

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.*Tuesday, 25th October, 1938.*

The Council met at 11 a.m. pursuant to, adjournment, His Excellency the Governor SIR WILFRID JACKSON, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, (Acting), Mr. S. E. Gomes, B.A., (Cantab.).

The Hon. J. S. Dash, Director of Agriculture.

The Hon. E. G. Woolford, K.C. (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. E. F. McDavid, M.B.E., Colonial Treasurer.

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, O.B.E., (Georgetown North).

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E., (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. N. M. Maclennan, Director of Medical Services.

The Hon. M. B. Laing, Commissioner, of Labour and Local Government.

The Hon. G. O. Case, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

The Hon. H. P. Christiani, M.B.E., Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Hon. F. O. Richards, Comptroller of Customs (Acting).

The Hon. L. G. Crease, Director of Education (Acting).

The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E., (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E., (Georgetown South).

The Hon. J. I. De Aguiar (Central Demerara).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus, (Western Berbice).

The Hon. C. R. Jacob (North Western District).

The Hon. A. G. King (Demerara River).

The Hon. J. W. Jackson (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. F. A. Mackey (Nominated Unofficial Member).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 21st day of October, 1938, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

PAPERS LAID.

The following documents were laid on the table:—

Second schedule of additional provision required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the estimates for the year 1938.

Report of the Surgeon-General for the year 1936.

Air Mail Rates.

Eighteenth Annual report of the Imperial War Graves Commission. (*The Colonial Secretary*).

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.**INTRODUCTION OF BILL.**

Notice was given of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill:—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to continue certain Expiring Laws. (*The Colonial Secretary*).

2ND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motion:—

That this Council approves of the Second schedule of additional provision required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the estimates for the year 1938, which has been laid on the table.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO CHURCHES.**

Mr. WOOLFORD gave notice of the following motions:—

Whereas the financial position of the various religious denominations in the Colony is becoming more and more acute;

And whereas the need for substantial

financial assistance is pressing very heavily on such denominations;

And whereas the present revenues of the said denominations do not allow of adequate provision being made for the supply of a full ministry being attached to their bodies or for the necessary maintenance of their Church buildings, manse and schools, and/or for the support of their various missions throughout the Colony;

And whereas it is already provided for by the provisions of Cap. 228, Churches Financial Assistance Ordinance (Ordinance No. 38 of 1920) that there shall be distributed in the year 1945 among the denominations named therein and who were provided for by the Clergy List Ordinance of 1918 the said several sums mentioned therein and amounting in the aggregate to sum of \$693,410;

And whereas the payments of the said sums of money were secured to the said denominations by the issue of Government Bonds bearing interest at the rate of 5 per cent. and payable in the year 1945;

And whereas it is advisable in the interests of the said Churches and of the religious life of the community that the said Bonds should be realised and the proceeds distributed among the said denominations:

Be it Resolved,—That this Council recommends to the Government the advisability of of at once realising the securities representing the provision made for the redemption of the said Government Bonds secured to the said denominations under the terms and provisions of the said Cap. 228, (Ordinance No. 38 of of 1920), and of distributing the said amount by way of grants among the following denominations:—

Church of England,
 ,, Scotland,
 ,, Rome,
 ,, Wesleyan,
 ,, Moravian,
 ,, ,, Lutheran,

The Salvation Army
 and in such amounts as would represent the proportionate part of the total amount that would eventually have become payable to them in the year 1945:

And be it further Resolved,—That this Council recommends to Government the continuance of a payment annually to the said denominations of such sums as would in the aggregate be equivalent to the total amount of interest that would be payable in respect of the said Bonds if they had not been realised.

RECOVERY OF OVERDUE RENTALS.

Whereas there is a conflict of legal opinion in the Colony as to the right of landlords to take into execution the goods and chattels of any other occupier of the premises let by them other than those belonging to their respective tenants;

And whereas there have been many instances recently in which landlords have been unable to recover the rentals due to them by their tenants in cases where the only goods and chattels distrained upon on the demised premises have been found to be the property of sub-tenants who have moreover discharged their obligations to such tenants of the landlords:

Be it Resolved,—That definite necessary statutory legislation be enacted to enable landlords to distrain upon or to take into execution all goods and chattels found on premises occupied by their tenants in satisfaction of any overdue rentals.

TENANTS' COMPENSATION.

