1,231,703.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

POST OFFICE—TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS' BRANCH

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 39—Post Office—Telecommunications and Electrical Inspectors Branch—be carried out at \$871,685.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

POST OFFICE—SAVINGS BANK

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 40—Post Office—Savings Bank—be carried out at \$60,438.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PRISONS

SUPERINTENDENT OF PRISONS

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move a reduction by \$1 of sub-head 1, item (1)—Superintendent of Prisons, \$7,200. There are two matters which I would like to bring to the attention of whichever Minister is responsible for the administration of the Prisons Department. I am not sure whether it is the Minister of Community Development or the Chief Secretary, as these Ministries overlap so much, but my first observation is directed to a complaint which I have heard over and over again, and of which I have documentary proof.

It is that the officers in charge of this Department—at least up to a few months ago (I am not sure when it was) the Superintendent or the Deputy

Superintendent did not seem to appreciate that the officers under him are human beings, and as British subjects they have the right to have their points of view heard by the officer in charge, and even by Government.

In fact, on one occasion this particular officer denied a Prison officer the right to be represented by counsel at a departmental inquiry, and it is also alleged that the officer in charge of the institution has on more than one occasion refused to communicate to the Chief Secretary's Department certain complaints by subordinate Prison officers.

It seems to me as if there is some confusion in the mind of the Superintendent, or the person who was Superintendent at the time as to the status of his prison officers as against the status of the inmates of the institution, for if what I am told is correct, the type of treatment that he is wont to mete out to his prison officers is treatment which the inmates of the institution, as human beings, do not deserve.

I queried from the Superintendent in Finance Committee whether everything was all right and he said it was. But these reports continue to come, and I feel that the time is almost ripe when there should be a thorough investigation because officers in charge of departments must be made to understand that though their establishments may be semi-military in some respect that the men are not to be treated like soldiers in the line who are not to reason why or to make a reply, but that they are people in the public service who have rights.

I do not know what is the previous experience of the particular officer in charge. It is quite possible that, from the territory or part of the world from which he hailed this type of conduct is the rule rather than the exception, but I think it is time that it be brought to the notice of the Council so that when an explosion takes place, these poor, long-suffering men should not be blamed for mutiny or irresponsibility because they can stand it just so long and no longer.

I do not blame the hon. Minister in charge because, as far as I understand, this officer does not permit certain representations to get pass him. Whoever is the Minister — whether it is the Minister of Community Development and Education or the hon. the Chief Secretary — I cannot blame any Member of the Executive Council for not knowing of things that do not come to his knowledge. I would recommend to the appropriate Minister that an immediate investigation — I am not asking at this stage for a public investigation of the department — be carried out in order to find out more about these disgusting and autocratic conditions which exist at the Prisons Department in Georgetown. That will give us an opportunity to hear the criticisms from both sides.

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Porcher, acting): In clarifying the position for the hon. Member for Georgetown Central and other hon. Members, I would like to make it clear that, as Chief Secretary, I am responsible for the personnel and establishment side—that is to say, if the staff has any complaints to make those complaints should be sent to me. The hon. Minister of Community Development and Education is responsible for the general administration of the department.

I regret very much indeed that the hon. Member has found it necessary to make these remarks. He has never approached me about the matter. Had he done so I would, of course, have inquired into it to see if there is any substance in it. If he would agree, after this debate, to give me the information which appears to be in his possession, I would very readily make full inquiries into any matter which he raises.

I do deprecate attacks on any member of the Public Service in these general terms because I, obviously, cannot answer generalities. As I say, the first step is always to see me first, let me know what the information is, and give me an opportunity to do something about it.

Mr. Burnham: I am very happy to hear that the hon. the Chief Secretary is always willing to discuss these matters with respect to staff, establishment and complaints about staff. I, however, feel it is my duty to have brought the matter to the attention of this Council first. I have not unduly attacked the particular officer or officers concerned. After all public officers must understand that certain people are employees and not slaves. They are servants of the public and we represent the public here.

Of course, if my remarks and observations are not justified, there is a point on the Order of the Day which permits the relevant Member of the Executive Council to make a statement. Much as I appreciate the hon. the Chief Secretary's undertaking to go into the matter when I have discussed it with him, I cannot share this oversensitivity about making remarks about public officers. Public officers will have to learn that in the same way as politicians must be prepared to take abuse, public officials and public officers must be prepared to take criticism in the Legislature. I have handled this matter with kid gloves. I did not use the mailed fist. I do not want to use it at this stage, because I was sure the hon. the Chief Secretary would have made the offer he has made. I will take advantage of it at the earliest convenient opportunity.

Another criticism with regard to this Department refers to conditions there. I have, from what I have seen with my own eyes, come to the conclusion that conditions in the Prisons in British Guiana, especially in Georgetown, are appalling. There is a prehistoric attitude to questions of sanitation and sanitary conveniences in the Prisons. I cannot see why, in these days, these conditions should still obtain. I do not want to go into too much detail because the matter is rather sordid and may be considered indelicate, but I think the Minister can understand what I am talking about.

While the diet may, in some instances, have the calorific value set out on

the Diet Sheet, the preparation of the meals for these inmates is something most disgusting and leaves a great deal to be desired. In this second half of the twentieth century even though we may retain certain principles in the Prisons, I should expect that our attitude towards the comfort and well being of the inmates of the institution should have changed with modern times.

Still, however, I find from visits which I have made to the Prisons in the course of my professional duties that there has not been any progressive development in the attitude towards prisoners, at least in the Georgetown Prison. I am particularly keen about it, because I notice that in the U.K. there is some attempt being made at prison reform in that celebratedly disgusting place, Wormwood Scrubs. It may be argued that it took the U.K. so many years to do something about Wormwood Scrubs, and why should we worry about it in British Guiana. I do not expect that attitude to come from the Minister who, like myself, knows that the U.K. claims to be a country with ancient tradition and long history. We are entitled to run our own affairs and to follow the pattern set by the people in the United Kingdom, consequently I do not expect to hear any opposition from the other side.

I shall urge upon the Minister to investigate conditions to see whether we should still adhere to the punitive value of punishment and incarceration that these prisoners are undergoing, or whether they should be treated as human beings and given the ordinary sanitary conveniences which have become part of our lives in Georgetown. He should also see to it that their meals be made as palatable as the budget would permit. So far as the meals are concerned, I feel that it is not a question of not enough money being available, but not enough thought and imagination being put into the preparation of meals. I think there should be more humaneness in the treatment of our prisoners.

Mr. Bowman : This is one of the occasions on which I am compelled to support the case made out by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central regarding the administration of the Prisons in Georgetown. I have been there and from my experience I can imagine what conditions are today. Apart from that, I have received quite a few complaints which leave me with the impression that things are not working well in the Prisons Department. Therefore I am supporting the call for an investigation, and I hope we will have it very early.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh : Not so long ago an expert on matters relating to the Administration of Prisons came to British Guiana and made certain recommendations with respect to the Prisons generally and the situation of the Prisons in Georgetown. The building is on a most undesirable site, and most citizens have expressed the opinion that it should not be situated there.

The question of what has been happening recently in the prisons concerns the entire community, in that there have been jail breaks and escapes of prisoners from the prison itself and from outside.

Another factor which the hon. Minister should take into consideration is the movement of prisoners from one part of the City to another part to do work. This appears to be most undesirable in the public's view. I think that something should be done to bring about some measure of relief and reform to those who are undergoing imprisonment.

I feel that the Government should be advised to tighten up the system. Within the last year a considerable amount of fear has been entertained by the community as a result of prisoners escaping from custody, and no pronouncement has been made by the authorities in this matter. I think Government would be well advised to go into the question of the adequacy of accommodation within the Prison walls.

The Georgetown Prison is well over a hundred years old. Many of the pri-

soners there have tuberculosis, many of them when they come out are not fitted for their future lives. The cost of the removal of this Prison from its present site has been given in a book somewhere. I ask the Government to remedy this situation with the Prison in the very centre of our City. I ask that something be done to create a better environment for the prisoners where they would undergo some degree of reform, because at the present time they can go in there bad and come out worse.

The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Benn) : I am grateful to hon. Members for their remarks in connection with the Georgetown Prison. I have never had any complaints before on the question of the meals in the prisons, and I will make some investigation into that matter. I am prepared, if necessary, to make arrangements for those warders in charge of the preparation of meals to get some course at the Carnegie School of Home Economics. [Laughter]. I am afraid some hon. Members do not understand that the Carnegie School is a place not for the instruction of ladies only, but for men also.

On the question of sanitary conveniences, I have no doubt that the standards are not as good as they should be, but hon. Members will agree with me that that fact bears considerable relationship to some extent to—as the hon. Member for Georgetown South said—the position of the Prison in the heart of the City. There is little room for extension and for carrying out other measures related to the reformatory side of prison work.

I had not heard any complaints about the inadequacy of sanitary conveniences of the Prisons. I should be able to because there is a Visiting Committee of very keen persons set up last year. Unlike the previous Committees which visited once a year or once a quarter, this Committee has already on 11 occasions visited the Georgetown Prison and held meetings there. Three

[MR. BENN]

surprise visits were paid. Anyway, I have no doubt that because of the position of the Prison, because of its cramped nature, there is some substance in what the hon. Member has been saying, and I will go into the matter.

The hon. Member for Georgetown South made reference to the question of the occurrence of jail breaks from the Georgetown Prison and Government not making a pronouncement on the matter. He also referred to the position of that Prison. Government has for some considerable time been trying to find a suitable site for the Georgetown Prison, but has not been able to find one. Only recently the Superintendent of Prisons and the Deputy Commissioner of Local Government went making investigations towards finding a suitable site. I want to assure hon. Members that Government is making every effort to secure a proper site.

It is true that conditions, because of the cramped nature, are not as good as they should be, and I ought to say here that it is a credit to the Superintendent of Prisons and his officers and men that despite the position and the cramped nature the degree of discipline which has to be maintained at the Prison is maintained. There have been several jail breaks, but all this is attendant upon prisons.

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Chairman, I accept the hon. Minister's undertaking to investigate and look into the matter, and may I make this further observation—not in caustic criticism, but it would show more fully what I am getting at.

Members of the Visiting Committee may go and may not report anything unusual. My principal concern is about the prehistoric arrangements for ablutions. One does not expect that one should find there things that one would find at home, but proper precautions should be taken. With those remarks I beg to withdraw my motion.

NIGHT PATROLS

Mr. Jackson: I beg to move that item (21)—“Night Patrols”—be reduced by \$1. I do so in order to see whether I can get an assurance from the hon. the Chief Secretary in this matter. According to this item there are 17 Night Patrols. I gather that three of them are at Mazaruni Prison, and if my information is correct, there is to be an examination as to whether there is a full complement.

But my point does not relate to the size of the Patrol. I understand that they are not given uniforms, and I feel that since they work in a Service that issues uniforms that should not be so. I heard also that these Night Patrols are not given the station allowance which is paid to all people who work in the Mazaruni area, and I ask the Chief Secretary to look into these two matters and see that an adjustment is made.

The Chief Secretary: I shall do so.

The Chairman: Shall I put the Motion?

Mr. Jackson: Please, Sir, I beg to withdraw the Motion.

PRISON OFFICERS

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry I have to importune you, but the hon. Member for Georgetown North got up a little before I got up to move the reduction of a sub-head, and I now do so with your indulgence. I beg to move the reduction of item (10) of sub-head 1—“Prison Officers”. I do so to deal with a matter on which I feel very strongly as a trade unionist. I understand that Prison Officers, members of the Prison Service, are not allowed to join trade unions. Whatever may be said in defence of such a regulation or attitude with respect to the Police, cannot be said with respect to Prison Officers.

The Attorney-General (Mr. Austin): Oh!

Mr. Burnham: Oh, yes! As I understand it, one of the things which the

last war was fought for, was the preservation—or in the case of British Guiana, where we did not always have it, the institution—of freedom of association. For years now it has been said that the workers right to join a trade union of his choice, to organize himself with his fellow workers for the protection of his rights, the improvement of his conditions of labour, conditions of service and even the improvement of the efficiency of the Department in which he happens to work, was recognized. It is an inroad on the democratic rights of the Prison Officers to preclude them from joining trade unions.

What is wrong with joining a trade union? In the United Kingdom you have instances of unions for uniformed workers—the officers of the Fire Brigade—

The Chief Secretary : Their own.

Mr. Burnham : Their own union. Very well ! But here these people are not allowed to join any union at all. And I think it is an imposition to tell people which union they must join—it is a piece of cheek on the part of the employers. They are not even allowed to set up their own union here.

These men have no means of stating their grievances; they have no means of making representations as a body, or of letting the Head of their Department know clearly what they think as a group. All that is frowned upon, and they are not allowed to join a trade union. I am surprised that in this 20th century such a thing continues. Even civil servants who have access to secret files can join a trade union, but men as low in the scale as Prison Officers are not allowed to do so. If this attitude continues I shall have to draw the conclusion that this Government is hostile to trade unionism.

The Chief Secretary : A little while ago I protested against the remarks which the hon. Member was making about another class of officer in the Prison service, and I was told that public officers had to put up with those things;

they were the servants of the public, which of course they are, and I am one of them. We have a number of crosses to bear which other members of the public have not, and one of the things we have to put up with because of our public service, is a certain amount of restriction of our rights.

It is untrue to say that members of the Prison service cannot join a trade union. They are permitted to join a staff association for the purpose of benefits, but it is correct to say that they are not allowed to join a staff association outside their own service for representation purposes.

The Prison service is one of the three uniformed services—what I would call quasi-disciplined—and it is accepted practice that a service such as that should not be represented by a general staff association or a trade union. Members of the Prison service should be represented by their own organization. We have consulted the Secretary of State about this very matter which was raised in Whitley Council, and we have had his advice on it.

The Superintendent of Prisons is in the process of attempting to re-organize the present system of representation in the Prison service to bring it into line with the system in the Police Force; that is to say, to establish a Federation which can represent the cases of the men, and I have no doubt myself that such a body should prove satisfactory.

Mr. Jackson : I wonder whether the workers in the Prisons have been told that they should form their own staff association. I also wonder whether the men in the Fire Brigade have been so informed, because last year I raised this very matter, and I was told and I accepted the assurance that the matter would be gone into.

I am glad to hear today of the ruling that these officers can form their own staff association, but I am wondering what is the difference, in the mind of the Government, between a staff association

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and a trade union, for if there is a difference, then the men should be allowed to choose whether they want a staff association or a trade union.

If the Police Federation is being taken as the premise upon which a staff association is to be founded, then I am certain the Prison officers would prefer not to adopt that type of organization; they would prefer to have a trade union. I know their feelings, and as the hon. Member for Georgetown Central said, in the United Kingdom there is a Fire Brigade organization which is a very strong one, and if that can exist in the United Kingdom I cannot see why a trade union should not be permitted in the Fire Brigade and in the Prison service.

The hon. the Chief Secretary said that the Superintendent of Prisons is being asked to re-organize the system of making representations. In these days it is not the employer who does that for the worker; the worker does it for himself, and I would ask the Chief Secretary to review that aspect of the matter so that it will not be the Superintendent of Prisons who has to say how it is to be done, but that the men should say that they will form their own organization on lines desired by them.

