



# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Friday, 12th July, 1935.*

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR GEOFFREY A. S. NORTHCOTE, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

## PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Major W. Bain Gray, C.B.E. (Acting).

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. Hector Josephs, K.C.

The Hon. T. T. Smellie, O.B.E. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

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

Major the Hon. J. C. Craig, D.S.O., Director of Public Works.

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

The Hon. G. J. De Freitas, K.C. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. J. Mullin, O.B.E. Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Hon. W. A. D'Andrade, Comptroller of Customs.

The Hon. G. I. Goring, General Manager, Transport and Harbours Department (Acting).

The Hon. M. B. Laing, District Commissioner, East Coast Demerara District.

The Hon. Q. B. De Freitas, Surgeon-General (Acting).

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

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

The Hon. Jung Bahadur Singh (Demerara-Essequibo).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. J. L. Wills (Demerara River).

The Hon. E. M. Walcott (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. R. V. Evan Wong (Essequibo River).

The Hon. F. J. Seaford (Georgetown North).

The Hon. H. C. Humphrys (Eastern Demerara).

The Hon. W. S. Jones (Nominated Unofficial Member).

## MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 11th July, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENT.

### HONORARIUM FOR INVENTION.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): I am the bearer of the following Message to the Council:—

### MESSAGE No. 26.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to invite the Council to approve of the payment of \$600 to Mr. F. H. Allen, Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, as an honorarium in respect of his invention of a special reinforced concrete sheet pile groyne and driving frame used in the construction of sea defence works.

2. By the use of this invention, it has been possible to effect savings in expenditure on the sea defences to the extent of \$38,584 in respect of the construction of 11,024 lineal feet of groynes. In addition, it has also been possible to save on the cost of other runs.

3. I consider that Mr. Allen should receive a reward for his resourcefulness in the execution of the programme of sea defences on the West Coast involving expenditure of large sums of money, and with the concurrence of the Secretary of State I invite this Council to approve of the payment referred to above.

G. A. S. NORTHCOTE,  
Governor.

11th July, 1935.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

## SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Major Bain Gray) gave notice of the following motion:—

THAT this Council approves additional provision being made to meet expenditure in excess of the provision already made for the year 1935, as set forth in the schedule for the remainder of the year, copies of which will be forwarded to members before the next meeting of Council.

## HONORARIUM FOR INVENTION.

Major CRAIG gave notice of the following motion:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 26 of the 11th of July, 1935, this Council approves of the payment to Mr. F. H. Allen, Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, of the sum of \$600 as an honorarium in respect of his invention of a special reinforced concrete sheet pile groyne and driving frame used in connection with the construction of sea defence works.

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

## GEORGETOWN ACCUMULATED TAXES AND RATES (FUNDING) BILL.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I beg to move that "A Bill to empower the Georgetown Town Council to fund the total amount outstanding in respect of unpaid taxes and rates which have been levied during the years 1933 and 1934 under the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance (Chapter 86) and the Georgetown Sewerage and Water Ordinance (Chapter 96) and the Georgetown Sewerage and Water Ordinance, 1930, and in respect of unpaid ratepayers' debts under the Georgetown Improvements Rates (Funding) Ordinance, 1932, together with interest thereon, and also to make provision for the payment of such taxes, rates and ratepayers' debts and interest" be read the third time.

Mr. GONSALVES seconded.

Question "That this Bill be now read a third time and passed" put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (VILLAGE COUNCILS) BILL.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of "A Bill

to amend the Local Government Ordinance, Chapter 84, with respect to the constitution of Village Councils, the election of Village Councillors and matters connected therewith, and to make provision for regulating the proceedings at elections."

## Clause 29—Procedure.

Mr. LAING (District Commissioner): With the Council's permission I ask that clause 29 be recommitted in order to move the insertion of a new sub-clause which will be numbered (2) and reads as follows:—

(2) The Governor in Council may make regulations providing for the regulation of the practice, procedure and costs of election petitions, and the trial thereof.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 36—Bribery, treating and undue influence.

Mr. LAING: I ask leave to recommit clause 36 in order to move the substitution of the word "person" for the word "candidate" in the first line, and the deletion from the thirteenth line to the end of the clause of the words "and shall be adjudged to be incapable of being elected a Village Councillor for two years after his conviction and the Magistrate shall so certify to the Board." I also move the insertion of the following new sub-clauses:—

"(2) Every person who, directly or indirectly, pays any rate on behalf of any other person for the purpose of enabling him to be registered as a voter in order thereby to influence his vote at any future election and every person on whose behalf and with whose privity any such payment as last aforesaid is made shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars or to imprisonment with or without hard labour not exceeding six months.

(3) (i) Every voter who, before or during any election, directly or indirectly, by himself or by any other person in his behalf receives agrees or contracts for any money, gift, loan, or valuable consideration, office, place or employment for himself or for any other person, for voting or agreeing to vote, or for refraining or agreeing to refrain from voting at any election;

(ii) every person who, after any election, directly or indirectly, by himself or by any other person on his behalf receives any money or valuable consideration on account of any person having voted or refrained from voting, or having induced any other person to vote or refrain from voting at any election;

(iii) every voter who before or during or after any election accepts or takes any entertainment of provisions or liquor as a recompense for having voted at the election;

shall be liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars or to imprisonment with or without hard labour not exceeding six months.

(4) Every person who is convicted of an offence under this section shall be adjudged by the magistrate to be incapable of being elected a village councillor for two years after his conviction and the magistrate shall so certify to the Board."

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think the words "or after" should be deleted. These words worried me the whole of last night. If a candidate gave a voter something after an election the Magistrate might say "I believe you gave him on account of the election." I want to be able to do service for a man at any time after an election. Even if the words are in some other Ordinance, give us some idea of the intention of their scope. I can understand the application of the provisions to any of the acts enumerated "before or during any election," but I do not see how a voter can be influenced after an election, and anything done afterwards may be considered for that purpose.

THE CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. Member will not take up the time of the Committee at any length. He spoke at length on the question when it was previously before the Committee and moved an amendment. That amendment was turned down by the Committee and I do not think he would be doing any service to the Committee if he presses it again. The Attorney-General has pointed out that if the words are deleted the whole provision is stultified. I do trust that the hon. Member is not going to waste the time of the Committee. If he wishes to move an amendment let him do so and we will get it out of the way.

Clause as amended put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed.

Notice was given that at the next meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read a third time (*Mr. Lainy*).

#### TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS BILL.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of "A Bill

further to amend the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931, with respect to appropriation by the Board of the revenues of the Department."

Clause 2—Estimates of Board to be approved by Governor in Council.

Mr. McDAVID: I beg to move the amendment of which I have given notice: that the following proviso be substituted for the one appearing in the Bill:—

Provided that with regard to the dues, fees and charges mentioned in Part III. of this Ordinance, the Board, with the previous sanction of the Legislative Council, may at any time fix, levy and collect such dues, fees or charges other than those contained in the estimates as it may deem necessary for the purposes of this Ordinance.

Since the matter was before the Committee it has been reconsidered, and the object of the amendment is to leave section 7 substantially as it is in the Principal Ordinance, except that the legal sanction for the appropriation of the money by the Board will be more precise. All that this new clause seeks to do is to insert certain precise words that the Board shall levy, collect and receive the revenues sanctioned by the Governor in Council and may appropriate the same for defraying the expenditure of the Department for which provision has been made in the authorised estimates. The new proviso appears in the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931. Its purpose is quite clear, and it should not have been omitted from the Bill now before the Council.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I regret to observe that the Colonial Treasurer did not deal with the point I raised when this question was before the House a few days ago. On that occasion I dealt with the proviso and moved the deletion of certain words. This morning the hon. Member is throwing rings around the remarks I made and has ignored the point I endeavoured to stress. I have examined the Principal Ordinance and also the amending Ordinance of 1932, and in neither of them appear the words I desire to see in the proviso. The time is opportune to amend what seems to me to be an error in the Ordinances of 1931 and 1932. The Ordinance of 1932 provides merely for the Department to approach this Council for authority when there is a deficiency to be met. If that is the case later on, if the

Department is able to show a surplus, we may be told "Keep your hands off the estimates; the Council has no right to consider or to criticise those estimates." I am sure other Members feel as I do—that the estimates of the Department should come before this Council at its annual session. I know I will be told that they will always come, but I do not want to be told at any time that the law does not provide for them to come before the Council. Now that we are trying to put wrong right, it is opportune for the Council to make what is wrong right at the same time. I move a further amendment to read: "provided that the authorised estimates shall be subject to the final approval of the Legislative Council and further."