Whereas it is desirable that occupiers of premises in which they reside as tenants of their respective landlords should, in the event of their suffering during the period of such tenancies any personal injuries or damage to their personal property caused by or the result of any defective nature or condition of such premises be entitled to recover in a Court of law adequate compensation for any such injuries or damage;

And whereas it is equally desirable that the right to recover such compensation should be conferred on tenants by statutory legislation:

Be it Resolved,—That the necessary legislation be immediately introduced conferring on tenants the right to recover damages against any landlord of premises occupied by them for any personal injuries or damage to their personal property suffered by them as the result of the defective nature or condition of the premises occupied by them provided however that due notice of the defective nature and condition of some premises has been given to such landlord.

PETITION.

Mr. SEAFORD presented a petition from the Hon. J. W. Jackson and other retired primary school teachers on pension, praying for a recalculation of their pensions.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move—

That this Council approves of the estimates of expenditure to be defrayed from revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1938, which have been laid on the table.

In accordance with custom, hon. members have already been supplied with the estimates and with a memorandum explaining in detail the changes under both revenue and expenditure heads.

Your Excellency dealt in your speech last Friday with the reasons which have caused the anticipated deficit for 1938 to be \$658,107 as compared with the deficit of \$155,785 shown in the estimates passed by this Council a year ago. In conse-

quence of this estimated deficit, the surplus balance of \$1,062,812 with which the year 1937 closed will be reduced by rather more than half after taking credit for a grant in aid of \$48,000 provided for the current year, and at the commencement of 1939 there will be a surplus of only \$452,704. It has not been possible to present to the Council a balanced budget for 1939 and the whole of this surplus as well as a grant in aid of some \$500,000 will be required to meet expenditure if the estimates are passed in their present form. The Secretary of State has been asked to approve of a grant in aid to cover the required balance.

The draft estimates show that expenditure (excluding self-balancing Colonial Development Fund items) is estimated at \$6,363,581 and revenue at \$5,408,342 leaving an estimated deficit on the year's working of \$955,239.

The draft estimate of revenue differ very slightly from the revised estimate for 1938; the main differences occur under three Heads—Income Tax, Postal Receipts and Interest.

Anticipated revenue receipts from these sources show a reduction of \$50,000, \$21,000 and \$13,000, respectively, and the total of these amounts is almost equivalent to the difference, \$87,000, between the 1939 estimate and the 1938 revised estimate of ordinary revenue.

Trade results in 1938 are not expected to be as favourable as they were in 1937 and this accounts for the reduction in the income tax figure. Postal receipts will be less because there will not be the philatelists' demand for stamps that there was in 1937 and 1938 when the Colony had a Coronation issue and a special new issue of postage stamps.

The anticipated reduction under the Head "Interest" is accounted for by the cessation of receipts of interest derived from deposits of loan funds held for loan redemption operations which will be completed in 1938, and some allowance has been made for an anticipated decrease in receipts from interest on loan liabilities of Drainage Boards in drainage areas. No increase in taxation is contemplated, but the revenue estimates have been based on

the assumption that legislation will be passed to continue for another year the Bill Entry tax which is calculated to yield \$260,000, the temporary excise duty on sugar estimated to bring in \$200,000 and the 15 per cent. surtax on harbour dues from which a sum of \$26,000 should be derived.

The estimate expenditure for 1939 of \$6,363,581 is \$657,891 in excess of the original estimate and \$176,933 in excess of the revised estimate for 1938. The following are the largest increases in round figures, and the heads under which they occur:—

Education	... \$	25,000
Hospitals and Dispensaries		47,000
Police		65,000
Post Office and Telecommunications		20,000
Sea Defences		34,000
Transport and Harbours...		296,000
Post Office Extraordinary		20,000
Public Works Extraordinary ...		99,000

Before dealing with some of the items under these and other heads, I wish to explain the reason for the many variations which appear under personal emoluments throughout the estimates. Proposals have been framed to enable a redistribution to be made in the number of clerks in the various grades of the clerical service to provide for a larger number of senior clerks and thus afford greater opportunity for members of the clerical service to receive promotion. A new grade of Senior Clerks is being introduced in which there will be 12 clerks at a salary scale of \$2,040 x \$120—\$2,520.

It is proposed to promote the twelve senior Class I. Clerks to these new posts, the twelve senior Class II. and Class III. Clerks to the consequential vacancies in Class I. and Class II., respectively, and to reduce the number of Class III. Clerks by twelve.