The Chief Secretary : There is a difference between the vast majority of Government employees and those who are in the disciplined or quasi-disciplined services, and if you join the Public Service you do so knowing that you have to sacrifice some of your rights as an individual.

That is a condition which every person who joins the Public Service knows and accepts. If you join a disciplined or quasi-disciplined service you have to sacrifice rather more of your individual rights. That is, I may say, a condition that is known and accepted.

The only difference between a staff association and a trade union is that a staff association represents certain groups of Government employees, whereas a trade union may represent a much wider

range. There is a difference between a staff association and the type of representation which we have in mind for the disciplined services.

I did not say that employees in the Prison service were entitled to form their own staff association. I said they were entitled to join any staff association, such as the Civil Service Association, for the purpose of benefits, but Government is not prepared to recognize the Civil Service Association as the bargaining body on behalf of those officers.

The type of representation which we have in mind for the Prison service is the same as for the Police Force which has the Police Federation, and that is admittedly a more restricted form of representation, but in a disciplined body that is necessary.

It is necessary for the Officer in charge of the Department or the service to have a considerable say in how that representation is to be organized, but I give hon. Members my assurance that I will make sure that the representation is organized as well as possible.

Mr. Tello : I would like to say that the hon. Member for Georgetown Central made it quite clear, and I know that what he said is true, that in the United Kingdom members of the Fire Brigade service have the right to have their own organization with normal trade union practice, and I expect that the least we should have in this Colony is the right to follow the experience in the United Kingdom which has had a start of over 100 years. Whatever Government's intentions are, I feel that it would be risky to gamble on an experiment rather than follow the example of the United Kingdom.

With regard to the Prison service I think that trade unionists in this Colony will also be satisfied with the introduction of something similar to what obtains in the United Kingdom. I am almost certain that the Prison service in the United Kingdom is in no way associated with the Police service in regard to represent-

ation, and I think we are possibly creating a precedent which may be very harmful to colonial workers of that status.

I think that trade unionists on this side of the Table would be happy to have an assurance from the hon. the Chief Secretary that the system of representation which is being worked out in the interest of the Prison officers will be comparable with what exists in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Burnham: We are told by the Chief Secretary that there is a principle applicable to members of the uniformed services, that is, that they are not permitted to join trade unions. That is one of the restrictions imposed upon public servants, more especially the uniformed ones. I do not understand it because, as I said—and the Chief Secretary has not been able to controvert it—if the uniformed service of the Fire Brigade in the United Kingdom can have a trade union which is affiliated to the T.U.C. and the London District Trade Council, why must there be a difference here merely because the Prison officers are uniformed?

If the Chief Secretary had said “Well, we are copying from England so far as the Prisons are concerned, and will copy from England so far as the Fire Brigade is concerned” I might have said that at least he is prepared to be consistent, but there is a glorious inconsistency, because the Prison service cannot organize in the United Kingdom but the Fire Brigade are organized, yet we in British Guiana cannot organize. Why must British Guiana always be at the end of the line? To tell us about staff organization is not to tell us anything.

I shall be a little more blunt. These staff organizations are not worth anything because they are rigged and kept under the thumb of the Administrator of the Department. If he is a gentleman things work well; if he is a Hitler or a would-be Hitler, things work very badly. If these men are to be allowed an opportunity to have representation, but you say it must be their own trade union—there are 128 of them, quite a sizeable trade

union—and it must be exclusively comprised of Prison officers, I would be prepared to yield.

A trade union can secure certain advantages through working in conjunction and co-operation with other trade unions, which the Chief Secretary knows and understands, and that is why Government does not want these Prison officers to join a trade union, so that they would be isolated in the community, and when they have grievances there can be no other trade union they can call to their rescue and assistance. That is not Democracy as I understand and interpret it, and for which so many Guianese fought and so many died.

I was a little bit worried when the hon. the Chief Secretary came out with the alarming announcement that Government would not be prepared to recognize the Civil Service Association as the bargaining agent on behalf of civil servants!

The Chief Secretary: It is hardly necessary for me to rise to a point of Order. I said that the Government is not prepared to recognize the C.S.A. as the bargaining agent for the Prison Service, not the civil servants.

Mr. Burnham: I apologize. Perhaps something has gone wrong with my aural hygiene. I am really disappointed with the statement, civil servants are trusted people. The hon. the Chief Secretary is a civil servant and as such he can become a member of the C.S.A. Can he tell us why his Government will not accept representation from an Association which he can join? There seems to be some sort of inconsistency in this matter. I think that Government should investigate the whole matter of certain public servants who want to join trade unions and have their trade unions recognized.

If, perhaps, Government is afraid that being a member or members of a trade union automatically spells the possibility of strikes, let me impress upon the Government that a worker, or a

[MR. BURNHAM]

group of workers do not be a member or members of a trade union in order to go on strike.

Secondly, Government has the power to deal with the question of strikes in essential services under an Ordinance. I do not agree with a lot of things in that particular Ordinance, but the necessary legislation is there. Therefore there can be no good reason for preventing these poor men from joining a trade union, unless there is some hide-bound tradition peculiar to people in British Guiana.

The Attorney-General: The hon. Member should know that in keeping with certain uniform principles the members of the Police, Prisons and to a lesser extent, the Fire Brigade are not permitted to join trade unions. This practice is followed not only in the United Kingdom but, I think, throughout the British Commonwealth and there is a very good reason for it. The reason is that whereas a Government who employs people to serve in the Police Force or Prison Service wishes to give them the fundamental right and means of bringing their grievances before it, nevertheless, it is important that that means should be entirely divorced from politics because they are services which must act at all times regardless of the political climate and in any circumstances. It is a recognized fact that trade unions are to a greater or lesser extent entangled with politics.

The hon. Member mentioned that he is a politician as well as a trade unionist. If the members of the Police and Prisons Department are permitted to join trade unions it would be impossible to keep them entirely divorced from politics, and they would not be able to give impartial service to the country if they owed allegiance to a particular party. In certain instances, in order to be true to their union, they may have to take action which would be at variance with their duty.

In the year 1909 the Police Federation was started in the United Kingdom,

and so far as the Prisons Service is concerned there is a Prisons Officers Association — an extremely powerful Association which is doing a lot of work. The members of the Prisons Service in England are just as alive to their rights as Prisons Officers in British Guiana.

As the hon. the Chief Secretary says, people who are employed in Government under various rules must accept to a greater or lesser degree that they cannot indulge in politics, or join trade unions or political associations. There is nothing new in that, because it is an established principle. We are not breaking fresh ground; we are merely pursuing a policy which has been well tried and followed for very good reasons.

Mr. Jackson: One would have thought that the hon. the Attorney-General would have refrained from making reference to the Fire Brigade Service in the United Kingdom, because the hon. Member for Georgetown Central says that one of the strongest unions in the U.K. is the Fire Brigade Union. If we are taking our pattern from them, why prevent the people in our Fire Brigade from joining a trade union?

The matter centres around the Prisons, and when the hon. Member for Georgetown Central moved the reduction of a certain item by one dollar it was due to the fact that several complaints have been made that the people who work in the Prisons were not permitted to make joint representations concerning matters which affected them adversely. I understand that the Superintendent makes them sign documents, and then separates them so that they cannot make joint representations.

You may call it the Staff Council Federation or Association or whatever you like, but the workers are not going to have the freedom to discuss the matters that affect them adversely because they know that the Superintendent does not like his views queried. I know that several persons have been pushed around because they have expressed their

views plainly. That is why we are saying that it should not be left to the Head of the Prisons Department to arrange for any Association whatsoever. Whether the Government is right or not in saying that they should not join a trade union is a controversial matter. I feel that a worker has the right to join any trade union whether he is under quasi-discipline or otherwise.

As the hon. Member for Georgetown Central has pointed out, it is not necessary to join a trade union to go on strike. I see no reason why these men should not be given permission to form a trade union or association of their own. If our information regarding what is taking place in the Prisons is correct, what do you expect would happen if the Superintendent is made responsible for arranging for a Federation so that these men will make their representations through him? Whether the officer is in a trade union or an association he will be a member of a political party. I do not know of any provision to prevent him from being a member of a political party. I know that he cannot hold office in a political party.

We are conversant with what has been said by the hon. the Attorney-General, but we are not discussing this matter from a political point of view. I am here not because I am a politician, but because I am working in the field of the trade union movement. Whether the workers are going to support me as a member of the trade union or otherwise is a matter for them. If I ask the officers to support me as a politician, I am sure they would do so because of my association with workers. Therefore this fear is groundless and it will serve no useful purpose.

It is not fair to Prison Officers to have an Association formed under the management of the Head of the Prisons, because they would not be able to put forward their recommendations fearlessly. They know what has been done to them in the past. I accept the assurance of the hon. the Chief Secretary that he will go into the matter.

Mr. Burnham: What I very much admire some times from that side of the Council is the alarming frankness which frequently lets the cat out of the bag. We are told that quasi-disciplined members of the Public Service should not be permitted to join trade unions because they have to be kept free from politics. Do you plan to put a lot of politicians in jail? The people have their own political convictions; they are free to vote, but they are not free to support any political party.

This is merely hide-bound tradition from which we are now rationalizing. I grant that it may be necessary at one time or another to quell a riot, or to stop a march of one political party or another. Can you keep civil servants out of politics in the U.K.? In the U.K. the C.S.A. is affiliated to the T.U.C. which carries the heaviest vote at the Labour Party's Annual Conference. Therefore, what are we talking about? The people in the U.K. are moving on and giving everybody more freedom. Why can't we follow them? Is this like our constitution — just a little bit at a time. There is no Political Fire Brigade Service in the U.K. but the men have their own political views.

What are we wasting time here for, talking about getting a Service that is free from anything political? Indeed, we are established in our Victorianism while the people in England have become Elizabethans. I ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 41 — Prisons — be carried out at \$508,494.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 42 — Probation Service — be passed at \$57,546.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PUBLIC DEBT

B.G. (RAILWAY) PERMANENT
ANNUITIES — ORDINANCE 23 OF 1921

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move that sub-head 4 — “B.G. (Railway) Permanent Annuities—Ordinance 23 of 1921” —be reduced by \$1. I do that to make an observation which I made last year, which everyone on the other side seemed to agree with and concerning which a promise was made, and about which nothing has yet been done.

I know the leaders of the Party in office have long advocated this. Why instead of paying this annuity every year doesn't the Government capitalize and pay off once and for all. At this rate we are going to continue paying in perpetuity and this railway, which is costing already so much in subventions and subsidizing, will be always burdening this country in this way. Can't we pay it off once and for all? This is a matter on which I believe there is no issue between the two Political Parties, nor between the Party in office and Government.

Mr. Ram Karran: What about Jai?

Mr. Burnham: I said the two Political Parties.

The Financial Secretary: As the hon. Member said, this question is raised from time to time, and it is one that I am looking into. There is a good deal of history attached to it. As regards the hon. Member's suggestion, it all depends how much it will cost, and I am not in a position to say what it will at the moment. There was a redemption operation some years ago, and maybe there will be another. I agree with the suggestion in principle, but I doubt if it will be profitable to do another conversion or redemption just at present.

Mr. Burnham: I ask leave to withdraw the Motion.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I will be glad if the Financial Secretary will tell us what is the public debt of British Guiana at the moment.

The Financial Secretary: Well, I did give a full statement in my Budget Speech.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I mean at the present moment.

The Financial Secretary: As I said before, the Funded Public Debt at the beginning of last year was \$54.6 million. This figure excludes the \$6.6 million owing to the Joint Consolidated Fund at the close of 1957. In addition to that \$54.6 million, we borrowed during the year \$3 million from the Widows and Orphans Fund for Public Officers Housing, \$5.4 million from the Joint Consolidated Fund and \$7.5 million of the Exchequer Loan of £5½ million. So we can say that the total Public Debt at the end of last year was \$74.4 million; and there is a Sinking Fund towards that of \$9.3 million. The position has not changed much since the end of last year. We are now borrowing from the Exchequer Loan which is \$26.5 million. I would expect that to run out some time in August this year once the short-term \$6.6 million is repaid. If the hon. Member is interested in more detail, he can find it in Paragraph 39 of the Budget Speech.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 43—Public Debt—be carried out at \$1,686,343.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 44—Public Service Commission—be carried out at \$38,863.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Hubbard: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 1, item (2) — “Deputy Director of Public Works”—by \$1. In fact I would like to move the deletion of the item “Director of Public Works” in favour of the substitution of the appropriate emoluments of a good clerk, but I am precluded from doing so by law, since the salary attached to that post is a public charge of priority.

But what I want to talk about is engineering. It seems to me most remarkable that when an engineer enters the Public Works Department he seems to cease to be an engineer. If you ask him to erect a white elephant in the form of a Stone Crushing Plant he makes a mess of it and Government has to spend a lot of extra money because it is not erected as it should be. If you ask him to build a part of the Technical Institute he builds it so that part of it collapses. If you ask him to build a bridge at Montrose he builds it so that it collapses. If you ask him to build a sea defence structure it collapses before he is aware of it. If you ask him to build roads, well that is something beyond his capacity.

Mr. Chairman, I have here figures of the amounts we have spent on roads in this country in the 11 years from 1948 to 1958, both years inclusive. The total is \$22,935,488.89. Nearly \$23 million we have expended on roads and we perhaps have not got as much as 10 miles of good roads in the whole country for our \$23 million.

Let it not be suggested that there is no technical know-how in this country as regards the building of roads. There is the Municipality of Georgetown. Water Street is a splendid example of a road well constructed and standing up to heavy use and tremendous wear. From time to time the spring tides of the nearby Demerara River wash over part of it and there is a lot of pressure from constant traffic. Yet all that is necessary,

occasionally, is to re-surface it with small stone and bitumen.

Now our Public Works engineers who have worked here with the engineers of the Municipality do not seem to know about building roads, and so this country was required to employ an expensive firm of Consulting Engineers to tell us how to build roads, and I understand that this firm has submitted specifications for a road costing \$½ million per mile.

The way I feel about this question is that I would like to charge the amount of this Consulting Engineer’s bill to the engineers that we employ. I do not want any engineer to suggest to me that some sinister administrative directive is preventing him from building roads. An engineer is a professional man, and just as a doctor cannot accept a directive not to deal with typhoid, I cannot accept any proposition from any engineer that he received a directive not to build roads.

Government spent nearly \$23 million on our roads during the last 11 years. On the East Canje, Corentyne as a Development project we spent \$4,398,351.77; on the East Coast of Demerara in the same period and also for Development we spent \$1,986,643.72; on the East Bank of Demerara we spent \$2,847,573.48.

In the Parika-Bartica area we spent \$65,121.54; in the Bartica-Potaro \$253,423.12, and in the Potaro-Lethem area, \$288,613.10. On the Annually Recurrent Vote in the same period we spent \$11,300,000.64, and on the Extraordinary Vote \$1,438,977.59. So that in our Annual Estimate for the period we have spent \$12,738,978.23, and under the Development Estimates we spent \$10,196,510.66.

That is the position with regard to our roads, and I wish seriously to suggest that this Government approach the Municipality of Georgetown and ask them to make available to the Government their specifications for road building, because their engineers have carried

[MR. HUBBARD]

out experiments, using practically every known material as a foundation.