THE CHAIRMAN: I understand that the effect of the amendment of the hon. Member is that the Bill shall read as printed in clause 7 down to the words "in the authorised estimates" and then go on to say "provided that the authorised estimates shall be subject to the final approval of the Legislative Council, and further provided" as moved by the hon. mover of the Bill.

Mr. McDAVID: I think, sir, the amendment of the hon. Member is inconsistent with the section itself and the whole spirit of the Ordinance. This Council has by that Ordinance, which is a consolidation of previous Ordinances dealing with the Transport and Harbours Department, entrusted the duties of management to a Board constituted by law. Control is left to persons approved by the Governor and to whom this Council is willing that these matters should be entrusted, and I feel sure it was never the intention of this Council that the estimates of the Department should come back for revision after the power of sanction had been given to the Governor in Council. If that were so the section should not use the language it does. I cannot see anything indicating in that language that the estimates shall be sanctioned by the Governor in Council and at the same time come back to the Legislative Council to be reviewed in the same way as the estimates of other Departments. The whole spirit of the Ordinance is to entrust the management of what is a commercial undertaking and a public

utility service to a Board, subject to the veto of the Governor in Council. I draw attention to Ordinance 25 of 1932, which sets out what the annual estimates shall contain and states that whenever the estimates contain interest and sinking fund charges the net deficiency of the Department for any year must be voted by the Legislative Council. It follows therefore that the opportunity to criticise the conduct and policies of the Department will still accrue to the Legislative Council. In spite of that the whole policy is that the estimates shall be controlled and approved by the Governor in Council.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am not convinced by the reply I have received. All I want is that this Council shall have the right to approve of the estimates. I cannot see why this Council is not justified in asking that the estimates of an important Department should come before us for review. I am not concerned with whether or not these estimates are subject to review by this Council. I concede that is the law, but I say that is an error and I want to correct it now. I can visualise that when the Department can balance its budget Members of the Council will be told to keep their hands off the estimates because it is the law. With the proviso I propose we will ensure the estimates coming before the Council for review.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am in favour of the amendment of the hon. Member. I feel that this Council has a right to know what is happening to the revenue and expenditure of Government Departments. If we take an interest in the Colony, as we do, it is only right that we should know all that is going on, and I do not think the expenditure of certain Departments should be taken out of the hands of the Council. It is a question of principle. It was pointed out by the Colonial Treasurer that there are on the Board certain gentlemen appointed by the Governor in Council and who are representatives of this Council on that Board. We are not saying that we have no confidence or faith in those gentlemen. We have faith in them and in their ability; but it is extraordinary how often things are brought to light by public discussion. There are on the Board gentlemen who, perhaps, have to decide on points they know very little

about, and open discussion might lead them to form an entirely different opinion.

Further than that, the representatives of this Council on that Board do not always get a chance of doing what they would like. I mention that because the Governor in Council has the power of over-riding any decision of the Board, and it is no secret that that has been done before. Those members of the Board have no power, and we never know whether a decision has been made, or expenditure allowed, with their approval or not. A case came up a short time ago with regard to the Forest Department. That case was taken out of the hands of this Council, but Your Excellency's predecessor laid it down that it was only right that the Council should have a voice in the matter. I think that holds good also with this Department. There is no reason why we should not appoint Boards to run other Departments on business lines, and by that means the handling of all moneys will be taken out of the hands of this Council. I realise that this is a very big Department with a large number of employees, and it might take a considerable time for this Council to go into every question. I do not think it is the intention that we should go into details, but I think we are entitled to have a say in the general expenditure and revenue of the Department just as we do in any other.

Mr. AUSTIN: This particular question comes up from time to time. On one occasion it was raised by the late Mr. Webber and on another by Mr. Crane. Those two gentlemen thought the Department was well managed by the Board appointed by the Governor. Mr. Crane was a member of the Board, and although a member of the Board he questioned the principle as the hon. Member for Central Demerara has now done, but he eventually withdrew his opposition. The Board consists of four Elected Members, two Nominated Members, two Officials (the Colonial Secretary being Chairman), and two members of the Chamber of Commerce. When it comes to the question of considering ways and means and expenditure and matters incidental to the Harbour Board and its multifarious duties, I cannot conceive that this Council would be right in altering the present arrangement. The honourable Member for Georgetown North

mentioned a point which also I cannot conceive occurring under Your Excellency's regime. There have been officers appointed for duty under the Harbour Board without the knowledge of the Board; money has been spent in the purchase of motor cars without the knowledge of the Board; and other works have been undertaken likewise. That is no reason why the Board, which does good work in scrutinising the estimates and controlling expenditure as far as it possibly can, should be dissolved or its conduct of affairs come under discussion here again. I would like to ask on behalf of the members of that Board that they be left alone just to report to the Executive on their work. I think the honourable Member would be doing, without wishing to do so, a disservice to the inhabitants of the Colony if the duties and administration of the Department are taken from those gentleman who now give such good service in their own time and even at night.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am supporting the amendment. It seems to me that as soon as some Members of this Council get on the Board they become the embodiment of wisdom and protest against any interference. We have this Board spending public money and we are not to have a word to say until the funeral comes along. If there happens to be a deficit, which they have always had so far, they say that is time enough for us to criticise what they have already done. All we say is that when these gentlemen have formulated their estimates, like all other estimates, they should come before this Council. It seems clear that in the past things have been happening and we did not know of them. I submit that is good enough reason why the estimates should come before this House. The Forest Trust was an example of entrusting public money to a Board and this Council having nothing to do with it. That has been changed. When we are told that the only time we are to have an opportunity of criticising the conduct of the Board is when there is a deficit, then heaven help us. There is no reason why we should allow it to continue in the future. Some of our ablest men are on that Board and we have no reason to doubt anything they do, but they have not got a monopoly of brains in any respect. More than that, we are aware that things have happened about which they

did not know themselves, and even Members of this Council are not afforded an opportunity of bringing them to the notice of Government. Even the members of the Board would welcome examination of their estimates and Government should see the reason for the amendment.

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL:** There is absolutely no analogy between what happened in connection with the Forest Department and the Transport and Harbours Board. In 1927 a Statute was enacted in connection with the Forest Department, and in that Statute certain sections were incorporated which it was believed came from British Honduras, as probably their forests are more advanced than ours. Those sections required this Council to vote a certain amount of money every year to the Forest Department, which could do what it liked with the money. The Forest Department was not a producing Department at all. The revenue from forest products amounted to practically nothing, while there was a considerable sum to be paid by statute from general revenue. When the matter came to be examined the Statute was repealed and the estimates of the Department came before the Council, like those of the Lands and Mines and Public Works Departments, and there is no analogy between the two. The arguments of the hon. Member for Georgetown North would be very pertinent if they had been based on facts—matters which had occurred or matters which were likely to occur. But he based his arguments on purely a matter of doubtful hypothesis. Had he been able to say that certain facts have occurred or that they are transpiring, the position would undoubtedly have had some basis of support.

