

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL****FRIDAY, 10th JANUARY, 1947.**

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

**PRESENT**

The President, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. D. J. Parkinson (acting).

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. E. M. Duke (acting)

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.

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

The Hon. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

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

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated).

The Hon. J. B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. F. Dias, O.B.E. (Nominated).

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. C. P. Ferreira (Berbice River).

The Hon. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

The Hon. W. J. Raatgever (Nominated).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum (Nominated).

The Hon. J. A. Veerasawmy (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 31st of December, 1946, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

**ANNOUNCEMENT****ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The PRESIDENT: With the approval of Members I would like to vary the Order of the Day. After the Treasurer has given due notice we will suspend the Standing Rules and Orders and take the two motions in the Second Schedule. Then, after we have dealt with those and it is convenient, I suggest to the Council to go into Committee to consider the outstanding Heads under "Miscellaneous". After that is done we will move back into Council and take the formal motion that the Estimates of Expenditure for 1947 be approved. When the motion is moved Members will have the opportunity of making such remarks as they wish. Though they may have spoken on the previous occasion when the motion was introduced by the Treasurer, I am prepared to allow them to make further remarks at the end if they wish to do so.

**PAPERS LAID**

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. McDavid) laid on the table the following documents:—

Address by Lieutenant-Colonel O. A. Spencer, Economic Adviser, at a meeting of the Legislative Council on 11th December, 1946, on the Colony Budget for 1947.

Notes by the Economic Adviser on subsidization and cost of living in British Guiana in the light of revaluation of the Canadian Dollar and subsequent events.

Statement of allocation of Estimate of Expenditure under Head XLIV—Public Works—Extraordinary in 1947 Estimates.

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES****TEMPORARY WAR BONUS**

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motions:—

That, this Council approves of the payment of temporary war bonus to Government employees during the year 1947 in accordance with the rates set out in the Governor's Message No. 10 dated 15th July, 1943.

#### CONTINUATION OF SUBSIDIZATION

That, this Council recommends and approves of the incurrence of expenditure on the continuation of subsidization measures during the year 1947 to an amount not exceeding one million dollars to be met from Colony funds.

#### NOTICE OF QUESTIONS.

##### WALLABA WOOD PULP AREA

Mr. ROTH gave notice of the following questions :—

1. For how many years has the area of Crown Land situate on the Left Bank of the Essequibo River, above Bartica, and known as the Wallaba Wood Pulp Area, been reserved from exploitation by others than Mr. R. Evan Wong, pending the development of his Wallaba Pulp Project?
2. Is Government of opinion that this pulp project is likely to be brought to a head in the near future?
3. How much longer does Government propose keeping this area closed from exploitation of its forest resources?
4. Has Government received any alternative proposals from parties other than Mr. R. Evan Wong for the development of this area?
5. If the answer to question 4 is in the affirmative, who are the parties and what were their proposals?

##### THE HILLS ESTATES

1. Does any person, corporation or estate at present hold title over the lands formerly known as "The Hills Estates", situate on the Right Bank of the Mazaruni River?
2. If the answer to question 1 is in the affirmative, what are the general terms and conditions of such title?
3. What funds, if any, has Government or any Committee appointed by Government advanced against the security of these lands or the title thereto?

4. If the answer to question 3 is in the negative, are these lands free of any encumbrance?
5. Is Government in a position, without any further expenditure, to take over these lands in the communal interest?

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

##### CONTINUATION OF WAR BONUS IN 1947

The COLONIAL TREASURER : As Your Excellency has just informed the Council, I beg to move that Standing Rule and Order No. 9 be suspended in order that I may be able to move the two motions of which I have just given notice.

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : The terms of the first motion are —

"That, this Council approves of the payment of temporary war bonus to Government employees during the year 1947 in accordance with the rates set out in the Governor's Message No. 10, dated 15th July, 1943."