They have used railway sleepers, small blocks of greenheart, tin cans and stone. Government spent some money in the Potaro in 1949 experimenting with a sand bitumen mixture as a carpet for the road there. In Finance Committee I inquired of the Director of Public Works whether the specification for that experiment had been passed over to the consultants, and he said "No." The report on that experiment went up in smoke; it was burnt up in the Potaro.

Government built a road of burnt earth foundation between Albion and New Amsterdam. It stood up very well but when it got beyond Albion the engineers decided that it was too good a road, so they reduced the specifications and we have no road there at all. I speak very feelingly on this question because I think it is a great imposition upon the people of this country which employs engineers at high salaries, and when we take stock of the service we have got from them it is less than what we would have got from clerks.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I propose to speak on Roads under the appropriate Head, 45A. I am only intimating that at this stage.

Mr. Tello: I must congratulate the hon. Nominated Member who, after a long silence, has spoken on this important matter and supports my suggestion that there is need for Government to avail itself of the services offered by the Municipality.

The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran): I merely rise to reply to the remarks made by the hon. Nominated Member. Mr. Hubbard, with respect to the experiments in road-building on the Bartica-Potaro road. Those experiments have been carried out at the expense of the oil companies with labour supplied by this Government, and the oil companies continue to send their examiners and skilled people to see how the strips of bituminous surface road re-

act to traffic in the area. I have myself made inquiries about the reports on the experiments which were supposed to have been submitted to the Public Works Department, and I am told that those reports were either destroyed in the fire at 72 Miles, on the Bartica-Potaro Road, or are lying somewhere. I have, however, spoken to the people who have done the work and they promised to send me copies of the reports.

There is no doubt that the road situation in this country is very bad. Apart from the dust nuisance on the countryside we have also the problem of very heavy recurrent costs, but I would like to challenge the statement by the hon. Member that there is hardly 10 miles of good road in this country.

He pointed to the East Bank road on which I travelled this morning, and I can assure him that the work done there with the advice of the Chief Highway Officer who, unfortunately, left British Guiana this morning, is work of which the Public Works Department may well be proud. It is true that in the past there was no specialization on the part of our engineers, but today we have at the head of our Roads Division a former Municipal City Engineer, Mr. Jennings, who joined the Department at the beginning of this year. With him are a few engineers who have specialized, some of whom are still undergoing post-graduate courses, and others who expect to follow soon to specialize in this particular field, and we hope to be able to improve the work, provided funds are available.

I wish to add that on a recommendation by this Council an inquiry into the construction and maintenance of public works is being carried out by a Committee on which a Member of this Council is serving, and we hope to be able to get from that Committee some further advice on those difficulties that face the Government. A week ago we received intimation that one of our students, an engineer undergoing the course I referred to earlier, sponsored by the International Roads Federation, has done very well, and we hope that on his return

he will strengthen the team of road engineers.

May I also say that I indicated to the Council last year that we were working on a scheme to abate the dust nuisance in crowded villages alongside the public roads, and as soon as hon. Members complete the passage of these Estimates we hope to order some materials from the U.S.A. for use in dry weather on the roadsides. I feel that with the training of staff, the acquisition of more plant and development of more skill among the skilled and semi-skilled personnel, apart from the engineers, we will be able to tackle the job of road-building much more efficiently.

At 4.30 p.m. the sitting was suspended until 5 p.m. for a tea interval.

RESUMPTION

APPROPRIATION BILL

BUDGET DEBATE

Council resolved itself into a Committee to resume consideration of the Bill intituled :

“An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current session of the Legislative Council”

clause by clause.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Mr. Campbell: When the Motion is withdrawn, I would like to speak on another sub-head.

Mr. Hubbard: I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

DRILLING SUPERINTENDENT, PURE WATER SUPPLY

Mr. Campbell: I beg to move the reduction by \$1 of sub-head 1, item 13—“Drilling Superintendent, Pure Water

Supply”—\$5,760. I want to thank the Ministry responsible for a job well done in the North West District. A pumping system has been put down in the Hosororo Scheme to pump water about 300 ft. on to the hill tops. From 1957 I was fighting to get this scheme started, and at one time I had to ask in Finance Committee whether it was dead. I have spoken to the Superintendent of Pure Water Supply over and over again concerning this matter. Some times he is in the Rupununi and at other times he is elsewhere, but I am glad to see that at last the work has been undertaken. The Director of Public Works assures me that within three months the job will be completed.

I have received complaints from certain people in that area that the pipe is not sufficiently extended, and I have been asked to make representations on their behalf to the Ministry concerned with a view to having the pipe extended so that more people will be able to get water. I hope the Minister concerned will look into this matter and see whether it is possible to extend the pipe in order to cater for more people. Of the seven Government Housing Scheme houses there, only three houses are serviced by piped water from the rain.

Mr. Jackson: Under this sub-head, I wonder whether the hon. the Chief Secretary would go into the aspect of saving in the Pure Water Supply section of the Public Works Department. The staff has been increased by the addition of an engineer who has a B.Sc., degree, but there has not been any re-organisation to give this officer any sense of responsibility in his new post. It would appear that this officer has little or nothing to do, and if this continues it may lead to frustration. I am not saying this as a criticism of the Pure Water Supply section of the Public Works Department, but I feel that when we have a qualified officer in a Department his services should be utilized at the highest level.

I understand that this appointment may have been the result of an after-thought, because this officer returned to

[MR. JACKSON]

the Colony not so very long ago and it may have been a question of finding a place for him. Some people have the feeling that he has been sent to this office in order to keep him quiet. I hope that the situation will be examined by the hon. the Chief Secretary, a re-organization of that section will be given very careful consideration, and the services of this engineer utilized at the highest level.

The Chief Secretary: I am not familiar with the details, but I will go into the matter and let the hon. Member know what is the position.

Mr. Ram Karran: In reply to the request made by the hon. Member for the North West District for extra piping for the Pomeroun, I wish to inform him that this year Government has allocated a very large sum of money for Water Supply with the expressed intention of providing water in districts where there is none, and to improve the supply in areas where it is limited. The question of giving priority to extend pipes in areas already served will be gone into.

It is not true to say that it was an afterthought when Government decided to appoint a graduate engineer in the Pure Water Supply Department. The Drilling Superintendent in the Pure Water Supply Department is about to go on retirement and, in order to have a Guianese appointed to fill the post, Government has decided to put, as an understudy to the Drilling Superintendent, a very experienced local officer who is doing good work despite the fact that he is not a graduate engineer. It is unfair for the hon. Member to suggest that it is an afterthought.

I am wondering in what direction we are going. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, suggests that we should have engineers doing the work of engineers, and the hon. Member for Georgetown North is suggesting that for every engineer we appoint there should be an extra staff to surround him. We want engineers to do engineers' work, and a number of clerks to do clerical and administrative work.

The Chairman: I think you intend to say the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, and not Mr. Tasker.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am sorry, Sir, I meant the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard. This engineer is a graduate officer who has just returned to the colony and he has no experience in practical work. He is understudying the present Drilling Superintendent, and it is expected that he will take over from him in due course.

Mr. Jackson: The hon. Minister has misunderstood my point. I said that the engineer has not been made to fit into the proper pattern of things, but I never said that he should be given additional staff. I also said that, in order to avoid frustration, there should be some examination of the situation so that he would be made to do something worthy and in keeping with his qualifications. The hon. the Chief Secretary has already given an undertaking that he will investigate the matter.

Mrs. Jagan: As soon as this Budget is passed the engineer will be fully occupied, because we propose to have a very intensive Water Programme this year.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: So far as this question of water pipes is concerned, British Guiana has embarked within recent years on importing a tremendous quantity of pipes for water, cables and telephones into this country. Can the hon. Minister of Communications and Works and the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry give us any information as to whether the engineers have undertaken any experimental work for the purpose of manufacturing pipes?

Mr. Ram Karran: May I ask under what Head the hon. Member is speaking?

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I am speaking about the Drilling Superintendent of Water Supply. I believe that pipes can be made here. Millions of dollars are leaving this country for the employment

of people outside of British Guiana, and we should endeavour to do something about that. If the engineers are given the necessary instructions, I am sure it will be easy to get the necessary machinery for manufacturing pipes for water, cables and telephones. We are told that we are going to have a rural electrification scheme, and that the electric wires will be put under the earth. It will be seen therefore that we will require a considerable amount of pipes on these jobs.

The Chairman: We are dealing with Pure Water Supply.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I am saying that nothing has been done in this matter.

There is a tremendous amount of dissatisfaction at the present moment throughout the rural communities with respect to the clogging of wells and the clogging of pipes that take water into the various villages, and I think the Minister would be well advised to pay some attention not only to the drilling of wells but to the clogging of wells and pipes which occur from time to time.

We are bringing experts from abroad, but here we have to vote over \$1 million for technical services. Here is an opportunity for the technical staff of the Public Works Department to see that this money is not thrown down the drain. Maybe we will hear of research work that is being done to stop money from being thrown away in British Guiana.

[Pause].

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Maybe the Minister of Trade and Industry will tell us if he has a research programme for the manufacture of pipes locally.

Mr. Campbell: Mr. Chairman, through you I desire to thank the hon. Minister of Communications and Works. I beg to withdraw the Motion.

PERSONNEL OFFICER

Mr. Tello: I beg to move the reduction of item (40) — "Personnel Offi-

cer" — by \$1. I have nothing personal against the Personnel Officer but I just want to bring to the attention of this Committee an unfortunate state of affairs in the Public Works Department which affects not only this but other Departments. I refer to the lack of a wages structure for this Department.

I am informed that for some years now a Committee was appointed to inquire into the question of having a uniform wages structure for this Department and to make recommendations. As far as I know that Committee has not reported, and it is not certain whether this Committee has met at all.

In the meantime in spite of the fact that there was an abolition of a differential between wages in the rural areas and wages in the urban areas, we find that people employed in the same job in the country and in the City draw different rates of wages. We also find that there are different definitions of "heavy duty" which cause people employed in the same type of work to receive different wages. I know that the Public Works Employees Union is fighting this matter, but the fact is always referred to them that a Committee is sitting in this matter. I think it is unfair to the workers as a body and unfair to the individual worker.

It goes further than that. Public Works contractors who are committed to the "fair wages rules" find it difficult to pay the rates of wages established by the Public Works. I would say it is a bad record on the part of Government, as a good employer, that it has not produced a proper wages structure as its own guide and for other employers to follow.

I thought of bringing this matter up now, and I would not be surprised if the hon. Member for Georgetown South speaks at length on it because I know he has gone into the problems of this question. I want to say, as an associate of non-Government employees unions, that I feel that unless this matter is raised at the higher level with the Chief Secretary

[MR. TELLO]

and the Minister of Labour I know nothing will be done and these people will continue to be taken advantage of.

Wherever a differential is used the worker suffers, but if there is a standard schedule that must be adhered to, it would relieve the trade unions of embarrassment and be of some benefit to the worker.

Mr. Hubbard : The hon. Member, Mr. Tello, just made reference to the "fair wages rules" in relation to the workers with the Government contractors. I am a little confused, because to my knowledge the "fair wages rules" contain some of the simplest wage-fixing legislation there is. Therefore I would advise the hon. Member, Mr. Tello, that if he is in any difficulty, all he has to do is to apply to the Commissioner of Labour who would be able to explain the law as it is.

Mr. Tello : I would like to correct the hon. Member and say that the "fair wages rules" are not law. I can also assure him that as long as the Public Works is operating in an area, even if it is only the organization using such rates within that area, those rates become fair wages. And as long as there is no standard schedule, I say again, the workers are the worse for it. I speak from experience.

Mr. Jackson : A decision was taken by Government some time ago that there is to be no differentiation between the wages paid to workers in Georgetown and to those in the country districts.

That was shortly after the Hands-Jakeway Salaries Revision Commission and the special Committee went into details in respect of many problems which existed. These problems related not only to the Public Works Department but to other Departments of the Government which employed people in that category.

In addition to all that, I have seen that there was at one time a Standing Committee for the Regulation of Wages. That Committee is not functioning, in fact

it has been out of existence for some time; and I felt an opportunity would have been taken to bring it to life again.

I do not know whether in view of what has been said by Mr. Tello, the Government would indicate for our benefit at this moment whether that Committee is still alive or whether it will continue to sleep as it has been sleeping for quite a good many years now.

Mr. Ram Karran : May I ask what category of workers the hon. Member referred to?

Mr. Jackson : I think the question is one of wages, because the hon. Member, Mr. Tello, referred to heavy duty workers — who would be in the category of wage earners, and there are several categories of people who come into that class; and as complained, there is still a differentiation between the workers in the City and the workers in the country districts which should not exist at all.

The Chief Secretary : I think the Committee to which the hon. Member for Georgetown North has referred is one of which the Accountant-General is Chairman. It is still in being; it is a Standing Committee and it is meeting.

As regards the point raised by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello. I cannot recollect any representations being made to me in recent years by the Union. Perhaps the hon. Member for Georgetown North can help me about that, since not too long ago we sat together in a certain place.

In my experience the Public Works and Pure Water Supply Union is not a union to be hesitant in coming forward to represent the cause of its members, and I feel fairly sure that if it had a problem like that and had pressed it I would remember it, but I will make inquiries and see if there is any difficulty, and I will let the hon. Member know.

Mr. Tello : Did the hon. the Chief

Secretary say that the Committee is functioning?

The Chief Secretary : A Standing Committee for the Regulation of Wages is in existence. It is meeting, and has met, to the best of my knowledge, from time to time.

Mr. Jackson : It is admitted that the Committee will meet from time to time, but I wonder whether its composition will be reconsidered, because I do not think there is any member representing the workers on it. I think it is purely a Government nomination, and I would like to have some assurance that a trade union representative will have a place on the Committee.

The Chief Secretary : I cannot remember the exact composition of the Committee offhand, but I will have a look at it.

Mr. Tello : I thought the hon. Member for Georgetown North would have had an assurance that if the composition of the Committee did not include workers' representatives, that provision would be made to offer them representation. But the Chief Secretary did say that he will look into it, and possibly he may do that if he finds that trade unions are not represented. I am glad to hear that the Committee is meeting, but I can assure the Chief Secretary that it has not produced anything yet, and proper recommendations can only be made if the workers are represented on the Committee.

PERSONNEL OFFICERS

Mr. Jackson : I would like to ask whether I can now get a statement on my frequent representation with respect to the posts of Personnel Officers. Last year I sought to get an assurance that the Personnel Officers of the Medical and Public Works Departments would be put on an equal footing with the Personnel Officer of the Post Office Department, and I expressed the view that those officers have bigger staffs to contend with, and that

they should be given the necessary consideration. I would like to know whether I can get some information on the point.

Mr. Ram Karran : May I ask whether the hon. Member appeared before the Commission who came here to revise salaries and wages of Government employees?

Mr. Jackson : I am not here to answer that question; I am here as a politician. I raised this question last year as a matter of principle, and as a matter of principle I am again seeking information whether anything has been done to put all Personnel Officers on the same salary basis.

Mr. Ram Karran : It is true that the hon. Member raised the question but I think it is most embarrassing to the officers concerned, and most improper for this Council to be used as a trade union.