**MR. SEAFORD:** May I interrupt the learned Attorney-General to say I did not state actual facts because I did not desire to embarrass Government.

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL:** There is another point. Perhaps if Members of this House realise something of the history of the Boards which now form a single Board their attitude would probably be different. There is only one Member of this House now who was a Member when the Harbour Board was first created in 1919 and the Colonial Transport Department in 1922, and, of course, by

reason of being a Member of the Legislature and a member of these Boards his interest in them has undoubtedly been continuous and sustained, whereas people who had not so much to do with them from the beginning down to the present time would have a vague idea. In 1919 the Harbour Board was created to look after the Harbours and was given the right to collect harbour and other tonnage dues up to a certain amount. That Board continued to function until 1921. In 1922 the Colonial Transport Department was created by Statute, which vested in the Governor the railway and its appurtenances and also the steamers, and the duty of the Board was to control and manage the Transport Department. The provision as to the estimates was practically as it is here. Those estimates were authorised by the Governor in Council and the point was that when there was a deficiency they came to the Legislature to get the amount made up.

Let us now look at the difference between those estimates and the Forest Department, which, as I said, has no analogy. The Transport and Harbours Department collects, by virtue of Statute, certain fees and dues up to a certain maximum. If it is desired to exceed that maximum the authority of this Council is necessary. Another branch of its revenue comes from the running of the steamers and another from running the railway. This is a Department which is administering a lot of property and is a revenue-earning Department. It receives revenue from business which it is empowered to do. The Forest Department had no business in that sense at all. When we look at the Statute we find the expression "authorised estimate" used in section 7, and this is a reproduction of the former provision of the Colonial Transport Department. The honourable Member for Central Demerara is very anxious to change the system, but in so doing he acknowledges that the estimates which are sanctioned by the Governor in Council are the authorised estimates, nevertheless he says that although the estimates have been sanctioned by the authority which has power to do so they must come to this Council for final approval.

What is the value of them as "authorised estimates"? That seems to me a

defect in the reasoning of the hon. Member, and I think it goes to show that the Legislature would be invited to undertake an unnecessary duty or burden to go over again the authorised estimates. Further than that, as has been pointed out by one hon. Member, the Department is really being run on commercial principles as a commercial department. It is different in that way from other Departments of Government. When the Departments were amalgamated the Legislature considered that it should be managed in a commercial way and the Legislature provided for its management. That has subsisted up to the present time. The reason is that a legislative body is notoriously incapable of running a commercial business. That is an acknowledged principle. In the opinion of several people lawyers are not business men. The members of the Board do take, as we all know, a very active and careful interest in the management of the Department, and they have achieved what are realised to be exceedingly good results to the great advantage and benefit of the Colony. They have served the Colony well and faithfully, not merely because they have done their duty but because there have been good, tangible results following from their management of the Department.

As a general proposition it is perfectly clear that it is not to the benefit of the Department that it should become the subject of general criticism and interference by Members of this Council in the exercise of what they may properly consider to be their constitutional rights. I have dealt with the matter perhaps historically, and I hope I have shown good reason why it is impolitic to make such an amendment. It may be expedient, but it is not always wise, to do things which may appear to us to be expedient. If there was a successful charge that by reason of events that had happened, or which must necessarily happen, it is necessary that the control and management be taken out of the hands of the Board, then it would be different and the proper way of censuring the Board would not be by the Legislature taking it over but a vote of censure by the appointment of a new Board. I venture to think that on a careful consideration of the facts and of the circumstances the amendment moved by the Colonial Treasurer should stand and the Committee should reject the amend-

ment put forward by the hon. Member for Central Demerara. It is in conflict with the whole spirit of the Statutes which govern the management of the Department and it is in conflict with the whole history of the Department down to the present time. And there is no evidence or sound suggestion that there is going to be any valuable result which makes it of overwhelming necessity to disturb and make an upheaval in regard to what has been working so well in the past.

MR. HUMPHRYS: The amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Central Demerara is sound in principle. It seems to me to be in consonance with the rights and privileges of this Council, and I wanted to hear how in 1932 it slipped the Council in allowing the Ordinance to pass as it is. I agree that now that we have an opportunity of amending it we should do so. I have not heard why consideration of the estimates by this Council is being contested; it can do no harm. The Board has on it Nominated and Elected Members and it is only right that the Council as a whole should be able either to commend their work or to criticise it if there is need for doing so. Like all other Departments it is a Department in respect of which expenditure is being incurred. The Department of Lands and Mines collects revenue and submits its estimates to this House.

THE CHAIRMAN: No Department of Government except the Transport and Harbours Department is run on its own funds.

MR. HUMPHRYS: That is so, sir, but I do not see any reason why its estimates should not be submitted to this House. I feel that the submission of the estimates to this House enables the Legislature to know what is going on. It is not with any idea of an absence of confidence in the Board that the suggestion is made but simply that in matters of expenditure this Council should have a hand in them.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I have no desire to prolong the debate but certain comparisons have been made which I think should be cleared up. I thought I made it perfectly plain that my only object was to protect the rights and privileges of this Council. I quite agree that the Depart-

ment is being run as a commercial undertaking. I do not think it can be said that the Board of Directors of a commercial undertaking are not subject to criticism. In this matter the shareholders are the public and Members of the Legislative Council represent the shareholders. These are rights and privileges I want to protect. What happened in the past might have been an error. I never suggested that this Council wanted to take away the powers of the Board. The Board is comprised of gentlemen of honour, repute and standing in the community, but I claim that it is the right and privilege of this Council to review the activities of the Board as in the case of any public Department. It must not be lost sight of that the privileges of Members of this House are very limited. We cannot initiate money votes, but the right of voting sums of money is vested in us, and it is that right I want to protect, as long as I remain a Member of this House.

Mr. SEAFORD: The learned Attorney-General referred to the Board as being of a commercial status and run on business lines. I should like to ask the question: Are they allowed to run the Department on business lines? If they are I cannot congratulate them on their business acumen. I remember there used to be a reserve, called the Steamers Replacement Fund, amounting to nearly half a million dollars. I wonder where that Fund is today, and if it were given up gratuitously. If it were taken from them, the Department is not run on business lines by business men.

Mr. ELEAZAR: When this House had the privilege of investigating the estimates the Department came to the Council for a sum of money to extend the New Amsterdam stelling by 80 feet. I then said "What, 80 feet; the thing wants 280 feet." You will be surprised to know that the very next morning they measured the distance and found it to be 280 feet, and they had to make the extension that length. If we had not the privilege of criticising the estimates then we would have passed the estimate for 80 feet and when the work was completed they would have had to ask for further expenditure for 280 feet. That is a case in point. When matters come before the Council we can give the benefit of our knowledge and advice. Government have no regard for the experience of Mem-

bers of this Council but members of these Boards they regard as a source of wisdom. The Attorney-General says lawyers are not business men, but we give advice to business men.

Mr. G. J. DEFREITAS: As only a temporary Member perhaps I am able to look at this matter with an eye of disinterestedness. I look at it in the light of a shareholder. It seems to me that the hon. Member for Central Demerara is labouring under some missapprehension, or, if he is not, what he wishes is not met by the amendment he has proposed. As the Attorney General has pointed out, the effect of the amendment is to stultify yourself and make section 7 nonsensical. Out of curiosity I have looked up the report of the debate on section 7, and I find that not a single comment was made when that section was proposed, except an observation by Mr. Crane as follows:

"It seems to me that the words 'the Governor in Council' in the proviso are not necessary as the fees and charges referred to could not be changed before they went before the Governor in Council."

