

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)
Order in Council, 1953)

THURSDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER, 1954

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C., in the Chair.

PRESENT

His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C.

Ex-Officio Members;—

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. F. D. Jakeway, O.B.E. (acting).

The Hon. the Attorney-General,
Mr. G. M. Farnum (acting).

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. W. O. Fraser, O.B.E.

Nominated Members of Executive Council :—

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid, C.M.G., C.B.E. (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E. (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development).

The Hon. G. H. Smellie.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj.

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

Deputy Speaker:—

Mr. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E.

Nominated Officials :—

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

Nominated Unofficials :—

Mr. W. A. Phang.

Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E.

Mr. C. A. Carter.

Mr. E. F. Correia.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb.

Mr. H. Rahaman.

Miss Gertrude H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dev

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

Lt. Col. E. J. Haywood, M.B.E., T.D.

Mr. R. B. Jailal.

Mr. Sugrim Singh.

Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. H. H. Tross (acting).

Absent :—

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Member for Labour, Health and Housing).
—on leave.

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works).

Mr. T. Lee.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.—on leave.

The Speaker read prayers.

1955 Housing Demonstration 31st SEPTEMBER, 1954 in Jamaica 1100

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, the 6th of August, 1954, as printed and circulated were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOUSING DEMONSTRATION IN JAMAICA

Mr. Speaker: I have to announce that leave of absence has been granted to the hon. Member for Labour, Health and Housing (Mr. Cummings) to enable him to go to Jamaica on public business—to attend a Housing Demonstration as this Colony's delegate. He has asked for leave as from the 3rd of September until his return to the Colony, which he estimates as sixteen days.

The hon. Mr. Luckhoo is engaged in business elsewhere and hopes to be able to attend tomorrow, if we sit.

The hon. Member for Communications and Works (Mr. Kendall) is also absent and has asked for leave as from today to the 16th. He is remaining within the Colony. I think he has gone to the North West District.

REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

The following documents were laid on the table:

Minutes of Meeting of Finance Committee held on the 29th of July, 1954.

Schedules of Supplementary Provision (Development) for the months of May, June and July, 1954.

Schedules of Supplementary Estimates for the months of June (2) and July, 1954.

The Annual Report of the Post Office Savings Bank for the financial year ended December 31, 1953.

Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1954—Certificate and Report of the Director General of Colonial Audit on the Accounts of

British Guiana for the year ended 31st December, 1952, together with the Governor's comments thereon.

Order in Council No. 45 of 1954 made under Section 8 (b) of the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1952 (No. 69) on the 17th of August, 1954, and published in the *Gazette* of the 28th of August, 1954.

Order in Council No. 46 of 1954 made under Section 8(b) of the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1952 (No. 69) on the 18th of August, 1954, and published in the *Gazette* of the 4th of September, 1954.

Statement of Loans from voted expenditure written-off during the year ended 31st December, 1953.

Audited Statements of Accounts of the Controller of Supplies and Prices for the year ended 31st December, 1953.—(The Financial Secretary).

The Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1953, of the Cane Grove-La Bonne Mere Land Settlement Agricultural Assistance Scheme together with the Director of Audit's certificate and report thereon.

The Draft Crown Lands (Amendment) Regulations 1954.—(The Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Annual Report of the Registrar of Trade Unions for the year 1953.—(The Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines on behalf of the Member for Labour, Health and Housing).

The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Local Government for the year 1953.—(The Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development).

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Chief Secretary: I give notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intitled—

“An Ordinance to amend the undesirable publications (Prohibition of Importation) Ordinance, 1953.”

I would like to take this Bill through all its stages tomorrow. It has been published in the *Gazette* since the 28th of August.

The Attorney-General: On behalf of the Member for Labour, Health and Housing I give notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled—

"An Ordinance further to amend the Cinematograph Ordinance with respect to the granting of Licences."

I may say that as we go further along the Order Paper I shall ask leave to withdraw a similar Bill which is down on the Order Paper.

CUSTOMS ORDER IN COUNCIL,
NO. 45 OF 1954

The Financial Secretary gave notice of the following motions:—

That this Council in terms of Section 9 of the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1952 (No. 69) confirms Order in Council No. 45 of 1954, which was made on the 17th of August, 1954, and published in the *Gazette* of the 28th of August, 1954.

CUSTOMS ORDER IN COUNCIL,
NO. 46 OF 1954

That this Council in terms of Section 9 of the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1952 (No. 69) confirms Order in Council No. 46 of 1954, which was made on the 18th of August, 1954, and published in the *Gazette* of the 4th of September, 1954.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES FOR
JUNE AND JULY, 1954

That this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates for June (2) and July, 1954, which have been laid on the table.