Mr. Jackson : I am here to represent every worker and every person who lives in this country, and if a trade union has a grievance it should be brought here; I shall bring it here. I challenge the Minister's right to tell me what to bring here and what not to bring here. I shall not be questioned on a matter which does not concern him at this stage, and whether I appeared before the one-man Salaries Commission or not is not a matter for the Minister of Communications and Works. I raised a matter of principle last year, and that is what I am raising again—to see whether the hon. the Financial Secretary or his colleague on his left, the Chief Secretary, can give me some information on this point.

The Chief Secretary : As the hon. Member is aware, I was not in this seat last year, and I cannot tell him offhand. It seems to me, however, that the Personnel Officers in the Public Works Department and the Medical Department are on the same salary scale.

Mr. Jackson : The Personnel Officer of the Post Office Department is on a higher scale and his responsibilities are very different.

The Chief Secretary : It appears that it has not been changed yet. The Salaries Revision Commissioner's report is not yet available.

Mr. Jackson : I was given an assurance that the matter would have been gone into. I admit that the present holder of the post of Chief Secretary was not in this Council last year, but I think the matter was also raised in another place, and I gathered the impression that it was receiving consideration. That is why I have raised it again. It would not be fair for this to remain until the Salaries Commissioner reports, because if he finds the salaries of the Personnel Officers as they are he may leave them as they are, and the two officers concerned will be at the same disadvantage as they have been for many years.

Mr. Tello : I beg to withdraw my Amendment.

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 45 — Public Works Department—be carried out at \$1,142,308.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

PUBLIC WORKS AND SEA
DEFENCES — ANNUALLY
RECURRENT.

The Chairman : The question is that Head 45a — Public Works and Sea Defences — Annually Recurrent — be carried out at \$3,394,450.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

REGISTRATION, BIRTHS, DEATHS
AND MARRIAGES.

DEPUTY REGISTRAR GENERAL

Mr. Burnham : Under sub-head 1 (2) — "Deputy Registrar General", \$4,512—I beg to move a reduction by \$1 merely to point out something that has

struck me as being unusual between the post of Registrar General and that of the Deputy Registrar General—a difference of over \$200 per month in salary. It seems as if there has been some slipping up. I am sure that the Administration, or the Establishment Officer, did not really intend that there should be such an anomaly.

As one knows, the Deputy in any office is the person who normally acts for the holder of the senior post, which connotes that there is not that great disparity between the responsibilities and the abilities of the two individuals. I am quite sure that this must be an oversight and I should like to hear from the Government, not that we are awaiting Mr. Gorsuch's report and recommendations, but that there will be an adjustment of the salary scale of the Deputy Registrar General.

The Chief Secretary : I am sorry that the hon. Member does not want to hear something which he is going to hear. We are certainly not going to alter the salary scale of the post of Deputy Registrar General before Mr. Gorsuch's report is received. It is expected in a matter of two or three weeks at the most, and it would be quite wrong to alter the salary of the post, which is the same as it was last year. I do not know whether the hon. Member raised the point last year as to the relation between the two salaries. Perhaps he did, but to alter the scale now, if it needs altering, would cause immense difficulties for us. There would be at least 50 other applications. The Salaries Commissioner's report is due to arrive in a couple of weeks, and it is when that report is being considered that matters like that should be adjusted.

Mr. Burnham : Mr. Gorsuch's report, I understand unofficially, has arrived, or is to arrive—

The Chairman : The Chief Secretary says it is expected in two or three weeks' time. He is a responsible officer — very responsible too.

Mr. Burnham: But there can be certain verbal inaccuracies even from responsible officers, and the Chief Secretary knows what I am saying. I accept what he says but there is one thing I would like to find out from him. He says that nothing will be done before Mr. Gorsuch's report arrives and is considered. Does that mean that if Mr. Gorsuch, a one-man Commission, does not recommend the remedying of this anomaly, that Government will allow it to persist?

The Chief Secretary: Not necessarily, Sir. I wish to make it quite clear so that there should be no mistake in this Council or outside. I heard it announced on the radio while I was in the Rupununi, that the report had been received, and not being here I was not in a position to verify that information. When I came back to Georgetown I found that the report had not yet arrived. I also found a letter from Mr. Gorsuch informing us that it will arrive in about another two weeks.

Mr. Burnham: When I raised this question last year I had not gone through every Department as carefully as I have done this year. There is one very weak aspect of the Chief Secretary's reply — that if this anomaly were to be remedied Government would have applications from several other officers who suffer the same disadvantage. That is a very poor answer for the Government to give.

The Chief Secretary: I did not say there were other persons suffering from the same disadvantage, or that there are other persons in exactly the same position. I said we would have other applications from individual officers for revision of their salaries, and to alter at this stage, just before the Salaries Revision Report is received, the salary of one post would place us in an impossible position in relation to the request of other officers who want their salaries revised for a multitude of reasons.

Mr. Burnham: I appreciate the difficulty to which the Chief Secretary alludes, but I would like to know from him

whether he agrees that this is an anomalous position. I am not asking that the salary scale of the Deputy Registrar General be raised immediately. I want an acceptance from the Chief Secretary that the situation is anomalous. In the same way that he accepts the principle of equal pay for equal work, whether the worker be male or female, although he did afterwards say something about the female not having the same responsibilities, in the same way he accepted that principle I want him to accept the principle that this situation is anomalous. It is something that strikes me in the face. I know that under the Constitutional Instrument I am not competent to move an increase, but I want to know whether Government is prepared to accept what we say here, and if it does, will it accept the logic of the situation?

The Chief Secretary: If the hon. Member had the experience that I have in dealing with establishment matters, he would understand why I am not prepared to give a hasty reply in this Council to such questions. I will not say whether or not the salary can be altered, or whether it is anomalous unless I have had an opportunity to look into the whole background. There are other cases where you will find variations between the salary of the head of the department and his deputy.

Mr. Burnham: I see that in another office under Head 7 there is a similar variation. I would like to assure the hon. the Chief Secretary that my solicitude for the Deputy Registrar General flows over and includes the Deputy Chief Secretary. It is not a question of my not having experience with respect to establishment in other places. Maybe I have not got enough experience in the Public Service, but I am competent to say when there is an anomaly and to ask my colleagues to vote the necessary amount to put things right. I cannot see any unwillingness on the part of the hon. the Chief Secretary's colleagues to vote the necessary amount if he agrees that there is an anomaly. Let us hope that Mr. Gor-

[MR. BURNHAM]

such will make a proper recommendation with respect to this head.

The Chairman : We are dealing with Head 46.

Mr. Burnham : I thank your Honour for reminding me of that. I beg to withdraw my motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion by leave, withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 46—Registration, Births, Deaths and Marriages — be carried out at \$63,617.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

Mr. Tello : I crave your indulgence to ask for the recommittal of Head 45.

The Chairman : You will have to make a Motion to that effect.

Mr. Tello : I beg to move that Head 45A—Public Works and Sea Defences—Annually Recurrent, be recommitted. I am sure the hon. Minister will be glad to give us some information with regard to roads.

Question put, the Committee divided and voted as follows :

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Davis	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Tello	Mr. Ajodha Singh
Mr. Jai Narine Singh	Mr. Bowman
Mr. Jackson	Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. Campbell	Dr. Jagan — 5.
Mr. Burnham	
Mr. Kendall	
Mrs. Jagan	<i>Did Not Vote</i>
Mr. Saffee	Mr. Rai — 1.
Mr. Beharry	
Mr. Benn	
The Financial Secretary	
The Chief Secretary — 13.	

The Chairman: The motion is carried, and the head is recommitted.

PUBLIC WORKS AND SEA DEFENCES—ANNUAL RECURRENT

Mr. Tello: I recall that Mr. Hubbard has made it quite clear that we have spent over \$21 million on our roads, and yet we do not have even 10 miles of good road. I think that one of the factors to our bad roads is due to the miserly way in which our roads are maintained. I notice that the vote has been reduced.

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex): I thought the hon. Member wanted to ask a question. I did not know that he wanted to make a speech. I think the question is, why was the vote for the road maintenance reduced? The answer to that is that the vote is not reduced. If the hon. Member will look at sub-head 18 he will see that it includes provision which was formerly included under the road maintenance vote. The cost of all lorry maintenance is now shown all in one vote. The amount which was taken from the road maintenance vote is for running the lorries used on road maintenance. There is really no reduction. I have already explained this matter very fully in Finance Committee.

Mr. Tello: I was not there and I did not see that explanation in the minutes. As I understand it, the vote for roads was reduced to supplement the maintenance of —

The Financial Secretary: If the hon. Member would look at sub-head 18 he would see that there is an increase of \$238,000. That includes provision for the maintenance of lorries which was formerly included under various sub-heads. For example, 1, 10, 14, 26 and so on. Instead of these sub-heads bearing the cost of their lorries and transportation there is now one sub-head for the total cost of transportation and maintenance of lorries. The money which was taken off the road vote is now included in this omnibus vote for Road Maintenance. In other words, the reduction of the road vote is added to the vote for lorries, and the same amount is therefore provided for road maintenance as in 1958.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: With regard to this matter of reduction—

The Chairman: The Motion was specifically for the purpose of asking one question in the hope of getting an answer. The Mover of the Motion made it quite clear that it was for that purpose only, and it is on that basis that the Motion was carried.

Mr. Tello: I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I was under the impression that so long as the item was recommitted the entire item could be debated.

The Chairman: Do you mean that if a Member moves a Motion for an item to be recommitted for the sole purpose of asking one question and getting an answer, and that Motion is accepted on that basis, that it would be right for the decision to be abrogated and Members permitted to speak outside of the basis upon which the Motion was accepted?

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: If Your Honour so rule.

The Chairman: I am not ruling; that is the basis of the Motion. I have given you the precise decision taken by the Committee.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Very well, Sir.

The Chairman: We pass on.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

OLD AGE PENSIONS

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 20—"Old Age Pensions"—by \$1. I wonder by what magical calculations this Government imagines that in 1959 there is likely to be the same number of recipients of old age pensions as in 1958. I think that every year we would have had more people because as our population in-

creases the old age pensions will increase, unless there are epidemics. You must have older people and more people receiving old age pensions; unless the Government is telling us that the main reasons for people being in receipt of old age pensions have vanished, it seems unrealistic to vote the same sum each year.

The Financial Secretary: The hon. Member's proposition would be acceptable if it so happened that the amount spent in 1958 was \$955,000, but it is my belief, that the amount spent in 1958 was not \$955,000 but somewhat less by about \$20,000. Therefore the vote for 1959 does not assume a lesser number of recipients.

Mr. Burnham: If in 1958 you spend less than you budgeted for by \$20,000, that means you spent \$935,000. If you had an increase of \$41,000 in one year, how are you going to assume, with a greater population, that it is going to be less in 1959?

The Financial Secretary: I said to the best of my belief in the previous year a lesser amount was spent. I cannot swear to the figure because I do not memorize the figure of every sub-head in the Estimates. There is nothing unrealistic about this figure. Obviously one is not going to put a figure in the Estimates that is too low. Therefore, relying on the assumption of sanity in the Budget, I would say that the figure is realistic.

Mr. Burnham: The sanity of the draftsman of this Budget has never been publicly questioned by me. But even the sane makes mistakes in the interest of economy—

The Financial Secretary: It would not be an economy. It is an economy to cut a Department's vote, but you would not get an economy by cutting the vote for old age pensions; the economy would come if the rate of pension or the means test were reduced, but such is not the intention.

Mr. Burnham: Of course, there is the point of view of the Financial Secretary, but I merely show that those officers responsible for recommending these pensions may have been asked to be stricter than they were in the past in respect of proof, out of a desire to economize. That is why I am so concerned.

The Financial Secretary: I did ask those concerned if they paid heed to the size of the vote for Social Assistance when they were making awards, and I understood they do not. As a sociologist I was glad to hear that, but as Financial Secretary I was not.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: A very important point here is that to distribute \$955,000 Government will spend about 8 per cent. of that figure, as can be seen in sub-head 1, item (5), which provides for 27 Public Assistance Officers and other officers, not taking into account travelling allowances and so on.

I see men riding beautifully in motor cars, giving very little attention to the job they should be doing, and probably working three days a week while the poor people who should be getting old age pension are suffering.

I would have seen the magnanimity of the Majority Party if they had made out some form of age limit by way of reduction for people who want old age pension, but that has not been done, and the means test is still applied vigorously, and those who are receiving are not receiving much.

The Financial Secretary told us that the Poor Law Commissioners when they make their awards do not go into the question of the Budget, but I can assure him that many persons are turned away with the explanation that there is not enough money. These people have given their blood and sweat for the welfare of this country and it is time that Government assumes its proper responsibility and make provision for them.

It is time that the Administration go into the matter of spending 8 or 10 per cent. of this money in merely distributing these moneys to the poor. It is iniquitous. This money should go to the poor people instead of to those who ride in motor cars all over the place saying that they are distributing money to the poor.

The Financial Secretary: May I point out that the hon. Member's arithmetic is not as impeccable as it usually is. The figure is not \$955,000 but \$385,000 for the support of the destitute, and the percentage would not be 8.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I see that the Financial Secretary is deducting the amount to be devoted to the support of the destitute, but even then, the Government does not make a proper contribution to the Alms House.

Mr. Burnham: I am about to ask leave to withdraw this Motion, but before I do so, I should recommend very strongly to Government their consideration of the conditions at "The Palms", with which conditions I am very familiar because the institution is situate in my constituency. I feel that it is time that in the same way as the Minister undertook to look into the conditions at the Prison with a view to their improvement, he should undertake to look into conditions at "The Palms" —I am not sure which Minister it is, but I think the Government is in a good mood to look into the conditions prevailing at certain public institutions. Before I withdraw my Motion I would like to hear the Minister, so I put off the withdrawal if Members would not mind.

Mr. Benn: Conditions at "The Palms" have been looked into. The hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing paid a visit to "The Palms" and made certain recommendations to me. My Ministry is making an attempt to carry out those recommendations. In addition to that, the new Superintendent of "The Palms" has put up several new suggestions and I am certain that in due

course considerable improvement will be made there.

Mr. Davis: I was hoping that the Minister would have put up some defence for the people who serve on Boards in the interest of social work, after the comment of the Member for Georgetown South. I have not been requested to speak on their behalf, but I sit on one of the local Guardians' Boards.

I want to say that we do impartially go into each case that is submitted to us, which the officer says he has thoroughly investigated, and he is very severely questioned. As a Committee we go into each case very thoroughly and make up our minds one way or the other. I think it is unfair for any Member to say that these things are just glossed over. I had hoped that the hon. Minister, under whose portfolio it falls, would have said that she is aware of the fact that these matters are not handled in a slipshod manner, as the hon. Member suggests.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I maintain that it is done in a slipshod manner. The Committee depends wholly on what the officer does, and there is a lot of nepotism on the part of the officer.

Mr. Davis: The Officer is not under the Board; he is under the Establishment Officer, and if the Establishment Officer feels that he is inefficient it is his duty to have him removed. It is not the duty of the Board to go behind these officers to see if they are doing their work efficiently. These generalizations are quite uncalled for and unnecessary. Officers are hit behind their backs as they have no opportunity to come here and defend themselves. The hon. Member's knowledge is perhaps limited to his constituency where I express the hope that he is more in touch with things.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: His Excellency the Governor has himself said that there is corruption in British Guiana. I am saying that there is corruption in the Administration, and it is time somebody

says so openly and let the country be run under a proper administrative system.