Not another word fell from any other Member of the Council on the question. All they laboured was the constitution of the Board, and Government met their wishes by increasing the number of the Elected and other Members, and incidentally the Colonial Secretary said the Board might be composed of 12 lawyers. Evidently he himself thought lawyers bad business men. What surprises me is that the hon. Member for Central Demerara, who is himself a business man, does not see it in the way the Attorney-General puts it. Here is a Department which has been transformed into a business concern, and there is no doubt about it. The net receipts are in excess of working expenditure. It is really capital charges that make it almost compulsory for many years, if not for all time, for the Board to come to this Council to vote the deficiency. The Department is paying its expenditure out of its revenue. The hon. Member is asking for an amendment that the authorised estimates shall be subject to the approval of the Legislative Council after they have been considered by the Board, consisting of the Colonial Secretary, three Elected Members, two persons selected from a panel submitted by the Chamber of Commerce (who presumably recommend proper



and competent business men), and four other persons who I imagine would be persons of business acumen. That is, the Board that considers the estimates with the assistance of the General Manager, after which they are put before the Governor in Council where again you find Elected Members.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara asks that after all that has been done the estimates should be submitted to this Council, not for criticism only but for final approval. Would the hon. Member as the manager of a concern, after he and his directors had decided on certain measures and expenditure had been incurred, stand for one moment any shareholder coming along and saying he voted against those measures. The shareholders would have to do what the Attorney-General said is done: move a vote of censure and elect a new Board. If it were thought that a Board of Directors were mismanaging the affairs of any business concern, what any business man would do would be to remove the whole Board. It seems to me very inconvenient to have all the estimates of expenditure taken one by one and criticised. It would be carrying out the work of the Department in a way which would make it almost impossible for any Board of Directors to conduct their business on anything like sound lines. The hon. Member seems to think there is no right to criticise. I myself cannot see how, when the deficiency is brought forward, Members can be precluded from making comments about the general management of the business. You could not ask Members of the Council to vote a deficiency and prevent them from making comments about it. The Ordinance of 1932 says "The net deficiency of the Department for any year after providing for the amount payable to the Colonial Treasurer in respect of interest and sinking fund charges shall be met from such sum as may be voted by the Legislative Council: provided that any surplus shall on the direction of the Governor in Council be paid by the Board to the Colonial Treasurer for credit of the general revenue of the Colony." That clearly shows that the revenue of the Department is not general revenue as is the revenue of the Department of Lands and Mines and other Departments, and if the net deficiency is likely to be running for some considerable time there would be nothing to prevent

Members from making some criticism about the actual expenditure of the Department when approval is asked for that deficiency; but to give the Council power to discuss, criticise and strike out items which have been finally sanctioned by the Governor in Council would land the Department in chaos. Mr. Crane was very jealous of his constitutional rights, and if he thought they were being interfered with he would have made some comment, or opposed section 7 of the Ordinance. I find it difficult to understand what is the necessity for the amendment.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think I am the only Member of the Council who enjoys the privilege of a member of both Boards. I served on the Harbour Board as representing New Amsterdam, and when Government took over the railway service I was also appointed a member of this Board. In the past of which I am speaking the estimates of the Harbour Board were discussed here, but they never became the subject of adverse criticism because the revenue of the Harbour Board largely exceeded expenditure, and I rather fancy that if that position were maintained with regard to the steamer department the hon. Member for Central Demerara would not have ventured to submit his amendment. I believe the hon. Member is rather thinking of the continuous period over which the deficit will have to be met. It is a good illustration of the hon. Member's wish to serve the public, and more particularly his own constituency, that items like expenditure on the railway should receive some amount of public attention. But what really happened was this. In a desire to effect economy a Committee was appointed of the joint Boards, to which other people were added, and it was decided as the result of that Committee's deliberations that the two Departments should be amalgamated. The distinction drawn between the constitution of the Transport and Harbours Board is that in no other Department of the Public Service is the sole and entire control of administration vested in persons who are not members of the Civil Service. There is no Department of the Civil Service in which the elected element has the sanction of expenditure and the supervision and management of the Department. A compromise was made that so long as representation

on that Board consisted of a certain number of Elected Members, and so long as the Chamber of Commerce and certain other interests were represented, this Council agreed to the proposed legislation which now stands on the Statute. It was not by any means overlooked at the time, and I think the whole matter was considered by the Committee.

I agree that the Legislature surrendered whatever privileges it had to generally criticise the estimates. As the Hon. Mr. De Freitas has pointed out, the whole of the estimates of the Board can be subject to criticism, adversely of otherwise, when the proposal is made for sanction of the net deficiency; nor will it prevent any Member of the Council from moving a motion in regard to the general policy of the Board. The Legislature at the time found that its privileges were being adequately protected by a sufficiency of representation of this Council on the Board. It was even suggested that nominations to the Board should be made by the Council, but that was not persisted in. At the present moment the Board is well managed and, I think, its privileges sufficiently safeguarded. The hon. Member for Georgetown North has ventured to cite, as an instance of insufficient appreciation of their public duties, that the Board have willingly surrendered the amount at credit of the Steamers' Replacement Reserve Fund, and he cited it as a lack of business ability. Whatever prompted him to make that suggestion it is a very unfortunate instance, because the amount was confiscated by Government, and if it is any pleasure to him to know that was the position with regard to the Harbour Reserve Fund also.

Mr. WONG: I belong to that large section of the public who feel very strongly that, generally speaking, Government should not engage in commercial undertakings. We recognise, however, that there are some cases in which it is the best policy for Government to undertake commercial undertakings, and this Department is one of those cases. We feel equally strong that when such cases occur at least the management of that concern should be removed from the control of the Legislative Council, and it is in that way I would oppose any attempt to alter the Ordinance of the Department. I happen to

know that there is another strong opponent of this principle,—the hon. Member for Georgetown North,—but he, apparently, has changed his mind overnight. The Transport and Harbours Ordinance admirably achieves the policy which I have announced is one held by a large section of the public. The hon. Member for Central Demerara wishes to make a change because members of the public are also shareholders of the company. I do not think I can add anything usefully to what has been said by Mr. De Freitas. The hon. Member for Berbice River supported the amendment by stating that without it the Department would be spending public money and the Council would have no voice in it. I wish to point out that he is quite wrong. The only time when the Department would be spending public money is when there is a deficit, and it is already provided in the law that the Board has to come to this Council for the deficit. The only occasion that the law does not provide for the Board coming to this House is when the Department makes a profit, and in that case there will be no spending of public money by the Department.

Mr. SEAFORD: I entirely agree with the statement that I object to Government entering into public enterprise. If these undertakings are run on business lines I have no objection to them, but they are over-ridden from time to time and as long as Government over-rides them I shall object. If Government gives an assurance that it will not interfere with them but allow them to run on business lines, I am quite satisfied, but until that is done I must claim the rights of this House.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It is perfectly true that I or my directors may not stand for criticism levelled at us by shareholders on any matter dealt with by them, but as a matter of fact the shareholders are entitled to criticism.

Mr. G. J. DE FREITAS: The hon. Member has misunderstood me. I never said they were not entitled to criticism. What I said was that the hon. Member and his directors would not stand for shareholders coming forward and saying they must not spend so much money. Criticism is always there.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: If the majority of

shareholders decide that certain things shall not be done the directors can do nothing more in the matter, therefore the answer is that the decision rests finally with the shareholders. I have no desire to embarrass Government with the amendment if it will not carry out the object I have in mind, and I am quite willing to move a further amendment, which might place a different complexion on what I have in mind and probably meet the objection. The amendment is to delete all the words after the word "estimates" in the fifth line and to insert the words "and the same shall be submitted to the Legislative Council for approval." If Government will accept the amendment in that form I will withdraw the previous amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think it would worth the hon. Member's while. It would make no difference to the attitude of Government if the hon. Member were to substitute the second amendment for the first.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: If that is so I will take my seat.