As regards Chief Clerks, all of them are in receipt of salaries in excess of the maximum of the scale of \$2,124 x \$120—\$2,484, having been appointed prior to the 1934 reclassification. It is not proposed to make any more appointments on this scale but, as vacancies occur to revise the salaries of chief clerks according to

the work and responsibilities attached to each post.

The twelve senior Class I. and Class II. Clerks, having been appointed prior to the 1934 reclassification or because they are in receipt of Service Allowances, are at the present time receiving approximately the maximum salary of the Senior Clerk and Class I. grades, respectively. The resultant increase in expenditure for 1939 will be only \$644, rising in 5 years' time to \$4,744.

A further change is in respect of the grade of "Probationer." Hitherto this group has included men and women. On a vacancy occurring in Class III. it has frequently been found impossible to promote a woman because of her unsuitability to perform the work of the vacant office with the result that there is now a large number of women probationers whose prospects of promotion are small. It is considered that the time has come to have a separate class with three scales of salary for women and that they should be styled "Typist-Clerks." Their salaries will range from \$288 to \$720 per annum; as probationers they cannot earn more than \$432 per annum.

Expenditure in connection with Labour, Local Government, Immigration and District Administration has been transferred from Head—VI. Colonial Secretary's Office, to a new Head—Labour and Local Government—because it has been found that the department operates quite independently of the Secretariat; the office, the staff and the records being entirely separate.

I shall now deal with the more important of the new and increased items of expenditure in the draft estimates.

Head VIII.—Education.—The post of Principal, Teachers' Training Centre, created this year has been included in the estimates for the first time, accounting for an increase of \$2,690. Teachers' salaries which used to be lumped with "Grants to the Primary Schools" have been separated and there is a total increase under these two sub-heads of \$22,928 due mainly to increments falling due, increases in salaries to a number of trained teachers and to pupil teachers on obtaining higher

qualifications, 40 additional teachers and 4 new schools.

Head XII.—Labour and Local Government.—As I have already mentioned, this new head includes provision for labour, local Government and immigration, previously shown under Head VI., and District Administration, with a net increase of expenditure on these services of \$8,898, details of which are given in the memorandum accompanying the estimates. The largest increase is in the Transport and Travelling vote which has proved inadequate owing to the amount of travelling that officers have to do on duties concerning the Labour branch of the department and which has to be increased by nearly \$3,000. Certain additions to the staff of the department have also been made. It is proposed on the retirement of the District Commissioner for West Demerara, Georgetown and East Bank, Demerara, to divide the district into two; Georgetown and East Bank Demerara being one and West Demerara the other.

Head XIV.—Law Officers.—A new post of Crown Counsel has been included. A sum of \$1,920 was provided this year for temporary legal assistance and instead of continuing to make similar provision year after year for temporary assistance, it will be more advantageous to have a whole time officer appointed. He will be required to assist in the Attorney-General's Chambers and to prosecute in Crown cases.

Provision has also been made, under Head XV., for another Magistrate. This officer will be required to perform duties in the Berbice district, where the magisterial work has increased considerably, and to fill temporary vacancies occasioned by sickness or leave. This will obviate the necessity which exists at present of having to engage someone outside the service in the absence of a Magistrate.

Head XIX.—Hospitals and Dispensaries.—There is an increase of \$18,271 under sub-head "Nurses and Servants" to provide for 21 additional nurses to enable a reduction to be made in the working hours of the nursing staff and to permit of the wages of nurses and unskilled attendants being revised. An increase of

about \$10,000 under Other Charges is due to a rise in the price of beef and milk.

Provision has been made under the appropriate Heads of the Medical Department for additions to staff. For instance, another temporary Assistant Medical Officer is required in view of the increase in the number of medical examinations to be held in connection with workmen's compensation and in the number of Government employees who have to be medically examined. The appointment of this additional officer will also make it possible to provide weekly medical services for the people of Leguan and Wakenaam. Two relief dispensers are necessary to enable dispensers at out-stations to come to Georgetown for training as Sanitary Inspectors. The object of giving them this training is to qualify them to perform the duties of sanitary officers in mining camps and other places in remote areas in conjunction with their duties as dispensers.