Mr. Burnham: I thought the Chief Secretary would have liked to defend his Civil Service against the allegation of corruption. Since he seems to accept the accusation I ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Dr. Jagan: I was going to say that the hon. Member who spoke about corruption was certainly generalizing.

The Chairman: The Member has withdrawn his Amendment. There are sometimes some things which are better left alone. The question is, that Head 47—Social Assistance—be carried out at \$1,791,372.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

SUPREME COURT

SUB-REGISTRY OFFICER

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move a reduction by \$1 of sub-head 1 (2) Puisne Judges, \$48,000. I desire to impress upon Government the fact that the Judiciary—

The Attorney-General: To a point of order! Did the hon. Member say sub-head 1 (2)?

Mr. Burnham: I shall take the opportunity later on to move a reduction of the whole Head by \$1. I thought we were not sticking to formalities. I wish, however, to move a reduction by \$1 of item (7)—“Sub-Registry Officer”, \$4,512. It is a little annoying and irritating to find that year after year one has to make the same points. Government accepts the justice and the reason in what you say, yet you have to make the same comments a year after.

Last year in Finance Committee and in Council I observed that it is patent that this particular post is not rated sufficiently highly for the responsi-

[MR. BURNHAM]

bilities. I see the hon. the Attorney-General shaking his head in agreement with me. So he did last year. Once already for this year he has done it, but nothing will be done. The Sub-Registry Officer is in fact the Deputy Registrar of Deeds and Deputy Registrar, Supreme Court, Berbice.

I have visited the office and not only is the salary of the post too low but I know that it requires an officer of great loyalty and devotion to duty to work in that office.

At one time there were not sufficient seats if all the members of the staff were present. I understand that there is now a sufficient number of seats but not a sufficiency of remuneration and recognition of the status of the post, and when you underpay officers with great responsibilities you cannot expect anything more than slipshod work and apathy. That this office is still succeeding in carrying out its duties competently is a tribute to the devotion of the officers concerned.

The Attorney-General: I am not afraid to agree with my Friend on this point. I personally feel that the responsibilities of the Sub-Registry Officer are such as should earn him more money than he gets at present. As Head of the Department I have represented this to the proper quarter but I was disappointed to find that this particular point about increasing the salary of the Sub-Registry Officer was not unique; that there were other officers in a similar position whose cases it was necessary to consider, and I understand that the Salaries Commissioner has been asked in particular to look at this case and the category within which it comes. So that when the Gorsuch Report comes out we hope that the matter will be disposed of once and for all, in a manner that is satisfactory and meets the desires of both my Friend and myself who are, at least on this point, *ad idem*.

Mr. Burnham: In the circumstances, while awaiting this momentous document,

the Gorsuch Report, I ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I wish to move a reduction of the whole Head by \$1.

The Chairman: That should have been done before. We have moved on to item (7), and we are going onward.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Probably Your Honour did not hear me. I said I was moving a reduction of the whole Head.

The Chairman: Not now that we have proceeded. From the whole we may go to particulars, but when we come down to particulars we proceed to the end.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Then I move a reduction by \$1 under sub-head (19)—Miscellaneous.

CLERICAL ESTABLISHMENT

Mr. Rai: If I may be allowed, I wish to speak on sub-head 1 (14)—Clerical Establishment, \$77,368.

I am in receipt of complaints that the supervision of trade unions by this Department is not being efficiently carried out, and it may be that there is necessity for a change in the system or a change in control. In particular, I have been informed that the financial reports of two trade unions—the Transport Workers Union and the B.G. Mine Workers Union — have not been commented upon favourably by the auditors, and I should like to know what is being done in respect of these matters. I am very critical of this subhead and I therefore move a reduction by \$1,000.

The Attorney-General: I am unaware of the particular point raised by my hon. Friend when he says that the accounts of two Unions have received adverse comments at least by the auditors, and I undertake to go into the matter.

So far as the general sub-head is concerned, it is a matter for the Establishment Officer. There is no doubt that

the present establishment finds it hard to cope with the work. The Registrar has already asked for an increase in staff. He is doing as best he can with the staff at his disposal. I understand, however, that a certain amount of work has to be left, and arrears are piling up. The head of the Department, the Registrar of Deeds, is concerned with the establishment, and he has asked the Establishment Department to see what can be done to increase his staff.

I believe that an officer or officers from the Organization and Methods Department will be invited to examine the working of the Deeds Registry to see whether it is as efficient as it should be. I can only hope that either they will find ways and means of reducing any work that is unnecessary so as to give the staff a chance to do essential work, or that the staff will be increased in due course.

Mr. Jackson: I cannot understand the point which the hon. Member for Central Demerara is making on this item. He says that he understands the auditor has not reported favourably on the accounts of two organizations: The Transport Workers Union and the Mine Workers Union. Is he trying to imply that the unfavourable comment is an indication of dishonesty? What has that got to do with this Department? Has the auditor made a report to this Department, or to the organizations themselves? This point is not relevant to the item before us, because auditors report on the financial position of an organization and give a true report on its accounts. What has the Registrar of the Supreme Court to do with the situation as it is found by an auditor?

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I wish to indorse some of the remarks made by the hon. the Attorney-General. The Registry of the Supreme Court deals with three branches of Supreme Court work: the notarial branch, the judicial section and the conveyancing section. The people who work there practically have to sit on each other, and there is no room for the work to be carried out efficiently. I feel

that this is a responsibility which the Government will have to face and that early attention should be given to the matter. Probably a re-organization of the entire building may assist. It might be possible to separate the conveyancing section from the judicial section and so on.

As I see it, there is need for additional staff in the Deeds Registry. It is a very important branch of our Civil Service. Several persons are dissatisfied when they cannot get certain documents in time, or when conveyances are delayed. When certain documents are not recorded within a certain time great harm can be done to the public. I am very familiar with this Department, because my professional duties take me there regularly. I have to pay tribute to the Department for the work done there, despite the conditions under which the clerks have to work. I feel that something should be done to provide better accommodation in the office. I hope the hon. the Attorney-General will see to it that better accommodation is provided, because increased accommodation will lead to greater efficiency in the Department.

A casual observer on visiting that office will see the hustle and bustle going on there and it must lead to confusion at some time or other. The congestion lends itself to confusion, for important files have been misplaced on several occasions and it took hours to find them on somebody's desk. This Department takes care of the records of will and so on, and it deals with a most important function of the country's business. I am asking this Government to take immediate steps to do something about the matter.

Mrs. Jagan: The Ministry of Labour has been examining this question of the need for increased staff at the Registry in order to cope with the work in the Department. Among other things the Registrar of the Supreme Court is also the Registrar of Trade Unions. It is quite true that the over working of the staff

[MRS. JAGAN]

is associated to some extent with the lack of supervision of the Registrar's duties in respect of his responsibilities as Registrar of Trade Unions.

The Ministry has quite recently been considering the question of transferring certain duties from the Registrar to another officer, or have additional staff provided in the Department.

With regard to the unsatisfactory report by auditors on the accounts of the Transport Workers Union and the Mine Workers Union, it is causing the Ministry of Labour grave concern. The lack of close supervision by the Registrar of Trade Unions has, perhaps, allowed this position to develop and deteriorate.

Arising out of the question of the dissatisfaction with the administration of the funds of some Trade Unions, the Ministry has examined the question of whether the Registrar of Trade Unions has sufficient power to properly take care of all matters arising out of the faulty administration of Trade Unions. In the light of the two cases in point, it will be necessary to bring before this Council during the course of this year legislation which will tighten the supervision of trade unions in order to prevent a recurrence of this matter. If the duties of the Registrar of Trade Unions are not transferred to another officer, it will be necessary to increase the staff in the Registry.

The Attorney-General : What has been said about the Registry and the Registrar is very important, and I think it is well that it has been said in this Council.

The Deeds Registry is a department where the public may go frequently, and I have never heard any person say that the staff has been found slacking or inattentive to duties in the department. An increasing amount of work is falling to the Deeds Registry and its staff, and they spare no pains to try to deal with it as expeditiously as possible, in the interest of all those concerned, lawyers and

members of the public. Very often members of the Staff have to stay late in the evenings and at week-ends. I think there are few departments which can equal the overtime put in by the staff of the Deeds Registry in the interest of their duties.

Mr. Burnham : What particularly interests me in the debate on this particular Motion is the readiness with which both the Official and the Unofficial sections of the Government have admitted that the Department is in need of strengthening so far as Staff is concerned.

Why then did we not have a proposal for the increase of the Establishment? Why do we have to wait until an Amendment is moved to the Motion for the passing of the Head to be told about all these things? For the last 12 months Government has sat down and now with questionable piety says that these things should be remedied.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh : I raised the question of space, which is just as important. There is a tremendous amount of confusion as a result of the inadequacy of space in the Department. I do not see how they can avoid it.

The Chief Secretary : I have had an opportunity during the last few months of consulting with my Organization and Methods officers, and one of them who is now listening to this debate has been able to advise me that an O. & M. investigation has been made and a report in draft has been sent to the Registrar for his comments. The O. & M. division is confident that if their recommendations are accepted it would be quite possible for the existing Establishment to handle all the work which will have to be done, once certain arrears in the judicial section are wiped off; and with re-arrangement and re-organization of furniture it will be possible to accommodate all the people on the Staff without any difficulty at all. I think it was suggested that there was old fashioned furniture in the building. It may even be possible to reduce the Staff and still carry out the work,

The report is not complete and still needs to be finalized by the Registrar. I have not seen it myself, but it is remarkable what can be done; various records can be cut out and the work can be reduced and simplified quite a lot.

Mr. Tello: In fairness to the two Unions, which are affiliated to the Trades Union Council, I must make it clear that while these comments were made they were restricted to faulty book-keeping. I want that to be placed on record. In one particular case, the Mine Workers Union, it was recommended that a qualified book-keeper be put to keep the books.

Mrs. Jagan: Much as I would like to agree with the hon. Member, I must say the Report said much more. I would not like to say what was said, but it went much deeper.

Mr. Tello: I read it myself, and it is a matter of interpretation.

Mr. Rai: I do not wish it to be understood as saying that the Staff of the Registry is either inefficient or is guilty of neglect. I was informed that the finances of these Unions were in such a state that some supervision was necessary to put them in order. We should all have an interest in the healthy financing of organizations not only in the trade union field but in general. I think this Legislative Council should have some interest in seeing that the trade unions are properly supervised. If there is no other speaker, I would ask leave to withdraw the Motion.

Agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

EDITING LAW REPORTS

Mr. Rai: I beg to move the deletion of sub-head 9—"Editing Law Reports"—\$303. When the 1958 Estimates were being considered in Committee I drew attention to the fact that the Law Reports of the Supreme Court, both in its original and appellate jurisdiction, were not being edited regularly even though this Court was under obligation according to law to have these reports published. I do not

know why these reports are not being edited and published regularly.

I cannot say that the present system is satisfactory, and I think it should be replaced by one whereby lawyers and other interested members of the public should be able to get these reports as early as possible after judgments of the Court have been handed down.

The Attorney-General: The hon. Member has suggested that the system is not satisfactory and it should be replaced by another system. Well, it is going to be replaced by another system, and one of the first matters dealt with by the West Indies Federal legal authorities was that of law reports. It was suggested that it would be of interest to all the territories, that is to say, all the Courts and the practitioners therein, to have a single volume of law reports of the various Courts, most of which deal with the same law, at least in principle.

An approach was made to Butterworths who are a world famous firm of law publishers, as to whether or not they would be prepared to undertake the publication of such Law Reports. They said they would do so, provided the Governments of the territories would, as it were, underwrite the project by guaranteeing to purchase a minimum number of copies of the Law Reports each year for, I think, five years, and they would then sell to practitioners in the various territories.

In each territory an editor would be appointed. The suggestion is that he should be a Judge under an editor-in-chief who, I think, would be the Chief Justice of the Federation. It is hoped that before very long this new service will be in force, which I think will meet with the approval of all those who use Law Reports. The system would be similar to that operating in East Africa, and I have seen the corresponding Law Reports from there, also published by Butterworths, which are in the same format as the English Law Reports.

[THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL]

They are extremely well turned out, and I think that when we catch up with the backlog of local reports, practitioners will have nothing to complain about. On the contrary, they will have something with which they will be pleased.

Mr. Rai : If there is no other speaker I beg to withdraw my Amendment.

Agreed to.

Amendment withdrawn.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Jai Narine Singh : I move a reduction by \$1 of sub-head (10)—“Miscellaneous”, \$3,100. Under this Head of the Supreme Court I wish to state that the number of cases on the list is so large that it is impossible for the available Judges to cope with the work, even working overtime.

The Attorney-General : To a point of order! This Head normally covers the purchase of ink, brushes and polish for the floors.

Mr. Burnham : Judges use ink.

The Attorney-General : The vote is not to pay the Judges.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh : There is a tremendous backlog of work.

The Chairman : It looks as if you are going to be long. We have to come back at half-past eight.

Mr. Burnham : I suggest that we need not come back because we have almost finished the Estimates.

The Chairman : I do not intend to sit later than ten o'clock.

Mr. Burnham : We have only a few Heads left which will not take an hour. It seems unnecessary to bring us back.

The Chairman : I am not bringing you back if you do not wish to come back. It is for Members to decide, but I do not propose to sit later than ten o'clock.

The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran) : We have the Development Estimates to pass. A tremendous amount of work remains to be done and cannot be tackled until money is provided.

Mr. Burnham : It was a very simple point I was making—that when we on this side agreed to the long hours we did not anticipate reaching this point. After Supreme Court we have about three short Heads which will not occupy the whole of next Tuesday. I appreciate the late haste of the Government in March, but unless it wants to spend this money by Saturday I cannot see the point of sitting this evening. If Government can persuade me on that I may consider its plea.

Dr. Jagan : We had agreed to meet this evening and the whole of tomorrow, including an evening session, but at the hon. Member's request, because of the Ghana celebrations, we acceded to his wishes and decided to cancel the meeting tomorrow. Here he is now coming with another request. I think he is being most unreasonable.

The Chairman : I am not sitting later than seven o'clock.

Mr. Burnham : If we came back tonight at eight or half-past eight we are going to finish this business in about an hour or less, and it seems unreasonable to break up our evening unless we are going to begin consideration of the Development Estimates tonight.

Mrs. Jagan : Oh, yes.

Mr. Burnham : Then start it by yourselves.

The Chairman : Let us get back into Council.

Council resumed and the session adjourned until 8.30 p.m.

RESUMPTION

APPROPRIATION BILL

BUDGET DEBATE

Council resumed at 8.30 p.m. and resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Bill intituled.

“An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current session of the Legislative Council”

clause by clause.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

The Chairman: We were dealing with sub-head 10 — “Miscellaneous,” \$3,100.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I had moved the reduction of this item in order to place before this Council the very difficult conditions under which the administration of justice in its highest level is carried out in British Guiana. In doing so I do not wish to cast any reflection on the Judges who administer justice here, but on the accommodation available where the Judges have to administer justice. There is absolutely no accommodation whatsoever for witnesses. People are pushed here and there; they go around in circles and are directed by police officers in various directions, and very often they do not know where their cases are being heard.