THE CHAIRMAN: I should like to give credit to the hon. Member for the public spirit which I know underlies his proposal, but I would point out that the amendment he has moved would effect so far-reaching an alteration in the whole foundation of the Ordinance, and in the organisation and management of the Transport and Harbours Department, that I could not possibly proceed with the Bill. In the first place, I should have had to refer the Bill to the Attorney-General to see to what extent so far-reaching an amendment would require modification elsewhere. In the second place, as it would entirely reverse the obvious intention of the Legislature in 1931 and 1932, an intention which was approved by the Secretary of State on a major principle, I should have to refer the Bill to the Secretary of State. For those reasons I could not possibly proceed with the Bill were that amendment to be carried.

I do not think it is necessary for me to go over the able expositions which have been made by the Attorney-General, the Hon. Mr. De Freitas, the hon. Member for New Amsterdam and others as to the essential difference between the Transport

and Harbours Department, which works on its own revenue collected by itself as far as it can, and any other Government Department. It has been admitted, I think, on all sides of the Council that the Transport and Harbours Department must be regarded as a semi-commercial body. If that is so I would ask the hon. Member to pause before he puts a third fetter on to that body, he being a business man himself. In the first place there is the Board constituted by Ordinance, and, in the second place, there is the Governor in Council. The hon. Member wishes to impose a third, the Legislative Council, and as a business man I suggest to him to regard this as a business proposition and not press his amendment for that reason. The present constitution of the Board is consonant with modern legislation elsewhere. In modern legislation in other Crown Colonies, so far as railways, harbours and so forth are concerned, the control of the detailed estimates has been taken away from the Legislative Council by the Legislative Council themselves, because they do not wish what is a business matter to be subject to the delay which parliamentary control entails. The principle is recognised also in Great Britain, and I think it is a very sound principle.

It is quite competent for any Member of this Council to raise any question of public interest and to have it debated. So far as the Board may be over-ridden by the Governor in Council, quite apart from the undertaking I gave to give full scope to the Board, there are several Members of this Council who are also members of the Board and it is always possible for them to raise any question here; so I do not think there need be any fear that the rejection of the amendment will do any harm. In so far as the railway is concerned, the Legislative Council for many years to come will have an opportunity of discussing the estimates because they will be asked for money, and when invited to vote money it is reasonable that they should ask to be allowed to discuss the estimates. Even if there were to be a surplus in the revenue of the Department at any time, it would always be within the competence of any Member of the Council to raise a debate upon its management or upon its finances. I do not think the Council is in any way being deprived

of the control it has over the Transport and Harbours Department if this amendment is negatived.

Question "That the words of the question stand as in the original motion" put, and negatived.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will now put the amendment by the hon. Member for Central Demerara, but with it I must incorporate the amendment by the mover of the Bill because they go together.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: With the permission of the House I withdraw my amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: I accept that with pleasure.

Clause as amended by the Colonial Treasurer put, and agreed to.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon recess.

Mr. McDAVID, on the Council resuming, reported that the Bill had passed the Committee with amendment.

Notice was given that at the next meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read a third time. (*Mr. McDavid*).

#### ADVANCES TO TEACHERS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 25 of the 6th of July, 1935, this Council approves of advances of salary up to a limit of \$50 in each case being granted to certificated teachers, not exceeding 100 in number, to enable them to attend the Conference of West Indian teachers to be held in Trinidad in August, 1935, on the conditions stated in the Message referred to.

The object of this motion is explained in the Message at greater length than in the motion itself. In the month of August there will be an important Conference of teachers in Trinidad and the Teachers' Association approached Government with a request that the teachers might be granted the privilege of an advance of salary to assist them to attend the Conference. Under ordinary circumstances very few teachers have an opportunity to leave the Colony; in fact, it can safely be said that with the exception of the small minority trained in Jamaica and Barbados,

it is a very rare thing for teachers to be in any country but this. The advantages to be gained by a teacher even by a short visit outside his own country is obvious, and for this reason Government decided to assist the teachers in organising this tour. Since this motion was put on the Order Paper two Members have drawn my attention to a minor difficulty. Owing to a misunderstanding the Teachers' Association was informed that an advance of \$50 might be drawn by any teacher irrespective of his monthly salary. The original intention of Government was to give an advance of one month's salary which, if it happens to be less than \$50, will be paid at that rate. As a mistake has however been made Government has decided to give the teachers the benefit, if it is a benefit to borrow more money than is strictly necessary, and with the permission of the Council I move an amendment of the motion to meet that point. The amendment is to delete the words "conditions stated in the Message referred to" and to substitute the following:—

"following conditions:—

- (i) that the advance is repaid by each teacher by monthly deductions from his salary in such instalments as permit of the total advance being repaid not later than 31st July, 1936;
- (ii) that a promissory note is given by each teacher together with a guarantee for repayment signed by the manager of the school by whom he is employed or some other approved person."

I beg to move the motion as amended.

Mr. SMELLIE seconded.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I rise to support the motion, also to thank the Colonial Secretary for the amendment. Had the motion gone through as at first proposed a hardship would undoubtedly have been created, especially to third-class certificated teachers, as the advance would have been limited and it would have been impossible for them to make the trip.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to thank Government for giving teachers this privilege. I also compliment the Colonial Secretary on his foresight that it is not good business to lend a man in receipt of \$20 the sum of \$50. We have to thank Government, however, for removing that restriction.

Motion put, and agreed to.

## SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move:—

THAT this Council approves additional provision being made to meet expenditure in excess of the provision already made for the year 1935, as set forth in the schedule for the period 1st April to 30th June, 1935, which has been laid upon the table.

Mr. SMELLIE seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the schedule item by item.

## SUPREME COURT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Since the schedule has been prepared it has been ascertained that this item (9—Fees to counsel, murder cases, \$210) should be increased to \$310. I move that the item be carried out at that figure.

Question put, and agreed to.

## COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND SCHEMES.

Mr. ELEAZAR: In the Berbice River there is just one Nurse working in connection with the Infant Welfare and Maternity League, and in maternity cases she has to travel a distance of 60 miles with or against the tide, which entails great hardship. A building has been erected out of private funds for the accommodation of this Nurse and some pots and pans are now necessary, and the President has requested me to ask Government for a grant of \$50 for this laudable work.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the best course will be for the hon. Member to get the Surgeon-General to raise the question when we take the next schedule of further provision required to the end of the year. At the moment we are only asking the Council to sanction expenditure to the 30th June. As I undertook at the beginning of the session I propose, wherever further expenditure above the estimates can be foreseen, to put a Supplementary Estimate before the Council before the money is spent, and another schedule will be put before the Council for the year 1935. That will be a better opportunity to raise the question. In the meantime I suggest to the hon. Member to use his

persuasive powers with the Surgeon-General to achieve his purpose.

The Council resumed.

Schedule as amended agreed to.

## PURCHASE OF STOCK.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): In pursuance of notice I move:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 24 of the 6th of July, 1935, this Council approves of the acceptance of a loan of £1,500 (\$7,200) from the Colonial Development Advisory Committee, free of interest, repayable in five years, to provide for the establishment of a revolving fund for the purchase of breeding stock in the United Kingdom for distribution in this Colony.

The particulars are, I think, clearly set forth in the Message. The question of assistance to the live stock industry, more particularly the improvement of beef production, has been under consideration for some time. As indicated previously in this Council, the Secretary of State was unable to approve of the financing of a Live Stock Farm, but he offered this loan free of interest to enable ranchers and cattle owners to secure pure bred sires on easy terms. The cost of such animals landed in the Colony, immunised from tropical diseases, is fairly high, and acceptance of this motion means that either by co-operation amongst themselves or individually stock owners will be assisted to secure first class sires to improve their herds in adequate numbers.

Major CRAIG seconded.