Head XXVIII.—Police.—There is an increase of \$64,646 under this head as compared with the approved estimates for 1938. This is due to increase in the strength of the Force by 3 Officers, 2 Warrant Officers and 100 other ranks for which approval was given a few months ago. The strength of the Force is now nearer what it was in 1925. Between the years 1925 and 1932 the Force was reduced by 4 Warrant Officers and approximately 100 other ranks to effect economies. The only other change which I need mention is the one which provides for the payment of men holding lance ranks. By creating such ranks and attaching special rates of pay to them the existing conditions caused by slow promotion in the Force will be improved.

Head XXIX.—Poor.—There is an increase of \$9,855 under this Head. One half of the increase is due to the rise in the price of beef and milk. The staff of nurses and servants in the Alms House needs strengthening by four owing to the increase in the number of inmates. It is also proposed to raise their rates of pay to the level proposed for nurses and servants in hospitals.

Head XXX.—Post Office.—It is proposed to restore the office of Assistant

Postmaster General which was abolished some years ago. The work in every branch of the department has increased to such an extent that it is considered that the Postmaster General should be given some assistance. Four more postal clerks are also required to meet the growing demands by the public on the services of the department. A large proportion of the additional amount required under this head is to meet mail transit charges and the cost of conveyance of air mails, part of which is covered by corresponding receipts.

Head XXXIII.—Prisons.—The post of Superintendent, Georgetown Prison, and Deputy Inspector of Prisons has been abolished and that of Superintendent of Prisons substituted therefor. Provision has been made for a new post of Assistant Superintendent so that there may be a fully trained man both to assist the Superintendent and to act for him in his absence. Four additional warders are required to provide relief for day and night warders whose hours of work are too long.

Head XXXVI.—Public Works—Annually Recurrent.—An increase of \$9,500 is shown under sub head "Engineering surveys," but a fair proportion of this sum may be regarded as a revote since it has not been possible to spend the whole of the amount voted on supplementary estimates this year for a survey on the Corentyne Coast.

Head XXXIX.—Sea Defences.—\$34,170 more than the amount provided in the 1938 estimates has been included in next year's estimates for expenditure on new construction and replacement works. \$10,000 of the excess is a revote of the unexpended balance of this year's vote.

Head XL.—Transport and Harbours.—Provision has been made for the purchase next year of a steamer to replace the s.s. "Arawana" at a cost of \$168,000 and a launch to cost \$16,000 to replace the launch "Sir Wilfred" which was lost in an accident last year. The Transport and Harbours Board and the Sea Defence Board have represented that the Fort Groyne and the Best Groyne are in urgent need of reconstruction and it is proposed to expend \$10,000 and \$6,000 respectively

on these two items. Work on the former has had to be commenced and the sum of \$7,000 is being expended in 1938. Further expenditure will be incurred over a period of years but it is not possible to arrive at a firm estimate until certain data has been corrected. The four items total \$200,000 which is included in the net deficiency of \$357,410 under this head. An additional sum of about \$37,000 is required to meet increases in wages and to permit of better conditions of employment by the granting of sick and vacation leave to employees in the several branches of this Department who have not previously been entitled to it. Further expenditure on capital account amounts to \$25,000, which brings the total amount required for the Transport and Harbours Department to the unusually large figure of \$382,410.

The revenue estimates of the Transport and Harbours Department do not differ materially from the current year's estimates but they fall short of the actual receipts in 1937 by approximately \$92,000. As in the case of the main items of Colony revenue the receipts of the Department benefited considerably from the exceptionally favourable trading conditions of 1939. The decrease in its receipts is general, the largest item being under Harbour dues, the estimate under which has been reduced approximately to the level of the 1936 receipts. Traffic receipts on the railway and steamer services have fallen by some \$35,000 and there is also a drop of \$13,000 on the Bartica-Potaro road services owing to the completion of the transport of heavy machinery etc., for the new gold company.

Head XLV.—Post Office Extraordinary.—An increased vote of \$20,670 is asked for, half of which it is intended to spend on the purchase of cables and the necessary exchange and line equipment to cater for 175 renters resident on the East Bank, Demerara and Kitty District. Other large items under this head are \$3,700 for the extension of existing services in Georgetown and its environs and \$2,600 to enable defective aerial cables to be replaced.