SUPPLEMENTARY DEVELOPMENT
ESTIMATES FOR MAY—JULY, 1954

That this Council approves of the Supplementary Development Estimates

for May, June and July, 1954, which have been laid on the table.

CROWN LANDS (AMENDMENT)
REGULATIONS, 1954

Sir Frank McDavid (Member for Agriculture, Forests and Lands and Mines) gave notice of the following motion—

That this Council approves of the Crown Lands (Amendment) Regulations, 1954, which have been laid on the table.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

REFUND OF TAX DUTY TO DIOCESE OF
GUIANA

Lt.-Col. Haywood: I give notice of the following motion—

That this Council recommends to Government the refund to the Diocese of Guiana of the sum of one hundred dollars paid in terms of the Tax Ordinance, 1939, for the Private Bill intituled "An Ordinance to consolidate and amend the law relating to the Diocese of Guiana."

I may say that permission has been obtained from His Excellency the Governor to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Orders to enable me to proceed with it today.

ABOLITION OF CONTROLS

Mr. Raatgever: I would like to find out when it is proposed to discuss the motion relating to the abolition of Controls, notice of which was given by the hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo, some time ago. The matter is very urgent, because the Controller of Supplies is creating a very intolerable condition with the commercial community. Unless something is done immediately, I am afraid, I will not be able to answer for what may happen. I ask that the matter be placed on the Order Paper as early as possible.

Mr. Speaker: It cannot be done in the way envisaged, and the hon. Member is not here.

Mr. Raatgever: I have his permission to say what I have said. If it is put on the Order Paper I would press him to be here.

Mr. Speaker: He is engaged presently in a public trial and cannot leave the Court. I would suggest that the matter be laid over to be dealt with as one of urgency.

LOYALTY OF VILLAGE OVERSEERS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Ramphal: Before we proceed to the Order of the Day I crave your permission and the indulgence of the Council to refer to a report which I was asked to bring to this Council on the 14th August by the Village Overseers' Association. I was invited to speak to that Association at No. 64 Village, and at the conclusion of the business with which I was concerned the Association through their President asked me to convey to this Interim Legislature—it is the first time I can recall that any such report has been sent to us and therefore I bring it to the Council—that they pledge their loyalty to this Legislature and ask this Legislature to call upon them at any time to render service, and they are willing without remuneration to carry out any lawful bidding of this Council.

MORE PUBLICITY FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: I would respectfully ask the Council's permission to draw hon. Members' attention to the reports of what takes place in Finance Committee. I have read the Minutes of those meetings myself, the most recent being those of the 29th of July and the 26th of August. It is quite clear that reports of

the proceedings in Finance Committee are not given the degree of publicity in the Press I think they should have, and one of the reasons is that they have not got the staff, but perhaps the greater reason is that they have not the space. Both may be sufficient reasons for the Press but I am anxious that the proceedings of the Finance Committee of this Council which have taken place since its formation and are held *in camera*, should be given greater publicity, because matters of very considerable public importance are dealt with in Finance Committee where a tremendous amount of good work is being done. One only has to see the Minutes of those proceedings to realize that. I think it is a great pity that greater publicity is not given to the important work that is being done. I think a Committee should go into the matter and select for publicity those subjects which are of greater importance. There is no secrecy about the decisions of Finance Committee whose Minutes are in the nature of progress reports, and I think some means should be taken to let it be the policy of the B.P.I. to let the public know more about the proceedings of the Finance Committee which are of very great public importance.

I recognise that hon. Members might prefer to say this themselves, but as an impartial observer I felt it my duty to suggest that some steps be taken to ensure greater publicity of the proceedings of the Finance Committee. I do not know if it can be done in the form of selection. For instance there was the decision in regard to the Boerasirie Extension Project and the circumstances under which the contract for that scheme has been awarded. It is a matter of very great importance. There is also the matter of the affairs of the B.G. Credit Corporation which has been criticised a great deal through ignorance and a lack of sufficient publicity.

I do not know whose duty it is, but I think the hon. the Financial Secretary might see that something is done to give greater publicity to the important work being done in Finance Committee.

The Financial Secretary: I desire to thank you, Sir, for the remarks you have made with regard to greater publicity of the proceedings in Finance Committee, and to say that the Minutes of Finance Committee are laid on the table in this Council from time to time. I think I am also right in saying that copies of those Minutes are sent to the B.P.I. who could select any portions of those Minutes for publicity.

Mr. Speaker: They could, but I think some direction should be given for greater publicity.

The Financial Secretary: I will speak with the Public Information Officer.

Mr. Speaker: The whole idea of a Finance Committee is to prevent lengthy discussions in this Council.