Mr. WONG: I welcome this motion, not because I believe anything useful will be achieved by it, but because I see in it an expression of Government's willingness to do something at last for the beef industry. It is a most surprising fact that up to now the whole of Government's efforts for the cattle industry has been directed solely to the improvement of dairy cattle. We all recognise the great importance, the necessity almost, of a good and plentiful supply of milk, but the milk trade is purely a domestic one and as such there is necessarily very limited scope for expansion. In fact, if one were to consider the low price of milk in recent years and the fact that in outlying districts there are vast supplies available which are not made use of simply

because the price would not cover the cost of transportation, one will see that the limit of expansion of the milk trade has already been passed. As regards the quality of milk, sir, I have heard one Official Member of this Council, who is a great milk drinker, declare that the milk in this Colony is better than any he has tasted anywhere else.

In spite of this plentiful supply of good milk year after year, Government's small contribution to the cattle industry has been directed solely and entirely to the improvement of our dairy cattle, whereas the beef industry for which there are export markets right at our door and has great room for expansion has to be satisfied with pious expressions of hope and sympathy. Possibly that is due to the fact that there has never been in this House a Member to represent the industry, but whatever might be the reason there is no getting away from the fact that beef production has been seriously neglected by Government. I look upon it as a very good augury that in the first session under your presidency, sir, this motion has been brought forward. It shows, if nothing else, that Government has at last awakened to its responsibility to the beef industry and is willing to do something for it. I must not be taken as advocating a discontinuance of Government's assistance to the milk industry. We have after many years brought the supply of milk up to a certain standard and should maintain it, but the time is past due when a part of the Colony's revenue should be made available for the improvement of our beef cattle. If Government finds it impossible to allocate further moneys for the cattle industry then the vote that is now being spent purely on dairy cattle should, to a large extent, be diverted to the improvement of our beef stock.

I wish now to show how this motion will not achieve very much. I look upon it purely as a good gesture on the part of Government. In your speech, sir, you told the beef producers that they were showing a lack of interest in the progress and development of the industry, and you were referring then to the lack of response given to the invitation of Government to take advantage of this revolving fund. I think you were a little bit unfair to the industry, and it is quite understandable

because you could not possibly have had the time to study local conditions as they obtain to-day. To-day a steer giving between 300 and 400 lbs. of beef is sold in Georgetown for anything from \$10 to \$14. An animal from the Rupununi costs \$6 to bring it to Georgetown and its maximum price is \$14. That is the state of affairs that has prevailed for some years, and there is no likelihood of any improvement in that direction in the near future. The producers of cattle who depend entirely on the beef industry for their livelihood are either bankrupt or on the verge of bankruptcy. The idea of Government is to import pure-bred beef sires for these people and allow them to pay for these sires by instalments over a period of years. But look at the price of these animals and the benefit the people will get. An animal six to nine months old would be imported at a landed cost of £70. On arrival it has to be kept under the care of Government to be acclimatised. That is a very wise and necessary precaution, but the cost of that will have to be added to the animal. After that it will be at least two years before that animal can be expected to do the work for which it is to be imported. By that time the animal will cost the rancher, I assume, at least \$400, and during those years there is always the possibility that the animal will die and never give any service at all.

In such circumstances, is there any wonder that no one has taken advantage of Government's offer? It would be all very well if the producers in this Colony would get £40 for beef cattle, as in England, or even \$40, but with the price prevailing in the Colony, Government's offer is like one standing on the deck line and if he would only swim to the ship he would be quite safe. I am aware of the fact that the Director of Agriculture believes he can get cheaper animals from Canada and is endeavouring to find out the price, but I doubt whether the price would ever be low enough for the industry in its present condition to take advantage of it. The purchase of beef sires means fresh cattle, and, bearing in mind that the animal you are going to import is only six or nine months old, it means that even the man who is prepared to put his hand in his pocket and purchase new cattle will never see a return on his investment for at least ten years. It is too much to hope that

beef producers will take advantage of the benefit intended by this motion. Even if he were able to do so, what about the small man? Your Excellency must be aware that a good deal of the beef cattle supplied to the local market is the product of the small farmer who owns one or two cows. He could not possibly benefit from this revolving fund. If Government wishes to do anything for the benefit of the industry the only way it can be done is by the establishment of Stock Farms and the provision of pure animals for service in the outlying districts.

That is the unanimous view of all competent opinion in this Colony. In 1931 the Cattle Committee reported to this House. That Committee was composed of all the leading cattle owners in the Colony and it also had the benefit of the advice and experience of Mr. Montgomery, Adviser on Animal Health to the Colonial Office. Their recommendations laid stress on the possibilities of the beef industry, and one of their recommendations was the establishment of a Stock Farm. Two years ago another Committee was formed and several meetings were held. It was very disappointing, not to say discouraging, that the report of that Committee has not even been laid on the table of this Council. Nevertheless, that Committee again reported in favour of a Stock Farm and emphasised the necessity for improving the beef strain. Another recommendation of the Committee was the provision of a revolving fund. But the important recommendations were that we should establish a Stock Farm, with special emphasis on the beef side, and provide animals standing for service in the outlying districts. I am quite aware that Government is in full sympathy with the recommendations of the Committees but finds itself financially unable to carry them out.

If that is the position of Government, I respectfully submit, at least Government should be able to import grown animals and send them to the outlying districts to stand for service there. That would be of some assistance, but not a proposal of this kind. We are in the fortunate position that our creole cattle are suitable foundation stock for the rearing of beef animals. If this money can be used for that purpose then some good would result.

If Government could provide animals for service in the outlying districts where the small men as well as ranchers and breeders could get service there would be an improvement in beef cattle in four to five years. On the other hand, even if this revolving fund would be taken advantage of by the ranchers, it would be at least ten years before you will see any result in the local market. In point of fact if there is nothing more than the benefit of this revolving fund offered to the industry, I prophesy that you will see no improvement whatever. What the industry is suffering from at present is over production of animals of an unsuitable and unsaleable type, and you will find that the larger ranchers will have to go out of business if that continues. We all recognise the fact that one of the crying needs of this Colony is an addition to the list of exportable agricultural products. Here is something that we can produce; here is something that we have an export market for right at our door. Neither Trinidad nor Barbados can produce the beef they require, and so far as we know this Colony is the only British possession that can supply their needs. In such circumstances, I submit, it is reasonable that the industry should look to Government for some fatherly interest and helping hand. I feel sure that when Your Excellency has had an opportunity for studying the matter yourself that helping hand will be forthcoming and I hope it will be stretched sufficiently far.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I wish to associate myself with the remarks made by the last speaker; but I doubt very much whether this revolving fund will be of any benefit to the cattle breeders. I happened to be a member of the Committee referred to which in 1931 recommended the establishment of a Stock Farm. I am under the impression that we were led to believe that the Imperial Government was prepared to give us a Stock Farm, and the only difficulty the Committee had at the time was to find a suitable place for that purpose. That question should have been enquired into by Government, but up to now I am yet to hear whether Government has found a suitable place. Government might say it made this offer to the cattle industry and it was not accepted, but under present conditions I fail to see how cattle farmers can afford to embark on such an investment. I doubt whether

they have sufficient well drained pasture lands to keep such an animal or even its progeny. I do not know if I correctly understood the last speaker to say that we are over producing cattle in this Colony.