Head XLVI.—Public Works Extraordinary.—The vote for buildings is \$3,700 and the vote for roads \$94,700 in excess

of the votes shown in the current year's estimates, but in comparing these figures it will be remembered that the current year's votes were increased by supplementary appropriation which, including a further sum you will be asked to vote, are expected to total \$61,000. The largest amounts to be spent on next year's building programme are the following:—

- \$30,000—on the completion of the Maternity wing at Public Hospital.
- \$10,000—on the reconstruction of Matrons' quarters and a hostel for nurses at Suddie.
- \$13,800—on the reconstruction of buildings, sanitary works and water supply at the Leprosy Hospital.
- \$22,400—on drilling new wells and reconditioning old ones.
- \$24,500—on the improvement of the drainage system of New Amsterdam.
- \$18,000—on drainage and filling in Government lands in Georgetown.

There is an item of \$6,000 in the estimates for a Police post at Enachu which needs some explanation. In 1937 the Council voted \$5,000 for the removal of the Government station at Kamakusa to Enachu, but on closer examination of the cost of removal it was found that a considerably larger sum of money would be required and an alternative proposal is being put before the Council which is that a Police post should be established at Enachu with a wireless telephone service at Kamakusa. The police post at Eping and Oranapai will be closed and the police will be provided with two fast motor boats.

\$138,000 of the \$180,000 provided for Roads and Bridges Extraordinary is to be spent on the construction of 11½ miles of concrete strip roads in three districts, East Coast Demerara, West Coast Demerara, and Corentyne.

In addition to the provision made in the Estimates, the Council will be asked to approve of the inclusion of certain other items and small increases which it has been decided, since the estimates were printed, should be provided in 1939. The most important of these are enumerated below; fuller information with respect to them will be available to hon. members when the estimates are being considered by the Select Committee of the Council:—

Head XXIII.—Miscellaneous.—Sub-head 23—The grant to the Tourist Bureau for advertisement of the Colony in Canada and elsewhere to be increased from \$2,880 to \$4,800—\$1,920.

Sub-head 28.—Refund to Messrs. Cable and Wireless, Ltd., of the cost of purchase and installation of emergency generating plant at the Georgetown Wireless Station—\$2,160.

The Wireless Station is at present entirely dependent on the Demerara Electric Company for power and it is desirable to have a reserve plant installed.

Head XXVII.—Police: Extraordinary Expenditure.—Sub-head 32.—Purchase and installation of three portable wireless sets for use at Police Headquarters and outstations—\$5,437.

Head XLVI.—Public Works Extraordinary.—As a result of report by the Director of Public Works and Sea Defences, Government considers it necessary to carry out river defences at Bartica where part of the town and public hospital compound are flooded at exceptionally high tides: and on the West Bank, Demerara River where the public road and Stanleytown village are in jeopardy.

The work at Bartica is estimated to cost \$56,826, and it is proposed to carry out the urgent part of it costing \$23,500 in 1939—\$23,500.

The remainder of the expenditure will be spread over the following 10 years. It is also proposed that the Bartica Village Council should be required to pay to Government a sum of \$1,500 per annum for 11 years as a contribution towards the cost of the work, the amount to be met by an increase in village rates. Government will increase its grant to the Village Council by \$300 as shown under Head XXV., sub-head 26.

In the case of the Demerara River it is necessary to construct river defences between Plns. Nismes and Belle Vue, West Bank, Demerara, at a cost of \$30,660.

The proprietors and local authorities are unable to meet the cost of the work. It is proposed, however, that the Village Council should be required to contribute towards the maintenance of the new works a sum of \$300 per annum, which is equivalent to the average annual amount now expended by them on the maintenance of this stretch of river defences.

I beg to move the motion standing in my name. I propose to move for the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the draft Estimates as on previous occasions.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer) seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know if hon. members wish to speak on the subject now.

The debate on the motion was adjourned.

THE PRESIDENT: The next stage will be the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that the Estimates of Expenditure for 1939 be referred to a Select Committee for consideration.

Mr. McDAVID seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE PRESIDENT: The usual committee will be appointed consisting of the hon. Colonial Secretary as Chairman, the hon. Colonial Treasurer, and all the Unofficial Members.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

The following bills were introduced and read the first time:—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to amend the Poor Relief Ordinance, Chapter 90, by increasing the number of Poor Law Commissioners and by providing for the appointment of a Deputy Chairman.

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to amend the Cinematograph Ordinance, Chapter 105, with respect to the constitution of Cinematograph Boards in parts of the Colony other than Georgetown and New Amsterdam.