I feel that the number of Judges who are called upon to hear cases in the Criminal Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court is inadequate. I know that about six Judges are sitting almost continuously at the Assizes in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and so on.

The Chief Secretary: I ask Your Honour's ruling as to whether it is correct for the hon. Member to speak about the number of Judges under this head. The head “Miscellaneous”, in my view, is to enable the Department to purchase ink and so on.

The Chairman: It is not correct for the hon. Member to speak about Judges under this item.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I thought that the hon. the Chief Secretary would have liked to hear about them.

The Chairman: I rule that it is not correct.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Let the Administration carry on justice in a cowboy fashion. Let it be put on record in the Legislative Council that justice is now administered in a cowboy fashion!

The Attorney-General: We are not against the hon. Member raising any question, provided it is done in accordance with the rules of debate and the matter is raised under the proper head. If he allowed his opportunity to go by, that is his fault. We are not going to stop him from saying anything.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: When the community rebels against it, people will know that it will be the Chief Secretary and the Attorney-General on whose shoulders the administration of justice rests.

The Chairman: You cannot speak under a head that has been passed, unless Members agree that the head be recommitted. Let us do things in the proper manner. When you miss the boat you must put things in order. Mr. Tello has just moved that a matter be recommitted and Members agreed to that.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: There is no other place under which this matter can be dealt with.

The Chairman: I have already ruled that it is not the correct place.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Rule as you wish and leave it at that.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 48 — Supreme Court,

[THE CHAIRMAN]

\$293,343 — be carried out as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Agreed to .

Head passed.

TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS

NET DEFICIENCY SERVICES

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 1, item 1 — Net Deficiency Services, \$1,857,762 — by \$1.

I have done so to bring to the notice of the Members of the Legislative Council certain important matters which I think should be remedied. One of them is the movement of agricultural machinery on Transport and Harbours ships that ply as ferry boats among the rivers of Georgetown, Essequibo and Berbice. When an ordinary motor car weighing about one and three quarter tons or four thousand pounds on rubber wheels are put on a boat to be taken from Georgetown to Vreed-en-Hoop the charge is \$2.16. When a tractor, also on rubber wheels, weighing less than two tons is placed on the ferryboat to be taken to the same place the cost is between \$9 to \$10. I have brought this matter to the attention of the hon. Minister of Communications and Works, and I am now placing it on record in the Legislative Council. I do not think it is in the interest of farmers if this Department is permitted to make excessive charges for conveying such machinery.

I feel that the Transport and Harbours Department should be permitted to charge for the transport of these vehicles in accordance with their weight, because they cannot do any more damage to the boat than a motor car. A Ferguson or a Fordson tractor on wheels does not weigh more than a De Soto or a Pontiac motor car. I am sure it would be in the interest of the community if Government would look into this matter.

At the moment there are several hundred tractors in this country, and they have to be moved from one area to

another. I think that the farmer has a justified grievance in this matter, even though he has no proper representation here. Some people do not worry with the farmer because he walks barefooted, and he cannot make his voice heard in certain places. If a farmer's tractor breaks down he has to pay \$10 for transportation across the river. In the circumstances, I feel that the tariff should be reviewed immediately.

There is a growing deficit in the management of the Transport and Harbours Department. In 1957 it was \$1,605,000; in 1958 \$1,805,000; in 1959 it is \$1,857,000. We do not know where this will end. I feel that there is plenty of room for efficiency in the Transport and Harbours Department, and it is Government's responsibility to see that something is done early.

Mr. Tello: I want to join with the hon. Member in his plea for a revision of the tariff so as to accommodate agricultural machinery. Perhaps it is an oversight on the part of some Members on the other side because most of them are interested in the development of agriculture in this country. I think this is a means by which Government can assist farmers.

Now that the hon. Member has drawn this matter to our attention, I should like the hon. Minister of Communications and Works to give us an assurance that he will go into the matter and see what can be done for the farmers. I am sure that the request is a fair one, and it will receive the sympathy of Government.

Mr. Ram Karran: It is quite true that the hon. Member for Georgetown South brought to my attention the question of freight on tractors. He has compared the size and weight of De Soto motor cars and tractors but I have already indicated to him that this matter has been gone into with the General Manager who is the authority in fixing rates, which are accepted by the Executive Council. There has been a reduction in rates but the

whole question of freight charges is to be reviewed and in view of that it is better to leave this matter over until then, when decisions will be made. My view is that between tractors and certain motor cars there is very little difference.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh : I have investigated the matter and I find that it is about \$5 value for value comparing tractors with certain motor cars; I think that the policy of the Government should be that the expert who gives advice must not necessarily be accepted as the final authority.

This is one case where the farmers, who are the backbone of the community, have a just cause, and this is an opportunity for the Government to act without in any way prejudicing anyone.

Dr. Jagan : It seems to me that the hon. Member has made a good point, that on the basis of weight equitable charges should be made, and I am certain this matter will be given due consideration by the Government. However, I am, like him, concerned over the growing subsidy for this Department. But if one speaks of an intention to introduce changes, technological or otherwise, our absent friends might talk about the creation of more unemployment and so on; and so we will have to be very careful about the loss of over \$2 million sustained by this Department.

Mr. Tello : Does that mean they are contemplating retrenchment?

Mr. Davis : I raised the matter before but the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret probably caused some delay in action to be taken. They have been looking into the matter since last year but "the matter is still under active consideration". Some of the tractors though small cross the rivers at a cost of \$9.60. Not only that, when it comes to repairs, the costs then become high and out of proportion for a tractor.

Mr. Tasker : With respect to the remarks made by the hon. Minister of

Trade and Industry they rather tie up with those I made yesterday when dealing with economic services. It seems perfectly clear that if we are going to provide a State system of communications in British Guiana at our present state of development it is going to be uneconomical—it is going to require a subsidy; and it does not seem to me to be a question to be decided by an authority.

If the State—the Government—appreciates that certain services should be provided for the common use and benefit of the citizens, it should provide them, at a loss if necessary, but it should keep that loss to a minimum by running the most efficient services possible.

As far as I am concerned, I would welcome any intention by the Government to encourage any public works of a relief nature in order to relieve unemployment. I thought I had made that point clear yesterday but, apparently, I did not. My objection is to uneconomical undertakings which do not benefit the citizens in general or relieve unemployment in particular.

I make these comments now because of the remarks of the hon. the Minister of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh : Government must have in use some system of cost accounting which can point to ways in which money is being lost. Is Government aware that this money is being lost? If not, why not? If Government knows the reason, it would be possible to find out the necessary remedy for the terrific deficit. If there are no other persons who wish to speak on this Head I will ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

The Chairman : Hon. Members, I will put the question that Head 49 — Transport and Harbours—be carried at the figure of \$1,885,762.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 50—Volunteer Force—be carried out at \$106,232.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

The Chairman : The question is, that Head 51—Loans from Public Funds—be carried out at \$185,000.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

COMMODITY CONTROL

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I beg to move that subhead 1 — “Miscellaneous Expenses”—be reduced by \$1. It is important at this juncture for the Government to declare its policy whether this organization will be strengthened or whether it is to go completely out of existence.

As at present I do not think this organization is serving any useful purpose and it lends itself to a considerable amount of abuse and chaos among the commercial community. Either it should be abolished or it should be put on a better footing. I do not know if the Government has considered the question of bulk purchasing; if so, it should give some indication of what is to be done, but for this organization to continue in a moribund state it is of no benefit to this country.

Dr. Jagan: I indicated previously in this Chamber that the whole question of the functions of the Control Board was under examination throughout last year, and indeed this year. We know that recently there has been a further liberalization of trade in favour of dollar areas, and thus a great deal of the work which was formerly done has been abolished. Many items have been taken off the quota lists and put on the Open General Licence list.

An examination was carried out by the Organisation and Methods Division to see what savings can be made by way of integrating some of the work now done by the Control Board with the functions of the Customs Department, especially in regard to the compilation of statistics relating to the entry of goods into this country.

In addition the oil question is being examined, and it is hoped to bring a measure before this Council for the de-control of crude oil throughout the countryside. That, too, should reduce the activity of the Control Board. Further, the Chief Secretary's Office is considering whether the Commodity Control can be integrated with the Ministry of Trade and Industry. We do not want to put people out of work, and we are seeking to expand its sphere of activities. I am hoping that one of the officers who has to deal with oil will also have something to do with marketing, minor industries and the Produce Depot, so that we will have someone visiting shops not only in the City but the country districts to organize buying groups, to purchase things like ground provisions.

In addition to this we are hoping shortly to go into the question of compiling proper trade statistics; for instance the import and export trade with the West Indian territories, so as to find out what they import by way of food and other things, especially the things we produce in this country, and to see how it is possible to further expand our trade in those products with those territories. So that in time, as soon as we can set up and introduce the necessary legislation, we can establish an Industrial Development Corporation with a Marketing and Research Division.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I heard the hon. Member speak of an Industrial Development Corporation. Is it going to be a Government or a partly Government Corporation?

Dr. Jagan: It will be merely a body set up by Statute, and how it chooses to

run industry—whether solely by Government or in partnership with private enterprise—is to be decided by Government policy and also the Corporation itself.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Are we going to have an Agricultural Development Corporation? Now that we have ventilated the matter I beg leave to withdraw my Amendment.

The Chairman: The question is, that Head 52 — Commodity Control — be carried out at \$183,356.

Agreed to

Head passed.

PUBLIC WORKS — NON-RECURRENT

The Financial Secretary: I think it will be necessary to alter the wording in the Schedule from “Public Works — Extraordinary” to “Public Works — Non-Recurrent”, and also in the Schedule to reverse the order of Public Works—Extraordinary and Commodity Control. The Head, Commodity Control, is Head 52.

With regard to the Public Works—Non-Recurrent, Head 53, it will be necessary to insert the Schedule of Works which is in the Finance Committee’s report. I think we should get that on record. In the printed Estimates there was no breakdown of the figure for Public Works—Non-Recurrent. The Schedule of Works was approved by the Finance Committee. I therefore think it would be advisable for the whole Council to endorse the Schedule of Works as well, as it will appear in the printed Estimates. Although the figure of \$585,000 was inserted there was no Head in the Estimates showing what the works were. The Schedule of Works approved by the Finance Committee appears in the report.

The Chairman: It was laid on the Table and it was adopted. Is it necessary to put it again?

The Financial Secretary: Out of abundant caution I think it would be wise to do so.

The Chairman: The question is that Head 53—Public Works — Non-Recurrent—be carried out at \$585,000. It takes in a breakdown of the figures which appear in the report of the Finance Committee.

Agreed to.

Head passed.

Preamble—

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that in the first and second lines of the Preamble to the Appropriation Bill the words “forty-seven million, one hundred thousand, nine hundred and fifty-seven dollars” be amended to read “forty-seven million, four hundred and fifty-six thousand, eight hundred and ninety-nine dollars.” The increase results from the alterations which were made in the Finance Committee and adopted in this Council.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Financial Secretary: Secondly, I move that in the fifth, sixth and seventh lines of the Preamble the words “four million, nine hundred and one thousand, two hundred and ninety-four dollars” be amended to read “four million, nine hundred and one thousand, three hundred forty-five dollars.”

The Financial Secretary: Thirdly, I beg to move that in the ninth, tenth and eleventh lines of the Preamble the words “forty-two million, one hundred and ninety-nine thousand, six hundred and sixty-three dollars” be amended to read “forty-two million, five hundred and fifty-five thousand, five hundred and forty-five dollars.”

Amendment passed.

Clause 2.—*Accountant General to defray expenses of Civil Government.*

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the words “forty-two million, one hundred and ninety-nine thousand, six hundred and sixty-three dollars” in the fifth and sixth lines of Clause 2 be amended to read “forty-two million, five hundred and fifty-five thousand, five hundred and forty-five dollars.”

Agreed to.

Council resumed.

REVISED FINANCIAL POSITION

The Financial Secretary: As a result of the consideration of the Estimates in the Finance Committee and recently in this Council, the Estimate of Expenditure has been increased to \$47,456,899. The Estimate of Revenue which appears in the printed Estimates is \$47,101,690, which means that on the Estimates the deficit for the year would be \$355,209.

That is the deficit on the recurrent budget, but with the new taxation proposals the increased yield is estimated at \$2,170,000, and if we take off the deficit of \$355,209 from that there would be a surplus of \$1,814,791. But as far as the Recurrent Estimates are concerned, and not taking into account the effect of the new taxation proposals, there would have been an estimated deficit on the year's working of \$355,209.

I now beg to move that the Appropriation Bill, 1959, as amended in Committee, be read the Third time and passed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time and passed.

The Financial Secretary: The next item on the Order Paper is the Tax (Amendment) Bill which deals with excise duties, and the next one is the Customs (Amendment) Bill which deals with the increase of Customs Duty. In accordance with precedent, I would suggest to Members of Council that we pro-

ceed with the Resolution dealing with the 1959 Development Estimates. That is how we always proceed, and I think we should endeavour to get the Estimates out of the way.

Mr. Tello: I think the suggestion made by the hon. the Financial Secretary is a sound one, and we will accept it.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot hear you.

Mr. Tello: I said that the suggestion of the hon. the Financial Secretary is accepted by the Members on this side of the Table.

Mr. Speaker: If it is the wish of Members, then we may proceed.

DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATES

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the following Motion:

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Estimates of Development Expenditure for the year 1959 which have been laid on the Table, with the amendments recommended in the Report of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council dated 7th February, 1959, totalling twenty-one million, four hundred and fifty-four thousand, six hundred and sixteen dollars as detailed by Heads in the undermentioned Schedule and of the projects therein being financed from the Development Fund Ordinance, 1954.”

I do not wish to take up the time of the Council unduly by going into details and giving Members a long speech on this Motion. I did set out, at great length, in my Budget Speech the rather complicated financial background regarding the financing of the Development Programme.

As I said at the time, the Estimates were presented to this Council to show the need for an expenditure of something like \$21½ million. I also said that this programme for 1959 follows in the main the lines of Sessional Paper for 1956 dealing with the 1956 — 60 Programme. I pointed out that the finance which would be necessary for a programme of this size was not immediately foreseeable.

I also pointed out that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had agreed, and it was ratified by Her Majesty's Government, to an Exchequer Loan of £5½ million which they thought would be sufficient to carry on the programme as planned until the end of 1959.

I also demonstrated that, on the figures of expenditure in 1958 and the physical capacity for spending in 1958, it was unlikely that £5½ million would be enough. We did spend \$1 million less than we had thought in 1958. That does not destroy the validity of my argument that £5½ million as an Exchequer Loan will not be enough to carry on the programme which we can physically deal with in 1959, and that we should be able to convince the Secretary of State for the Colonies about this when the Financial Delegation goes to London later this year.