Sir Frank McDavid: The Finance Committee does indeed sit *in camera*, as you have said, Sir, although that particular phrase in that connexion really means that the public is not admitted. It does not mean that the Finance Committee sits in secrecy. At the conclusion of its meetings, as I am sure my colleague will bear me out, a Press *communiqué* is usually issued with respect to important items that have been discussed at those meetings. Indeed representatives of the Press normally attend at the conclusion of a meeting and wait for a Press release. There is only one difficulty—that the Finance Committee cannot make firm decisions because its decisions are subject to the approval of this Council. Consequently a good deal of caution has to be exercised in releasing information to the Press which may be taken as

firm decisions, whereas obviously this Council is the final arbiter and may, as it has on previous occasions, decide otherwise.

Nevertheless, I think that Members will bear me out when I say that important decisions of Finance Committee are duly reproduced in the newspapers on the following day. It is only a matter of discretion as to what is important and what is not important for immediate release. As regards that very important matter to which you referred, Sir—the awarding of the contract for the Boerasirie Extension Project to Sir Lindsay Parkinson & Co.—which, of course, was not approval but merely an announcement in Finance Committee, it did have proper publication in the Press. Later on, when the Minutes of the Finance Committee are actually laid in Council here they then become public documents, and the Press are completely at liberty to take them and publish whatever they like. I never myself thought that important decisions of the Finance Committee do not receive publication, because I think the Press usually exercise great pressure to get them.

Mr. Speaker: Lots of people complain that they do not know what takes place here. There are very much abridged reports of what takes place.

Mr. Raatgever: While it is true that the decisions of Finance Committee have to be brought to this Council, the members of Finance Committee are Members of this Legislature, and in my long years of experience in this Chamber I have never known of the Legislature reversing any decision arrived at in Finance Committee. Therefore, any decision arrived at in Finance Committee can be safely handed to the Press as a decision of the

[Mr. Raatgever]

Legislative Council. It is exactly the same thing. No decision by Finance Committee has ever been rescinded in the Legislature during the years I have sat in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: I think the Press are not in a position to get all the information which I think they should have for publication.

ORDER OF THE DAY

CINEMATOGRAPH (AMENDMENT) BILL WITHDRAWN

The Attorney-General: At the request of the hon. Member for Labour, Health and Housing (Mr. Cummings) I ask leave to withdraw the Bill standing in his name on the Order Paper intituled:

"An Ordinance further to amend the Cinematograph Ordinance with respect to the granting of licences."

Council approved.

SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THE CINEMAS

The last item on the Order Paper was the following motion by Mr. Carter:

"That this Council recommends the enactment of legislation to prohibit the admission of children of school age, that is, between the ages of six and fourteen, to cinemas or other houses of entertainment between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. on such days when schools are in session, except when films or shows are sponsored by educational or cultural organisations with the approval of the Department of Education."

Mr. Carter: I am very happy to see my motion, notice of which was given as long ago as the 16th of February, reach a point on the Order Paper where

it can be discussed, but on my arrival here today I was requested by a few hon. Members to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to permit the debate on the motion to be deferred until the next meeting, as they would like to get some more data in order to deal with the matter extensively. With your permission, Sir, I ask that the debate on the motion be deferred.

Mr. Speaker: We may meet tomorrow. You do not mean tomorrow?

Mr. Carter: No, Sir, tomorrow I will be going to New Amsterdam.

Mr. Speaker: You are asking that it be deferred to a later date. The debate on the hon. Member's motion will be deferred.

REFUND OF TAX DUTY TO DIOCESE OF GUIANA

Lt.-Col. Haywood: I beg to move the suspension of the Standing Orders to proceed with the motion standing in my name as follows:

"That this Council recommends to Government the refund to the Diocese of Guiana of the sum of one hundred dollars paid in terms of the Tax Ordinance, 1939, for the Private Bill intituled an Ordinance to consolidate and amend the law relating to the Diocese of Guiana."

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Orders suspended.

Lt.-Col. Haywood: I wish to commend this motion to hon. Members very briefly: they are not all members of the Anglican Church, but I think that they would all agree it is a religious body doing excellent work in British Guiana, and I think we are all aware that it is in continuous need for funds to carry on its work. For that reason I ask hon. Members to approve of the recommen-

dition that a hundred dollars paid by the Diocese in connection with the Bill which was recently passed be refunded.

Mr. Ramphal: I beg to second that. The sum is exceedingly small, and this recommendation is really a token of appreciation of the work being done by the Churches generally and this one in particular.

Mr. Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak on the motion?

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

The Speaker adjourned the Council to the following day, Friday, September 10, 1954, at 2 p.m.