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to amend the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Ordinance, Chapter 13, in respect of acts of wrongful interference with the exercise of rights.

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to amend the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance, chapter 86, by providing conditions under which a Mayor or an ex-Mayor may be re-elected as Mayor and by making provision as to the enforcement of contributions from co-proprietors of a lot in the event of payment of rates or taxes by one of the co-proprietors. (*The Attorney-General*).

Notice was given that at the next or a subsequent meeting of the Council it would be moved that the bills be read the second time.

IMPROVEMENT WORKS, WINKEL AREA.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir, I beg to move:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 4 dated 18th October, 1938, this Council approves of the expenditure of the sum of \$860 for carrying out improvement works to the Winkel area.

The sanitary conditions existing in the Winkel area near New Amsterdam were unfavourably reported on by the Central Board of Health two or three years ago, and on the attention of the Town Council of New Amsterdam being drawn to that report they made representations to the effect that they were not responsible for that area. Subsequently it was found that the area was within the limits of their jurisdiction, and they then appealed to Government for assistance to enable the necessary works to be undertaken. Government agreed to expend the sum of \$317 on the drainage of the area, but that was found to be insufficient. It was necessary that the sanitary carts belonging to the Town Council should have access to the area so as to keep the place in a sanitary condition. The dam running through the area was not capable of bearing heavy traffic at any time of the year, and it was therefore necessary to surface the dam and to erect a bridge at each end. For this purpose a sum of \$860 is required, and it is proposed that the Government should assist the Town Council of New Amsterdam by paying that amount towards the improvement of the area.

Mr. McDAVID seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

**FREE GRANT FOR RICE INDUSTRY
INQUIRY.**

Professor DASH: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to Message No 5 of the 17th October, 1938, this Council approves of acceptance from the Colonial Development Fund of a free grant of £1,000 to cover the cost of an inquiry into the rice industry of the Colony.

I do not think there is any great need for me to say very much on the motion which is before the Council. I think the circumstances of the case are now sufficiently well known and have been fully set out in the Message. We should all be very

grateful to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for his interest and assistance in this matter.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I cannot oppose this motion for spending money in the Colony at this stage, but I am very much surprised to learn that the expenditure by this Department has mounted up by leaps and bounds within the last ten years and it is still making investigations at a tremendous rate. I cannot conceive of the Government assisting one single Department to go on forever experimenting, and we can see no end of it. If I cannot conceive the reason it is no fault of mine but certainly that of those who carry on that particular Department. Year after year we hear of rice. The whole Colony has gone rice-mad, it seems, and everything else is allowed to go "hang," and still the cost of this Department is being increased from year to year. I do not mind that this money is not from Government. It has been granted for the proper and beneficial use of the country. What this investigation is intended to cover I do not know. I see no explanation given.

THE PRESIDENT: If the hon. member reads the Message which deals with the case he will see what the investigation is required to cover.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Whenever this Department comes up for consideration, especially in respect of rice investigation after ten years of reconstruction, it gets my "monkey" up, and I do not worry to go further into the matter. I really think, Your Excellency, this Department needs inquiring into, for the one reason that every year we get the idea that blue stick rice is preferable to the other one. Is that going to help us to grow rice? I have only heard from that Department since I have been here that you must get the areas properly drained and properly irrigated. No one wants to know that. The industry is left to fight its way all the time and somebody takes the credit whenever we get a good crop, but no one wants the blame when the crop is bad. What we want is not an investigation into the industry. We all know that we are not producing the best quality rice in this Colony, and more than that, we know that even the sanction of distance cannot

enable us to sell our rice in the West Indies against the Burma product. Why is that? It is because those markets cannot depend on our supply. But nothing is being done to enable us to supply those markets when required. We are carrying on a gamble. This is a real gamble. We pay money, lose, and pay more again. That is purely the conduct of a stupid gambler. No wise man after planking on a particular horse and losing will continue to do so.