I also explained the difficulties in the way of utilising the whole of the C. D. & W. allocation because of the short fall in matching funds. I am glad to say that, as a result of representations to the Colonial Office, it looks as though we shall be given sympathetic consideration to proposals for increasing the proportion of C. D. & W. money in certain schemes. In other words, when we have had a fifty-fifty division of expenditure between Colonial Development and Welfare and local funds, the fifty per cent. from C. D. & W. funds will be increased. Although the Government has presented to you Expenditure Estimates of \$21½ million, it is necessary to reserve a certain amount until the financial position becomes clearer.

The items which are down for reservation are clearly shown in the Draft Estimates. From a remark which was made in this Council — I think it was by the hon. Member for Georgetown North — I wish to make it clear that the items are not reserved because the Government is not convinced of their desirability, or is convinced of their undesirability, but because the funds which are in sight cannot guarantee that after the schemes which

will cost \$21½ million in 1959 are started that there will be money to finish them. We hope that there will be money to finish them.

The Government has, therefore, put to this Council the full estimate of expenditure of \$21½ million but I wish to make it quite clear that it will not enter into commitments which would involve expenditure at that level until it is sure that revenue, grants or loans will be available to ensure that schemes are not left half-complete. I do not think I need say anymore. If hon. Members have any points to raise on the Estimates, I am quite sure that the hon. Ministers and myself will do our best to answer them. I beg to move that the Motion be adopted.

The Attorney-General: I beg to second the Motion.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I see that the sum of \$21½ million is mentioned in this Development Budget, but I do not see any specific item here which will ease unemployment and at the same time develop the country. I would have liked to see this Government embarking on a land development and not a land settlement scheme. The Government has already started a land settlement scheme at the Garden of Eden.

The Financial Secretary: May I point out that the item in the Schedule is Land Development and not Land Settlement.

Mr. Speaker: Will you refer to Head XI in the Schedule, please?

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Government has, indeed, embarked to some degree on an ambitious development programme as far as drainage and irrigation is concerned, but Government is shortsighted, if not lacking in knowledge, of what should be done in a drainage and irrigation programme. It is known that a lot of land which now remains in bush could be drained, irrigated and worked.

[MR. JAI NARINE SINGH]

In the Mahaicony/Abary area where drainage and irrigation is available the lands are fully developed. The British Guiana Rice Development Corporation has a lot of land in that area, but some farmers are afraid to plant small crops in that area because they fear that their crops will be injured by water.

Government has several hundred acres of land in the Boerasirie area, a part of which is planted and the balance remains in bush. Unless Government takes some positive action to see that those areas are put under the plough they will remain in bush. Government has not yet completed the Boerasirie project, but I understand that it is now embarking on the Tacama project in Essequibo. Government should not run all over the place. Let us build up one section at a time. A lot of land is filled with pegasse, and it is time that we put the plough into it. Government should complete one project before embarking on another one and not knowing where the development will take it. Government seems to be acting like the wandering minstrel, not knowing where to sing its song or to find the people who want to be put on the land.

I feel that Government must be practical in its approach to this development problem or programme. I am sorry Mr. Campbell is not here, so that he could speak about Amerindian development. We have over 20,000 Amerindians in British Guiana, and Government has only provided the paltry sum of \$62,000 to assist them. This is certainly something which is not in keeping with the best traditions of our community.

I notice that we have given Radio Demerara \$30,000.

Radio Demerara cannot be regarded as development as we know it under the Development Programme, but we have been giving Radio Demerara \$30,000 for the last 10 years. This contribution was to come to a close in 1953 but it still continues. Yet the poor Amerindian still remains poor, and an Amerindian is a

member of the community whose voice cannot be very forcibly heard.

I see that we have \$1 million to be spent on Housing. In the Finance Committee I suggested that land at East and West Ruinveldt should be made available to people in and around Georgetown in order that they may be able to build their own homes, for that I think is a practical solution to the terrible housing shortage that now exists. We cannot proceed with development on a hand-to-mouth basis, going to the United Kingdom every now and again hat in hand to be told yes or no.

It must be done on a surer basis — in a long-term way. The Government says "When we go on a money mission again we are going to get the money". Last year we heard the cry that the Development Programme would come to a standstill because no money was there, but at the end of the year we heard the Financial Secretary say we will have \$1 million extra. I suppose I will hear that I am wrong.

The Financial Secretary: The hon. Member is wrong, but let him continue.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Pardon me? I feel there is not this proper or sure footing on which to move forward. It seems to me we are living on a day-to-day basis; we have no definite promise of a loan. I do not see in this Budget where we are going to produce more. We are marking time, standing still or at other times going backwards, but very few times going forward. This Budget lacks imagination, deep thinking and it is merely what may be termed a Development Budget based on Government Departments marking time throughout current times.

Mr. Beharry: The hon. Member referred to the land development policy of the present Government as being rather like a wandering minstrel. I am wondering if he has not been highly irrelevant and unrealistic in his evaluation of the land development policy of the Government. Never before in the history of

this country has there been a more realistic approach by any Government towards the proper utilization and development of land in this country, and the agricultural production figures bear this out very forcibly.

I do not like to repeat myself, but in speaking in the debate on the recurrent Estimates I dealt very extensively with our agricultural production which reflected the agricultural policy, and which, in turn, reflected land utilization and development.

The hon. Member says that we have not been carrying out land development. I should like to remind the hon. Member, or, shall I say, he lacks knowledge of the Development Programme that is being carried out. Over \$14 million is being spent to develop 27,000 acres of land in the Corentyne area and to settle 17,000 families. Yet the hon. Member says he cannot see anything in this Development Programme that will give people employment. Either he has not been studying the Development Programme or he pretends to be ignorant of it.

It does not necessarily mean that over a thousand families will have work, but every time a settler is placed on the land he, in turn, provides work for three or four other persons. This year 4,000 acres will be brought into development.

If the hon. Member for Georgetown South would look at the Development Estimates he would see that \$1 million is set aside for minor drainage and irrigation works. For the benefit of this hon. Member I will explain what is meant by "minor drainage and irrigation works", lest he be confused when we reach this head. Government has realized the necessity to settle people quickly on the land, so there has been an acceleration of minor drainage and irrigation works whereby farmers can be settled very quickly with very little drainage and irrigation. There are several new schemes listed in the Programme with respect to minor drainage and irrigation works, which the hon. Member did not trouble

himself to examine before making sweeping statements. Of course I do not blame him. He is noted for making—

Mr. Jai Narine Singh : Sweeping statements?

Mr. Beharry : Not sweeping statements, but irresponsible statements. I have always said that I welcome criticism. I would like to say that I am not the repository of all knowledge and I can benefit from criticism. But one has been witnessing in this Committee during the past few weeks criticism that is not constructive, but is designed to play to the gallery. I want to put the hon. Member on the right track so he can realize that in this Development Programme there has been provision for the agricultural development of this country. To say that there has not been provision for agricultural development of the country would be a negation of the truth.

With respect to the generalizations of the hon. Member on the Development Programme I will leave the other aspects to my colleagues who are more conversant with the various items under their portfolios, but I would like to impress upon the Council that in the field of land development and drainage and irrigation which the hon. Member mentioned in his speech, he has either been misinformed or he has not bothered himself to study the Development Programme, otherwise he would have realized that provision has been made to accelerate the agricultural development of our country.

Mr. Tello : I am sorry the hon. Minister seeks to claim all the credit for the acceleration of the Development Programme, because he contradicts his colleague, the hon. the Financial Secretary, who went out of his way and in a quiet manner to remind this Council that actually we are dealing with the completion of the Development Programme which commenced since 1956.

Mr. Beharry : If the hon. the Financial Secretary said that we are dealing

[MR. BEHARRY]

with the Development Programme, the completion of which started in 1956, I would say that is an incorrect statement, because the Black Bush Polder Scheme did not commence until 1957 or early in 1958. Therefore it is incorrect to make such a statement.

Mr. Tello : I wish the hon the Financial Secretary would correct me, because I know that the bulk of this Development Programme we are asked to approve commenced in 1956. It was planned in 1956 and implementation of parts of it actually commenced in 1957. Land Development is not an overnight matter. I am not trying to take credit away from the Minister who has accelerated parts of the programme and revised some of the allocations, but one must be very careful in claiming all the credit and, as it were, playing to the gallery and the headlines. We must be more careful in our statements when we attempt to correct others. I have a great deal of admiration for the Minister of Natural Resources who was wise enough to recognize those sections of the four-year programme which were in the best interest of British Guiana, regardless of who started them, and he had the political wisdom and vision to see their economic value to the Colony as a whole. I congratulate him on selecting those sections which need acceleration, and I endorse what he has done.

We cannot possibly develop a proper agricultural programme without a drainage and irrigation scheme, and I agree with the Minister that it was necessary to undertake the minor works so as to assist the small farmers who could not take care of that expenditure, and let them divide the major drainage schemes. That is to the credit of the Government and particularly to the Minister, but I want to say that it is not fair to take all the credit for this Government.

I have some respect for the opinions of the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh) who is trained in agriculture, and he seems to think that the allocation of the expendi-

ture under the programme was not sufficiently thought out. He seems to think that while Government proposes to embark on tremendous expenditure on the Corentyne, an already prosperous part of the Colony, so as to make it a little more prosperous, the programme becomes unbalanced because there are large areas that have not reached that stage of development.

For instance, on the East Bank of Demerara where there is not much to offer by way of employment, Government has purchased the large estate of Garden of Eden, the development of which is still at the paper stage. Government must realise its responsibilities to the Colony as a whole, and if there is a five-year programme for development of the Colony as a whole the over-all picture must be taken into consideration.

I therefore think we are quite correct in reminding the Minister and the Government that they are pursuing the easy and beaten track. What they have done is to follow in the footsteps of the first Interim Government and select what was easy to follow and what was of political value, not paying due regard to the economic value.

Between the periods of the first and second Interim Governments there has been a tremendous increase in unemployment, and we feel that inasmuch as it is a five-year programme, each year the Government should revise its programme, and we thought that a portion of the money might have been channelled to housing, because it is known that in the urban area of Georgetown 22 per cent. of the employable people are unemployed. I would not say that Government has not done some revision. It has expended a large sum of money in public works, in spite of the fact that its engineers have forgotten how to build roads, houses, sea defences and trenches, but it has made no move to find money to provide houses for the people, to give them a greater degree of respectability, improve their standard of living and provide means of employment for the artisans.

I am not here to criticize the Government just for the sake of criticism, but I feel that inasmuch as it took the trouble to revise the Development Programme it should have taken into consideration the over-all interests of the Colony.

There is the question of rural electrification. The Minister of Natural Resources, supported by the Minister of Trade and Industry, said that the great problem is to keep the man in the country happy in the country, but they want to keep him in perpetual darkness. How is he going to stay in the country when the blinking lights in the City are attracting him? In their anxiety to push the Development Programme the Ministers have probably forgotten these things. We read in the Press that efforts are being made to solve this problem. We live in hope. We feel that it is the responsibility of the Government to put up a Development Programme for the Colony as a whole. The Financial Secretary made a very strong point when he said that he had not access to all the money required, and that there was need to raise money elsewhere. A Development Programme on paper means nothing without money. We recognize that there are means of raising money which are very helpful to the masses, but there are other means which are rather painful, and do not take into consideration the large army of unemployed.

The means proposed to be pursued to raise \$2 million, or part of it, comes at a very grievous time. How much faith, how much interest will people have in a Development Programme that keeps them on a starvation basis until such time as the fruits of development can be harvested? Government's taxation proposals have brought sleepless nights to the community as a whole, especially the small working people who, through no fault of their own, find the cost of living rising at a time when in almost every family there is the extraordinary burden of carrying the unemployed, and at a time when Government and private enterprise join together in a retrenchment

programme. That is the psychological moment that this Government has sought to increase the cost of living by taxing certain almost indispensable commodities used very extensively by the ordinary man. My friend referred to beer, but I am sorry that certain people take such a long time to understand simple language.

The Chairman: Do not bother about that; proceed.

Mr. Tello: I know that some people cannot come down to my language. I say it is most unfortunate that there is a great deal of merit in some of the complaints against the Development Programme. I agree that what the Government is doing about developing land is necessary. I agree with the object of the programme, but I say it is unfortunate that Government should seek the most oppressive means in raising money to accomplish something that is creditable.

One can be as right as he is wrong, and I think the acceleration of the work done by the Drainage and Irrigation Department on land development, however unbalanced it is, can lose its creditable value because the means used for raising the money is wrong. It is necessary to convince the people concerned that their interests are being taken care of. I doubt, in this case, that Government has demonstrated such interest.

At the proper time I will criticize the various items in the Development Estimates. I will say at this stage that the Development Programme is almost nullified by the means Government proposes to use in order to get money. I know that three Bills will be brought before this Council in order to collect money by the means which have been suggested. I know that there is an Order in Council that has authorised the collection of money already, but I am saying that it will be placed on our Statute Book when the three Bills are passed. I warn certain Members of this Council that we are going to oppose them.

[MR. TELLO]

I feel that Government can raise the money without tampering with the standard of living of the community as a whole. Having fallen down on certain matters, I think Government is now acting unfair and unkind to the community as a whole and that some of the laudable proposals have lost their true value. I had better not mention these items individually.

I hope there is no intention of rushing through the discussion on the Development Estimates, because I feel that the Minister concerned has given each item considerable thought and will be able to explain matters to us. I think that Members of this Council should be given every opportunity to criticize what has been done in secret conclaves, so that we can endorse a Development Programme which everyone will be proud of.

I think it is quite safe to say that Government has done well by keeping to the beaten track. It has done well in following the Development Programme initiated by the first Interim Government, and I believe that what Government is now attempting to do will be beneficial to the Colony as a whole.

Mr. Davis: Let me remind the hon. Minister of Natural Resources that he proposes to spend large sums of money on land that is not clear of bush. The providing of drainage and irrigation is merely the first step in preparing land. I understand that it is costing Government \$410 per acre to develop the land at Mara. We do not know how much it will cost Government to develop the Garden of Eden, because a lot of bush has been allowed to grow there again and people have not yet been able to settle on the land.

It is true that we can look forward to good prospects from the Black Bush area. The point made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, as to whether we should spend large sums of money in an area which is already pros-

perous is a matter for some further thought. However, I believe that the decision to develop the Black Bush area was taken long before this Government took office.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources has informed us that by the end of this year he is going to put under actual cultivation 4,000 acres of land, and a further amount will be brought under cultivation for settlers next year. That takes me back to the point I made earlier: what is Government going to do with the areas now filled with bush?

Only last week at the meeting of the Drainage Board I received a certain amount of information. Besides the area of land to be cultivated with rice, there are about 6,000 acres at the back of Port Mourant now under the plough. There is also another 17,000 acres earmarked for cattle. My opinion is that a portion of this land has been "squatted on" and brought under the plough.

In the Block III area which is separate and distinct from the Black Bush Polder area, another 13,000 acres have been taken over for rice cultivation, but we have not yet heard a word from Government with regard to the system of milling to be employed in the area. That is a very serious matter, and it should not be delayed.