Mr. WONG: I said there was an over production of animals of an unsuitable and unsaleable type.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Thanks for the explanation. That saves me from pursuing the point. I happen to know it is because we cannot supply the demand of the West Indian markets that we do not get all the preference those markets are prepared to give us. The proposal of Government would not improve the position, neither would it improve conditions of supply to the West Indian markets. If Government is genuinely disposed to assist the cattle industry it should approach the Secretary of State on the question of establishing a Stock Farm on the same lines that dairy animals are supplied to stock owners in different parts of the Empire. Milk production has increased so much that it has reduced the price of milk by at least 30 per cent. I hope that with improvement in the beef trade that would not be the result. We are producing more cattle than the local market can take and not sufficient for the export markets. Butchers are always more disposed to buy animals reared on the coastlands than Rupununi cattle. The Rupununi Development Company want to push sales and that also reduces the price of creole cattle. If I am correctly informed they have dropped the price of Rupununi cattle and the price of creole cattle has dropped 30 per cent. in consequence. I ask Government seriously to consider the establishment of a Stock Farm if it is genuinely disposed to improve the breed of cattle in the Colony.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to add my quota to this debate. I do not think there is any Member of this House who is more qualified than the hon. Member for Essequibo River to deal with this subject. I agree that what we want is a Stock Farm. I do not know that the proposed revolving fund will be of very much benefit, but we cannot look a gift horse in the mouth and I think we should take the loan. We need not spend it to import

cattle for the real cattle farmer. Every cattle farmer of any class at all can afford to import his own animal. I take it that this loan is intended to import a few animals, keep them in appropriate localities under proper supervision, and let small farmers around bring in their cattle for service. In that way Government can within a short period get a good strain of animals and spend the money to better purpose than is suggested.

Professor DASH: I have listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks of the hon. Member for Essequibo River. Certainly it cannot be charged that Government is not genuinely interested in this matter. Government has always been interested, but it is all a question of funds. In the remarks made by the Member for Essequibo River one or two points struck me, while most of what he said I agree with. The hon. Member mentioned, for example, the super-abundance of milk at the moment. I am glad to hear that because when we started the dairy cattle improvement work the complaint was that there was a shortage of milk for Government institutions, high infantile mortality and a number of other related factors which made it incumbent on Government to turn first to milk. I submit there is still a great deal of room for an increased consumption of fresh milk. If Members would look at the imports of condensed milk they will get a very rude shock. Perhaps the hon. Member for Central Demerara can enlighten us on that point. It seems to me that if we are importing this tremendous quantity of condensed milk there is a great deal of room for the further consumption of fresh milk.

The question of the beef supply locally and in the neighbouring Colonies is in the hands of a more substantial class of people than those who keep milch cows, and unfortunately there has not been that spirit of co-operation among those beef producers that one would have liked to see. There is no reason why a number of them could not have joined together—and that was a point the Secretary of State made in one of his despatches—and imported pure bred sires and in that way greatly help themselves. It is true that in the past a certain amount of importation was done, but it was done without the right type of advice and a number of these



animals were lost. Not long ago I made a suggestion to the Berbice Chamber of Commerce that there should be a combination of cattle interests so that some of these factors could be considered and Government assist in doing what it could for the cattle industry. We have an Ordinance calculated to improve conditions, which I was anxious to have discussed by them, but I gathered from reports which reached me that the Berbice cattle men apparently are not too keen on this question of co-operation. I hope they will change their mind and see the value of it. But however much Government wants to afford assistance and however well intentioned it is, Government cannot do much in cases of this kind unless there is that spirit of co-operation shown among those people for whom we are working. The suggestion has been made that matured animals may be imported and placed at service in different parts of the Colony. All experience is against the importation of matured animals in the tropics from northern countries. They must be caught young and immunised from tropical disease, kept under close supervision for some time before they are brought into the tropics and watched in the tropics again before they are put out. Under careful supervision we have had no loss at all with our importations.

We all admit that a Stock Farm would be the most desirable thing. I stressed that in one of my first speeches in this Council, and we have been working at it ever since then. We have had Committees, detailed estimates put up and the question of a site gone into, which are well known to Members of the Council, but the Secretary of State told us he was not in a position to help to the financial extent required for a Stock Farm. He threw out the suggestion that a little more co-operation might be shown among those interested in the beef industry and readily agreed to the suggestion that we should adopt a revolving fund which will allow ranchers a number of years to repay the cost of these animals. That is where we are to day, and I hope a little more interest will be shown in the effort and something genuine will come out of it. In the meantime the Department has turned to the question of importing for itself in so far as the limited funds will admit and gradually to do with the funds at its disposal

what it has been doing for milk. But if quick results are to be obtained it is quite impossible to suppose that one or two animals a year are going to make any very great difference. If this revolving fund materialises and is accepted, you will be able during the next five years to import a fair number of good sires of recognised and proved merit of pedigree strains, which when crossed with our creole animals should result in a very marked improvement in the type of animals the hon. Member for Essequibo River has referred to.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: After hearing the hon. Member for Essequibo River, who is an authority on hinterland cattle, and the hon. Member for Western Berbice, who is an authority on coastal cattle, I had no intention of saying anything on this question. I have been reluctantly drawn into the discussion by the reference to me by the Director of Agriculture in respect of the importation of condensed milk. I merely desire to say that condensed milk is imported primarily for use in the hinterland, as 80 per cent. of the people on the coast and elsewhere are supplied with fresh milk. I also wish to remind the Council that matured Bornstein bulls have been imported here and within a short time of their arrival have been put to service. There can be no doubt that the majority of people interested are in favour of the establishment of a Stock Farm.

Motion put, and agreed to.

#### DEMERARA FERRY FARES.

Mr. WILLS: I beg to move:—

WHEREAS as from the 1st July, 1934, the Transport and Harbours Department increased the fares of the Demerara Ferry Service in the early mornings and late afternoons by 50% in the case of single fares and 33½% in the case of return fares;

And Whereas such increases are appreciably felt by a number of persons of the poorest classes whose occupations necessitate their use of the said ferry;

And Whereas an increase in revenue, if even considerable, is not of itself an adequate reason to induce Government to increase to the labouring classes the cost of travelling to prosecute their employment;

And Whereas besides numbers of small suppliers of produce to the City are similarly adversely affected:

*Be it therefore Resolved*.—That this Council advocates to Government the advisability of maintaining cheap travel and transportation,

especially to the labouring and small industrial classes, by rail and steamers run by Government, and to this end respectfully requests Government to revert to the scale of fares in respect of the said ferry service existing prior to the 1st of July, 1934.

In commending the motion to the Council it is not my intention to enter exhaustively into the history of the transport service. It would be well to mention, however, that prior to 1914 Messrs. Sproston, Ltd., ran the steamer service on the payment of a subsidy. When the service was established the main idea was the inauguration of a cheap public utility service. On the introduction of the service fares were fixed at four cents for second-class and six cents for first-class passengers, and the public regarded those fares as an earnest of Government's intention to provide a public utility service. After a short time it was found necessary to put a larger boat on the service and the "Queriman" was imported. At the end of 1915 the service earned the handsome sum of \$54,643, and I think it was the success of this service that induced Government to acquire the Demerara Railway and merge the steamers and railway service together. We all know that the Demerara and Berbice ferry services are the only means for people crossing from Georgetown to Vreed-en-Hoop and from Rosignol to New Amsterdam. On arrival of the "Queriman" the second-class fare was increased to six cents and that of the first-class to twelve cents. The public did not complain about these fares because they appreciated that they were getting a bigger ship and quicker despatch. In 1932 the fares were further increased from six to eight cents and from twelve to fourteen cents. The public did not take kindly to that increase and it resulted in a decrease of receipts, which in turn brought about a reversion to the old fares of six and twelve cents.