We have got an Agricultural Department by name, but we get no results from it at all. We are told that nothing but rice and sugar can grow in this Colony. Sugar takes care of itself but now finds itself on its last leg, and we find that Department acting like rats running out of a sinking ship and attaching itself to rice, because some people are shouting the Colony has rice and nothing more, while some others would like to see all the sugar estates go out of existence and rice take the place of sugar. I suppose that by then every grain of rice would be a diamond and the next thing would be the glutting of the market. But that does not give this Department the liberty to come here from year to year for more money to put in this industry and all for no purpose. We have got the Director getting up here and making the shortest speech he has ever made in this Council, and why? It is because he had nothing more to say than that we should put some more money. What is the use of it? What are we going to do, investigate what? But, sir, this is British Guiana and Government is governing. That is how Government knows to govern. The Heads of Departments have each become a petty-Governor, and they come to this Council and say, "We are going to spend so much money"; then Government would say, "My advisers say they must have more money." No one can tell for what purpose that money is going to be spent.

I certainly cannot object to this money being spent in the Colony, even if it is squandered, because the money is badly needed; but I protest against the rate at which money is being spent by this Department. Even though the money be squandered, I prefer to see it spent by some other Department. Every year for

the last ten years the expenditure by this Department has been increasing and there has no advancement at all. Your Excellency, I am under the impression that most of the Departments need investigating into, and when the proper time arrives I am going to address you to that effect. This taking for granted what the Heads of Departments say and what Government advisers say has not taken us one step farther. We are going backwards even in agriculture. This country produces all kinds of things—coffee, coconut, fruits of all description and even those of the Temperate Zone can grow in some parts of this country. But we are now told that only rice and sugar can grow successfully here. Rice has not gone one step farther. I can understand sugar. The sugar planters know their business and do it well, and it is no fault of theirs that the industry is not making progress now.

But what is the Agricultural Department doing for rice except talking? I cannot tell you, and when we say that, we are told: "Certainly you have a new seed padi, and that is an improvement." But I am going to say that all this money is being spent for nothing at all. What I mean, the benefit derived is not commensurate with the expenditure. We should get much more out of the industry, if there is anything in it, for the money spent on it, and we should not be called on for more money for further investigation. We have known long enough that we are not producing rice of the quality of the rice of Burma and other places, and that that is due to lack of improved machinery. Government has no rice cultivation here as far as I am aware, and the Department is there to advise cultivators, and those people engaged in the industry must look after themselves. I do not know that Government has given any sugar estate a mill or new devices for the manufacture of sugar. The sugar planters spend their money in their best interest, and Government may get advice for them at certain times; but this Department has been speculating with rice for years and years and has not carried it one step farther than the ordinary East Indian planter has succeeded in doing. He plants his rice, knows what it costs to produce, knows the trouble encountered in the industry, and is continuing to do it. The

Department comes along with its experts who do not know grass from rice. I cannot oppose the expenditure of this money as it is due in circulation, but I do protest against the spending of it in the direction suggested.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I think it would be an ungracious act on our part if we neglect to express our appreciation in no uncertain terms of this generous gift to cover the cost of an inquiry into the Rice Industry of the Colony. I do not propose to embark upon a speech on the ills of the industry, but I merely join this debate to urge on Government the necessity for early action being taken to save what was at one time a very promising industry. The position to-day, sir, is worse than it was twelve months ago, and those of us who have had to make a living in one way or another from this industry know only too well that the position to-day is as I have already described it. For that reason I would like to urge strongly on Government the necessity for the report that will be forwarded by the person or persons concerned in this matter being given early consideration, otherwise I can visualize what this industry is likely to be in another twelve months time. I have no desire to speak at all on it to-day, but I want to sound this note of warning in the hope that Government will pay some heed to it. I urge that early and immediate consideration, if possible, be given to any report that may be sent in, so as to safeguard this important industry of the Colony.

Mr. JACOB: Sir, I am inclined to think that the debate has taken a somewhat different turn to what is stated in the Message. I rise to say to this Council that the rice-producers are grateful for the grant and for the expert advice that we will get from Mr. Parker's visit. I have had the privilege of meeting this gentleman, and I feel sure this Colony will receive a certain amount of benefit from his visit. But while that is so, I want to make this statement. We have started from the wrong end to begin with, and if we are making another step towards the right end, I think we should make some progress. We started first of all to control the sale of rice, and we are going to start now, I hope, to control the milling

of rice. I hope the next step will be to control the planting and transportation of rice to the mill. To my mind we should have started in the last direction first *e.g.*, the planting and transportation of rice to the mill. But as we have started from the third end, we should get to the first end at a not too distant date.