As Members are aware, payment of war bonus was approved by annual resolutions in 1945 and 1946, and the authority for such payments lapsed at the end of 1946. Members will also observe that provision had been made for the payment of war bonus in the Estimates for 1947 when laid before the Council, more for convenience and also as a means of allowing the Council to appreciate the full departmental position. The fact is, the payment of bonus requires a specific *ad hoc* resolution of the Council both as regards authority for payment and authority for the scale of rates under which it is paid. The rates which were in force up to the end of last year were those adopted by the Council in 1943 as set out in Message No. 10 of the 15th July, 1943. I do not think I need go into the question of the rates because the Council, and properly so, is very familiar with the scale now in force. I take it that when the Council considered the details of the Estimates, the fact that the item was not disturbed is an indication that Members of Council agreed that the time is not ripe for the removal of Temporary War Bonus. I feel sure that Members will

also agree that the cost of living has not decreased if it is not worse. Consequently, it is desirable that this bonus which is granted to Civil Servants and Government employees should continue. I do not propose to say much more. If during the course of the debate which follows any questions arise, I would answer them. The point is, we are asked to approve of the continuation of bonus on the scale which existed up to the end of last year. I beg to move the motion.

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Mr. LEE: In respect of this War Bonus to Government employees, I would like to find out if it is the intention of Government at some future date to remove it from the lower income groups or those Government Servants who are enjoying the privilege of earning from \$30 to \$60 per month. If that is so, I wish Government to consider at some future date the question of increasing those basic salaries, because as they stand now, if the cost of living is reduced to the normalcy of 1933 in the removal of any War Bonus, those income groups between \$30 and \$60 per month should be considered and something given them on their basic salaries.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Naturally, I cannot give any definite answer to the hon. Member who has just spoken. Obviously, when the time comes for the complete removal of the Cost of Living Bonus the question of salaries and wages will arise. I know it has arisen in another place, so I take it that consideration will be given by Government to the scales of permanent salaries and wages.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to support what my hon. Friend, the Member for Essequibo River, has stated and to state that in addition to those Government employees who are receiving from \$30 to \$60 per month there are large numbers of employees of Government who are receiving very much less than the rate of \$1 per day. I do not think this Government contemplates keeping those people at those wages, whatever the decision is in the future as regards Temporary War Bonus. I have always advocated here that no employee of Government, whether he is

engaged at a monthly or a daily rate, should earn less than \$1 per day. At the present time there are large numbers of people working on the roads, on several schemes and elsewhere, for Government at less than 3/- per day. You have women employees earning less than 2/- per day. Those earnings are supplemented by a war bonus of 25 per cent., but I think all those people are finding it exceedingly difficult to live, and so whatever decision Government may take later on, whatever proposition comes to the Council, I trust due consideration will be given to these people.

Looking at the Head "Agriculture" in the Estimates I see "Temporary War Bonus for 1947" is \$36,708. I can quite imagine if the total bonus is removed that there would be a great reduction in the estimated figure in the Colony's expenditure, but in respect of this amount a large percentage goes to those people who are earning these very low rates of wages and salaries. There should be no misunderstanding that when we talk of removing the bonus entirely it will be that huge figure. Whatever the decision is in the future, I would like Government to give due consideration to the fact that the people must be given a living wage.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion unanimously adopted.

#### CONTINUATION OF SUBSIDIZATION

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The terms of this second motion are —

"That, this Council recommends and approves of the incurrence of expenditure on the continuation of subsidization measures during the year 1947 to an amount not exceeding one million dollars to be met from Colony funds."