I think we should be given a White Paper or a statement from Government as to what is its intention with regard to the very important phases of the Development Programme for this Colony.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources referred to his drainage schemes, and mentioned some of his minor drainage schemes. Some of them are very worthy, but some of us fear that others are only palliatives. I will refer to one which I am very familiar with. I know that the people in the Mahaica Creek area are subject to a lot of adversities. During heavy rainfall their lands are inundated. The moment the conservancy at Lama gets full and the people in charge of it feel that the

dams are likely to be threatened, they open the large locks and throw the water on to the lands in the Mahaica area. The water rises overnight as much as between 1½ ins. to 2 ins. The palliative that has been applied to this particular scheme is that there is money provided in the Development Programme for cutting a canal at the back of Mahaica right on to the Garden of Eden in the hope of relieving the water from the conservancy. I am sure this will be a palliative or measure of relief to the people living in the Mahaica area, but, I submit, that it is not the answer to their difficulties. In the time of drought, what will happen?

A few weeks ago Government sent irrigators up there to pump water from the Mahaica Creek into the conservancy so that the people in Georgetown as well as "King Sugar" could get a water supply on the East Coast. I am sure the hon. Minister is aware of these things because it is his constituency. When there is no water it is necessary to pump water into the conservancy, and when there is too much water it has to be removed from the conservancy.

Due to these pumping operations, the sea water has now gone well past the back of the Biabu section up the river, I think the hon. Minister knows about this matter, because the people went to him with tears in their eyes. He gave them a palliative, because the District Commissioner sent out a launch with a few gallons of water which is being rationed.

Now those are things that concern us. We feel that sometimes these development schemes, laudable as they are, expend money which develop the hard-pressed areas in only a little way, and so the people there do not get relief.

I would like to touch briefly on the question of housing. In this direction there is to be spent more than \$891,160. One should not be inclined to feel that after this money is spent the problems of housing will relieve themselves. It is my

view that enough money has not been spent on this phase of the Development Programme, and when I consider that the figure I just referred to is to be divided between rural and urban housing, I feel that we are not even beginning to tackle the shortage.

My friend, the hon. Member, Mr. Tello, has already touched on rural electrification. The amount to be spent on that is \$36,000. This whole programme of rural electrification seems to be thrown back easily 10 years. Are we being fair to the people in the rural areas? Are we being fair to the people who work the soil and contribute so considerably to our country's economy? The answer is there for all to see: we are not pushing ahead with this particular side of the development programme as many including myself would like to see.

It is proposed to spend on livestock, through the activities of the Ebini and St. Ignatius Agricultural Stations and the Abattoir at Lethem, the sum of \$157,000, and it is my view that we are playing with this livestock question.

The other day I had a discussion with a very well-known man in this country, and we seemed to have arrived at this conclusion that two products which need expansion and encouragement here are livestock and coconuts. I give all credit to Government for what it is doing to encourage the coconut industry, but when it comes to livestock, I am not impressed. The expert, Dr. Mann left a very important Report. I hope that when the Ministers concerned are ready they will be able to find it — I cannot remember it being laid on the Table. I know, however, that the Report is available because I asked for a copy and have read it.

The Government found solace in a minor section of the Report, but the other recommendations of the Report in my view are likely to be the basis of considerable improvement to many aspects of the livestock industry. Those, Mr. Chairman, are vital points in a situation

[MR. DAVIS]

where Government is to spend \$21½ million on the Development Programme and only a measly sum out of that is to go to the industries to which I have made reference.

The Minister of Trade and Industry: (Dr. Jagan): Hon. Members have criticized the Government's Development Programme, and one in particular mentioned the fact that this Government was merely following in the footsteps of the Interim Government. It should be noted again that no Government coming immediately after another can make a complete break with the past, so far as economical matters are concerned. We can only do that when we have a revolution—a bloody one at that—and even revolutions sometimes cannot produce a complete break with the past. Therefore, we admit that we have to continue in some of the footsteps of the Interim Government.

Not because we love to do so. Obviously there are many things which the Interim Government did that were good: good in the sense that they provided houses for people who had no houses, and promised them other things.

But we must not only look at the trees — we must see the forest as a whole. It must be accepted that the Interim Government was not primarily concerned with the economic foundations of the country but with the political problems of the day. Therefore, if they made provision for houses and made other promises, these were in keeping with the political circumstances of the day.

We should go back further, to 1952, when the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development clearly and unmistakably suggested that what was necessary in this country was development in the productive sector of the economy, even if at the expense of the social sector. That was clear. But what do we find? A great deal of emphasis was placed on the social sector, and also on public security.

The Police Force was nearly doubled in strength, the vote rising from \$1½ million to \$3 million, and we had an Army on our backs for which the people of this country have to pay today. The P.P.P. did not start all this—all these seeds were sown by the previous Government, which was in a fortunate position since money was no object.

I remember that when the International Bank Mission came here its members said that in the next five years to come the Programme would rise to about \$66 million in cost. After the P.P.P. was thrown out of office Mr. Lyttelton (now Lord Chandos) got up in the House of Commons and said that Her Majesty's Government was determined to do as much as possible as soon as possible, and worthwhile schemes of development would not be held up for lack of money.

However, when the P.P.P. came into office the first time Sir Alfred Savage kept saying, "Where are we going to find the money?" The political situation became very hot, the P.P.P. Government was thrown out of office, and we found that very soon \$44 million was found for the Development Programme which was later to cost \$91 million spreading over five years.

Certainly, the Interim Government was in a position to throw money away lavishly on housing, super highways, rural central rice mills, Milk Pasteurisation Plant, etc. For the latter we have to pay \$140,000 a year to meet the deficit. Then there is a Cadillac-style Telecommunications building which has cost nearly a million dollars. We are not interested in the next 60 years; we are interested in solving the problems which the country is facing today.

Hon. Members have referred to the question of unemployment. Who does not know about this? It is not a new problem. I have told the British people on T.V. and on the radio of the unemployment problem in this country. It is not something new. In 1945 Dr. Giglioli wrote a report on the incidence of

malaria and its likely eradication by D.D.T., and the necessity to plan a campaign among the people around the sugar plantations. Today we are reaping the harvest—5,000 unemployed in the sugar industry within a period of five years. Members seem to be quarrelling over a bone.

The Minister of Natural Resources referred to the drainage and irrigation projects, and Members on the opposite side seem to think that he is claiming too much credit, and therefore they want to put it back into the lap of the Interim Government. But let us not forget that if the Hutchinson schemes were put through, or an early start was made with some of them (Mr. Hutchinson submitted his first report in 1950) we would not have been faced with the serious unemployment problem we have today. Indeed, we may not have had to embark on the Black Bush scheme to which Mr. Hutchinson was opposed, because he felt, perhaps rightly, that it would create little islands and cause flooding in other areas, and that the quicker we got down to solving our major water control problems the better for all concerned.

I have said in this Council that in the old days we were the strongest champions of the Hutchinson drainage and irrigation schemes. Why now quarrel about the bone—the Black Bush Polder? Who started it, and who did it? Had the advice of Mr. Hutchinson and the P.P.P. been heeded in the early days we would have gone a far way towards the solution of this unemployment problem which is hitting us today. On the question of unemployment Mr. McGale found that we had in 1956 an unemployment figure of 17.3 per cent., and the Financial Secretary will tell you that I probably lost my temper and told the Secretary of State for the Colonies that this country's problems were his and the British Government's responsibility, and that if there were 17 per cent unemployed in England he would not be occupying the position of a Minister, but they expected us to be sitting here with this growing problem

and running the Government with our hands tied.

With an unemployment figure of 17.3 per cent., we have our population increasing, and between 6,000 and 7,000 children leaving school per year. We were told in the World Bank Mission's report in 1952 that the situation would become more acute after 1960 because we would then begin to reap the real harvest of the D.D.T. campaign which was started in 1945. A child normally leaves the primary school at the age of 15 years, and the natural increase in our population at the moment is 16,500 a year. The P.P.P. did not create those figures, nor did it create unemployment.

Members have spoken about housing. Mr. Higginbotham came here as Housing Adviser to the Government in 1954 and told us in his report that for the 10-year period, 1954—1964, we needed 50,000 houses—30,000 to take care of the backlog, and 2,000 houses per year to meet the needs of new people and also to replace houses which are decrepit or broken down. Certainly, the Interim Government spent a lot of money on housing. It spent between 12 and 14 million dollars, and 4,000 houses were supposed to have been built. We were not opposed to the building of houses, or for that matter to rural electrification or the building of hospitals, but it has always been our view that if you have a little money you have to spend it in the productive sector, and that is what we are now trying to do. We are trying to change the course of things a little. Obviously we cannot change it too rapidly because the gear has been set. When we stop spending money on housing in order to find money for development work we are told we are creating unemployment. Our view is not that housing and hospitals are not necessary, but if we have a small sum of money we should at least spend it wisely, as the World Bank Mission advised in 1952, and that is what this Government is attempting to do at the moment—to spend it wisely.

[DR. JAGAN]

People criticize us for making promises and using high-sounding phrases, but my friend was a Member of the Interim Government, and I am wondering who made more promises. The G.I.S. is being criticised as being the mouthpiece of the P.P.P. As far as I remember one Member of the Interim Government used the G.I.S. in such a manner that one would have thought he was Propaganda Minister instead of the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing. It was the Interim Government which promised a lot of things — rural electrification, hospitals, etc. There was no provision in the Development Programme for hospitals, yet a week or two before the last Election we saw in the newspapers a sketch of a wonderful structure. In fact, I understand that even the architect was given *carte blanche* to go ahead with a plan for another Cadillac-style structure.

We have not enough money to go ahead with the rural electrification scheme which is estimated to cost \$7 million and was dependent not only upon the purchase of the Demerara Electric Company's plant but upon the extension of the City's electricity supply, without which it cannot work. But what happened? We have not purchased, we have not extended the service, and the lamp-posts are still up. We are following in the footsteps of the Interim Government by all means. We cannot uproot the posts; we have to leave them there. One Member remarked that this is a second Interim Government. Of course, the Colonial Office is still bossing the show. It is the second Interim Government.

We have a lot of things in the Development Programme including 16 or 17 million dollars set aside for the construction of an East Coast highway. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam is not here, but I suppose it would have been called the Kendall Highway. Nearly a million dollars have been spent on surveys and research, and we are now told that the highway will cost something in the vicinity of \$32 million. I can go on to elaborate many of these things. The

rural electrification scheme cannot go through now—why? Because the British Government has refused to allow this Government to purchase the Demerara Electric Company's plant which it had agreed to before. How are we to do it—by magic? How are we to provide electricity for the people in the rural areas? If the Demerara Electric Co. continues to operate it is most likely that it will not be economic to pursue the rural electrification scheme, because it was anticipated that the profits from the Georgetown service would be utilized to subsidize the rural scheme which would be an uneconomic undertaking, but realizing the needs of the people in the rural areas one was prepared to make a package deal if H.M. Government could be persuaded to change its mind.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Is this a pronouncement from the Government, Sir?

Dr. Jagan: It is possible for one to go on and on discussing these points. Suffice it to say that the Government is trying and taking hard political decisions. No one can deny that. One hon. Member has suggested that we have taken a bold decision, especially in regard to the potato tax. We are prepared to take bold decisions even though they may not be politically palatable, because we need a lot of finance for the future improvement of this country.

Somebody has to do that sometimes. We are not only looking at votes as some people do. We feel that it is absolutely necessary at this time to take the decision which we have taken. We are carrying out examinations in the hope of making or effecting an economy in the programme.

In the Finance Committee we endeavoured to cut down expenditure as much as possible. We hope to carry out investigations in the Department to see where economies can be made. It is hard to pull down a structure after it has been put up, but we will endeavour to do our best in this respect.

Some Members are not in favour with the taxation proposals, but Govern-

ment has no other alternative. If we do not tax the people we will not be able to carry on the Development Programme. Out of the \$16½ million we expect to get \$2½ million from taxation. If there was no taxation we would not have money to spend this year.

Some people say that a country can be developed by borrowing money instead of resorting to taxation. Every school boy knows that when you borrow money you have to pay interest and sinking fund charges on it. So far as we are concerned, we need a big Development Programme because we know that it is the only way in which we can solve not only the problem of unemployment, but the problem of education and so on.

So far as the problem of education is concerned, the Nicol Committee submitted a report some time ago on this matter. As time goes by our problems will become greater and greater. It was suggested that there should be a shift system introduced in the schools, but Government has not adopted this system. Government is continuing with its school building programme and doing everything possible to accommodate the increasing number of children. Therefore I do not think, in the light of our difficult financial position, that Government has done badly.

Hon. Members know that this Government approached the Colonial Office in order to get a large loan. It is also known that a Bank was prepared to loan British Guiana a large sum of money but the British Government refused to guarantee the loan. The World Bank was approached, and it was agreed that an expert would pay a visit to this Colony and examine conditions relating to our Development Programme and so on.

The Delegation which left this Colony also interviewed bankers in New York, and we found that it was not possible to raise a loan at the time. The position is now changed, and we are hoping that in the very near future we will have the wherewithal to help our people.

However, it cannot be done even if we borrowed money at a low rate of 2 per cent. or have a moratorium for five or 10 years. I remember when His Excellency came back from England and gave a radio talk he said that if we had to borrow the money we would have to pay a great deal of interest. He was referring to the Swiss Bank Corporation's offer. We are aware of all the difficulties in which this Government has to work at the moment, and in spite of them we are doing whatever we can not only to serve in the short-term but in the long-term, and to lay a foundation for the development of this country.

The Financial Secretary: I do not think I need to reply to some statements made, especially after the speech of the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry; I do not think there is any question asked by Members that requires an answer, and I therefore move that the question be now put.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I want to ask the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry if he is going to get money at 2 per cent.

Mr. Tello: We would like an assurance that the Council will go into Committee to deal with the Schedule and Heads.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I move that the Council go into Committee to consider properly this Development Programme Head by Head.

The Chief Secretary: Is it proper to move that we go into Committee after a reply has been given?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, but we cannot deal with the Heads here, because I cannot permit Members to speak any more on the Motion. But I cannot deny Members an opportunity to comment on the Schedule.

Mr. Tello: I second the Motion.

Mr. Speaker: There is a Motion that we go into Committee so that the Heads can be taken one by one.

Question put, and agreed to.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

AGRICULTURE

The Chairman: Now that we are in Committee I ask Members not to repeat what has been said on the Motion. There is no point in duplicating the long speeches already made.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I do not propose to do that, but I see it is five minutes before eleven o'clock.

The Chairman: We can pass the Heads.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Not Agriculture.

The Chairman : I do not know how to take Members seriously. They say they want to get through but every time I make an effort to get on with it the business is not pushed. I cannot do more.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: The clock is striking eleven and I am asking that the adjournment be taken now. I move that Council resume.

The Chief Secretary: I am afraid we

shall have to sit next week from 2 to 7 p.m.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I ask members on the other side of the Table to speak loudly. We speak loudly on this side, but we do not hear Members on the other side.

The Chairman: When proposals are to be made the Speaker should be consulted before he comes into Council.

The Chief Secretary: I am sorry, Sir, I was unable to consult you before. We should have sat tomorrow, but we have to give up tomorrow because certain Members on the other side have other engagements. There is a great deal of work to be done, and the Attorney-General is going on leave. I am afraid it will be necessary for us to sit from 2 to 7 p.m. at least from Tuesday to Friday next week.

The Chairman : I am quite prepared to sit from 2 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, and then we shall discuss about the other days.

Council resumed and adjourned until Tuesday, 10th March, at 2 p.m.