The position of the industry at the present time is rather alarming. Six years ago the export of rice was 30,000 tons in round figures, this year it will be 15,000 tons, and next year it may be 12,000 tons. That is what we have got from the control of the industry, and that is what this Council has contributed to the rice industry. Ever since I became a member of this Council, I have protested against that method of control, but I will say no more than that this Council is responsible wholly for the export of rice dropping from 30,000 tons to 12,000 tons next year. As Your Excellency rightly said in your address to this Council, we have got to increase the exports of every kind of commodity that can be produced in this Colony. Sugar is considered the chief commodity, with rice second. I hope that by this grant we will begin to do something to extend the exports and production of rice in this Colony and to extend the milling as well. I also hope that when we review Your Excellency's address I will have an opportunity to say more on this matter.

Mr. SEAFORD: From what I have heard, it seems that the position is not quite clear to hon. members of this Council. The hon. member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) has pointed out the very serious position in which the rice industry finds itself and has asked Government to take steps to prevent it from going from bad to worse. I do not know if hon. members know that some months ago, shortly after Your Excellency's arrival in this Colony, Government quite realised the serious position of the rice industry of the Colony and also the position of Essequibo. In view of that, Government decided to appoint a committee to go into the whole question, and it was after the committee had been sitting for some time that the Colonial Development Fund authorities offered to send out an expert at their expense. Government had sent to the authorities on the other side word

that steps were being taken in the matter. Apparently assistance had been asked for some time before, and it was promised that when the matter came up again and the money was available they would send out an expert. In investigating the matter we want the very best advice, we want the services of one who has experience not only in the milling of rice but the handling of rice on a large scale. There is no one in this Colony who has that experience or knowledge. Mr. Parker has been sent and he has expressed certain views and formed certain opinions, as the result of which very many of us who thought we knew much about rice have realised that we know very little or nothing about it, and others that they know much less than they thought they did. I am satisfied that Mr. Parker's visit to the Colony is going to be of inestimable value to the Colony, and I think we ought to be grateful to the Imperial Government and the Colonial Development Fund for the help they have afforded us. In view of what has been done by Government, I would like to assure hon. members who are in any doubt that Government realises the position and intends to do everything it can to help. I am judging that from the terms of reference of the committee of which I happen to be a member. I hope it will not be long before we get Mr. Parker's Report. The committee will then be able to send in its report.

THE PRESIDENT: I gather from the speeches that have been made even that of the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar), that hon. members are all in favour of the motion, and I need explain but one point. Perhaps the hon. member is sceptical of the Agriculture Department asking for further investigation and assistance on this important question of the rice industry which has been under study for so long, and I think I ought to say for the hon. member's information that the Agricultural Department must be absolved of all responsibility in this matter. The suggestion came from the Secretary of State for the Colonies and from the Colonial Development Fund. The proposals that are under review may involve considerable capital expenditure for which we will have to rely on assistance obtained from outside the Colony. It is indicated that before we consider pro-

posals of that kind we would have to look for independent expert advice. I feel sure that hon. members would realise that in these circumstances it would have been folly to have refused this very generous offer, which I hope may lead to concrete results.

Motion put, and agreed to.

EXTENSION OF CENTENARY EXHIBITIONS TENURE.

Mr. CREASE (Director of Education, acting): Sir, I beg to move:—

That with reference to Governor's Message No. 3 of the 17th of October, 1938, this Council approves of the extension, by the Governor, of the tenure of Centenary Exhibitions beyond the period of 5 years, to enable exhibitors who are granted extensions to sit for the British Guiana Scholarship Examination.

I do not think there is very much for me to add further to the explanation conveyed in the Message. This is really bringing them into line with other scholarship examinations. Quite recently the tenure of the Government County Scholarships has been extended beyond five years, provided the scholarship holder has achieved British Guiana scholarship standard, and I feel quite sure that hon. members of the Council will give their support to this proposal.

Mr. CHRISTIANI (Commissioner of Lands of Mines) seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Before the adjournment is moved, I would ask the Unofficial Members to remain behind so as to arrange with me the time for holding the first meeting of the Select Committee.

THE PRESIDENT: That concludes our business for the day, but the active business of the Members of Council will be the consideration of the draft Estimates for 1939 in Select Committee. It is not clear how long that may take, and I think the usual procedure is that the Council stands adjourned *sine die* to be summoned again by notice when the Committee is in a position to report.

THE Council adjourned *sine die*.