In introducing this motion I shall content myself with a very short statement. It is probably true to say that Subsidization is one of the most important and effective instruments which have been devised during the war and put into operation in the United Kingdom and in most countries of the British Commonwealth for the protection of the national income. I need not go into any of the theoretical considerations underlying this device for

controlling a decrease in the standard of living brought about by increased costs and other circumstances of the war. I feel sure that hon. Members are very familiar with those circumstances and also the dangers of the alternative policy of attempting to arrange that wages should keep pace with rising price levels—a course which inevitably leads to the spiral of inflation. As far back as 1942, we in this Colony, after a great deal of controversy both in this Council and outside the Council, accepted and adopted this general policy of Subsidization, and we have acted upon it right up to the present time. At that time, 1942, some of us felt that it may have been preferable to concentrate on the expansion and the development of local production at low prices, even though that might have meant the almost complete substitution of local foodstuffs in the place of goods previously imported. That course had its attractions, although it may not have been very advantageous to the local merchants. Therefore we adopted a compromise and we put into effect both ideals. I think much of the credit for the initiation of what came to be known commonly as the Grow More Food Campaign was due to the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara, Mr. H. C. Humphrys, who was the pioneer of that movement. We spent an enormous amount of money on it, but I think that it is a very great satisfaction. Our chief defence against inflation has however been Subsidization proper, e.g. subsidization of imported produce in order to reduce the cost of living as applying to foodstuffs. Along with that we adopted a measure of Price Control.

We spent a good deal of money on this local aspect of Subsidization—the Grow More Food Campaign—but we spent much more on Subsidization proper. In 1942 and up to the end of 1946 we expended no less a sum than \$6,700,000 of which \$2,000,000 was contributed by His Majesty's Treasury, the balance falling on the Colony's funds. I have repeated those figures with some emphasis, even though I may be making a present of something to anyone who may possibly be opposing the measure—the magnitude of the amount in relation to our Budget—because I want to make what, I think, is an important point. That point is this: Having adopted that policy, put

it into practice and spent that large sum of money, we cannot stop now. We cannot discontinue it when the danger to which we were exposed when it was brought into force is probably at its peak. It would be to my mind reckless in that it would be worse than folly to discontinue the measure at this stage and run the risk of not only losing the money we expended but also exposing ourselves to the very very great danger which we tried to avoid in 1942 and all the years between then and now. Let me illustrate what I am trying to say with an analogy. The owner of a plantation finds himself threatened with inundation from the sea. It is an emergency. He knows that the flood waters will recede at some time. So he erects a dam and maintains it over a period in order to protect himself. Of course it is a burden to him. It is expensive and he quickly gets discouraged. Would he be wise then when the flood waters are going to recede to discontinue his expenditure on the flood barrier? If he did that he would not only lose what he spent on erecting the barrier but he would subject himself to the very risk of being submerged by the flood. We are in the same position. It is true that, like the plantation-owner to whom I have referred, we are discouraged and disappointed, but it is not safe to reduce our liability on this very heavy service.

When I left the Colony in June last, the figure for Subsidization had reached a little less than \$500,000, and I had reason to expect and hope that by the end of 1946 the expenditure would have been considerably less than \$600,000. Then there came that stunning blow in the placing of the Canadian dollar on parity with the American dollar, which was very severe in its reflection on this Colony and other West Indian Colonies. Members, perhaps, know all about that. They also know that the price of flour has been subjected to very serious fluctuation in Canada for reasons which we are not quite sure of. I had the privilege while in Ottawa of discussing this matter with Senior Officials and financiers there. They fully appreciate what the effect would be in the Colonies, but they claim that the action taken was essentially in the interest of Canada itself. Those were

very discouraging decisions. Instead of the price of flour receding it is now at its peak, but we still have reason to hope that during this year something may happen which will reduce the burden to us. As it stands, a Committee is going to Canada to discuss this question of flour and prices. Let us hope that favourable results will ensue from that Committee's work.