There also used to be an early and late ferry fare of two cents which was increased to three cents. These increased fares affect the poorest classes of workers, who are factory girls and other menial servants. At this time when money is scarce and wages are low it is not right that the working classes should be called upon to pay one cent or a penny a day more for the use of a public utility service. I took a deputation to Sir Crawford Douglas-Jones and he promised to appoint a Com-

mittee to go into the matter and report. Twelve months have elapsed and nothing has been done to relieve these people of what is a tax on labour. There was a loss on the railway services and fares were substantially reduced, with the result that people are taking advantage of the cheap fares and more are travelling by the railway. Why is it then that where there is a monopoly increased fares should be charged to those who are less able to pay? People employed at the Match Factory are paid from six to seven shillings a week, from which they have to support themselves, and while fares might be increased by the Board they are looking to Government to afford them relief. They feel that an advantage is being taken of them by the Board and they have asked me to put their case before this House. It is clear that the ferry service is not being run at a loss but is clearing its working expenses, and while it is appreciated that it is a combined service the people feel that it is not fair that the fares should be increased to them. We find that the operating cost of the Demerara ferry last year amounted to \$43,918 and the revenue to \$50,707, which gives a surplus of \$6,789. Does it not appear that a large portion of that surplus is acquired out of the earnings of the poor? It might be termed "grinding the poor." They cannot afford it and yet the little they have is taken away from them. The motion should commend itself to the House.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I second the motion. The hon. Member has said all I would have said in helping him, so I have not much to say. I urge upon Government the advisability of enquiring into the increased fares for the early and late boats. Those services were inaugurated particularly with a view to meeting the requirements of labourers, some of whom come from the West Coast to Georgetown while others go from Georgetown to the West Coast. I do not think those services should bear the extra cent, and it is a little hard on persons in receipt of six or seven shillings a week. The Demerara ferry is the most profitable service of the Transport Department. I think the hon. Member has made out a case for enquiry as to whether the fares cannot be reduced in favour of those who have to travel to and from work early and late.

Mr. GORING (General Manager, Trans-

port and Harbours Department) : In rising to oppose this motion I will try as far as possible to get away from the extremely narrow view of General Manager of the Transport and Harbours Department and speak rather as a Member of the Council who has the taxpayer's benefit at heart. The special rates that have been attacked are workmen's tickets and I should like to explain how these are used by the general public. A workman's ticket is used in the early and late boats both from the Vreed-en-hoop side and from the Georgetown side. From the Georgetown side it is used by persons who, I think, find work in factories over at Vreed-en-hoop, but from the Vreed-en-hoop side it is also used by hucksters who stay in Georgetown the whole day. These hucksters are allowed to carry over one can of milk or a basket of provisions free, while on the rates that are charged on other provisions that they bring there is a considerable reduction of the ordinary rates. A huckster's ticket is a combination of a workman's ticket and a return fare. It is cheaper than that combination and it is used by hucksters to return in the middle of the day. They also get the same privilege of carrying a can of milk or a basket of provisions.

The hon. Member implied that when Government took over the service legislation was brought in to make it a monopoly. That, sir, is not the case. This proviso was in the contract to protect Sprotons as well as Government, and it was not to give a monopoly of the ferry service but to protect shipping in the river by not having unauthorised ferries running all over the place and constituting a danger to shipping. The hon. Member has spoken quite a lot about the equity of this increase. I think we should regard transport as a commodity just like any other commodity, and if the price generally goes up with other commodities I see no reason why the price of transport should not also rise. In this Council yesterday the hon. Member for New Amsterdam, in speaking about sea defences, quoted the pre-war price of \$1.50 for cement. Today that price is \$2.70. In 1914 ships that were obtained by Government for running the ferry service cost a little over \$40,000; to-day the same ship would cost \$80,000. Is it not then equitable that the price of transport should go up

in relation to the price of other commodities? The hon. Member quoted from a table in the Report on the Transport and Harbours Department for the year 1934 figures to show that enormous profits were made on the Demerara Ferry. I was anxiously waiting for him to go on to column 4, which shows interest and sinking fund charges and interest on advances unallocated to be \$18,414, and when the total cost is added the net deficit or surplus is \$11,625. That is about 18½ per cent of the expenditure and I would like the hon. Member to look at it from the point of view of the general taxpayer.

In the Transport Department, first of all, expenditure is governed by a Board who have absolutely no patience with the notion that "this is the way things must be done in the Government." They say, and rightly so, that in a Colony as poor as this is we should cut out all frills and furbelows. That being so the people of the Colony can rest assured that expenditure is cut down to a minimum. The most logical way to distribute cost is to charge the person who is benefited, but in an undeveloped country it is recognised that if the full cost is put on to the persons who are benefited by the service fares and rates may be so high as to constitute a restraint to trade. In that case it is recognised by Government that it is sometimes wise that the general taxpayer, who indirectly benefits or who would be in the same boat with the rest of the Colony if trade was restrained, should bear a proportion of the cost in order to encourage trade. But the question arises: How far is it good to go? I was expecting the hon. Member for Berbice River to oppose this motion on the score that it was certainly objectionable that the taxpayers he represents in the Berbice River should have to pay fares on the Demerara ferry, but I realised that what he wanted was perhaps a *quid pro quo*. The point is that if each special section of the community obtains these concessions, and if by such means fares are gradually reduced, we shall come to the logical conclusion of reduction to an absurdity when transport is free and the general taxpayer pays it all. In every increase that we make in the fares we rob Peter, the general taxpayer, to benefit Paul, the traveller. The taxpayers are small in number and there are many Peters who pay and don't benefit. As General

Manager of the Transport Department I have very little sympathy with persons who do not use our services. I wonder if poor inarticulate Peter has any friends in this Council to-day. (Laughter).

Dr. SINGH: One of the reasons for inaugurating the Transport Department was that when Sproston had the contract the fares on the Demerara ferry were eight cents second-class and twelve cents first-class. The then Governor considered those fares too expensive for such a short distance, and that was one of the reasons why he inaugurated the service. When the service was inaugurated in 1914 they charged one penny for a single fare second-class. Now we find the fare is six cents second-class and twelve cents first-class. The main point is to give some relief to the poor people. If Government could see its way to reduce the fare to two cents for the early and late ferries that would meet the case, and fares could remain as they are now for services during the other hours.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I am always in favour of cheap travel and cheap transport if it can be economically effected. In this instance I do not see how it can be done. I would like to know what the deficit would amount to if the motion is accepted. I do not think it can be contended that the fares are really high. If the Manager of the Transport Department can assure the Council that there would not be very much loss in going back to the two cents fare for the early and late boats for workmen the Council would support it. Unless there is not much loss I do not see how we can very well support it. In the circumstances, if Your Excellency would give an assurance to enquire into a three cents fare, the mover would be well advised to withdraw the motion as I do not think it can possibly obtain the support of the Council.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The information before the Board is that the loss by altering the present scale of fares would be something like \$4,000 and possibly as high as \$6,000. This matter has been fully considered by the Board of the Transport Department, and, as already

indicated by the General Manager, the Board is unanimously of opinion that this concession cannot possibly be made. The general point to keep in view is whether adequate service is being given for this fare. The fare has been referred to by the mover of the motion as an increase and a percentage. That does represent an arithmetical increase, but a larger increase is from two to three cents. That three cents service is, in fact, a cheap substitute on a six cents journey, and therefore taking into consideration that aspect of it and the nature of the service provided, the Board is unanimously of opinion that this rate should be retained. Hucksters and other small suppliers have a mixed concession. They come over in the morning and return any hour of the day. The cost to them is eight cents, and with the concession with regard to their produce that is a reasonable cost of the journey. This is a matter in which Government is not inclined to question the considered opinion of the Transport Board, and it therefore sees no reason to accept the motion. There was an occasion on which this subject was examined by a special Committee appointed to examine the finances of the Transport Department, presided over by the Commissioner of Lands and Mines, and they also came to the conclusion that these rates were fair and reasonable for the work being done. Under these circumstances Government cannot accept the motion.

Mr. WILLS: The fact has been lost sight of that this is a public utility service. These rates will drive the factory at Vreed-en-Hoop to provide some means of transport for its employees. There is nothing in the law to prevent it as far as I know. You will also find hucksters banding themselves together and crossing the river with their goods by their own boat, and perhaps the loss of \$4,000 may be even more and Peter would then pay for Paul instead of both Peter and Paul paying.

Motion put, and lost.

The Council adjourned until Tuesday, 16th July, at 11 o'clock.