I said, I will not speak very long I know Members had been discussing this matter among themselves. They probably have all the points in their minds, but this one, a very important point, I want to draw attention to. It is this: Much as we would like to be masters in our own house, much as we would like to be entirely self-efficient in our decisions on policy, we cannot. I said in my opening remarks that Subsidization is the general policy adopted throughout the British Commonwealth. What we do here has reflections elsewhere. I am not suggesting that is an emphatic reason for continuing it, but I must point out that if we allow the price level to go up in this Colony we may create a situation, perhaps, in some commodity which we export, which will have a serious reflection on ourselves, on our own economy and on that of other people. A general policy having once come into being, it must continue. If we continue Subsidization on the basis which was in force up to the end of last year, it would cost us a sum in the vicinity of \$2,000,000. What we are asking for is authority to spend up to \$1,000,000 from Colony funds. The circumstances which I have stated just previously—about having a general policy—are one of the reasons which justify us in approaching His Majesty's Government for further assistance in this particular matter, and I feel sure Your Excellency has put forward recommendations to the Secretary of State for assistance in the operation of this measure of Subsidization in the year 1947.

I am not going into any details in regards to the items of Subsidization, but as I may be speaking, perhaps, to a wider audience than that around this table, even though Members are fully familiar with the facts, I feel I ought to quote something in the Statement which was handed to me

by the Controller of Commodities and Prices in order to indicate what the effect of the withdrawal of Subsidization will be. I feel sure that these figures are correct. They were not prepared by me but by the Controller of Supplies and Prices. In the Statement it is stated that if Subsidization were withdrawn the price of Flour would rise from 6½ cents per lb. to 9 cents per lb., Condensed Milk from 16 cents per tin to 22½ cents per tin, Cooking Butter from 48 cents per lb. to 69 cents per lb., Lard Compound from 29 cents per lb. to 35½ cents per lb., Margarine from 29 cents per lb. to 42½ cents per lb., Pickled Beef from 24 cents per lb. to 44 cents per lb; and lastly, Salt Fish from 16 cents per lb. to 28½ cents per lb. That is the effect.

As regards other details I think the Council is indebted to the Economic Adviser, Colonel Spencer, for the preparation for this session of his notes on Subsidization and the Cost of Living which I laid on the table this morning. I feel the Statement will be of assistance to Members. Lastly I am authorised to say that the Government feels that it is committed to this policy of Subsidization, and also to say that it regards it as of paramount importance. I do urge Members to support the motion which I now move.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: Government must be congratulated for bringing forward this motion. I can assure you, sir, it is one of the wisest steps this Government can take. The workers are already crying out that the cost of living is too high, and if Subsidization is removed it would send the cost of living up. I think that all countries that attempted to remove Subsidization had a certain amount of upheavals. I can assure you that many Members and other people outside this Council are of the opinion that it should be removed, but if it is removed you can "put on your pot" you would have many disturbances in this country.

Some people say that we should not increase taxation and that we should knock out Subsidization, but I think the best thing is to keep it and even if we have to



increase taxation it would be better for those people who can bear it. As regards the Grow More Food Campaign, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central was very good to us during the War. He gave lands at Bel Air to the people free of charge and many of us who never worked a farm before, including myself, went and did so and were able to provide ourselves with food. I am glad to hear that it was a Member of this Council and not Government who started the Grow More Food Campaign. I think it should be continued because when we were given the lands it was stated that they would be taken away after the War. Now, there are no lands for the people to work since those at Bel Air have been given notice to quit. If Government can find some other lands near the City where people can work even part time, I think it would help their families very much. I heartily support the motion.

Dr. SINGH : I should like to make myself clear in this matter. From the very outset I was against increased taxation which would affect the people in the lower income group. The cost of living is still high and it is for that reason I am supporting Subsidization to the extent of \$1,000,000 -- it would help the poorer people especially. If the price of flour is maintained at its present level during the year, then over \$800,000 would be absorbed by this item alone and the remainder would go towards the subsidization of other items. But if the price of flour is increased, perhaps the whole of this amount would be absorbed in the subsidization of the item.

We have been told that in the 1947 Estimates there will be a deficit of 1½ million dollars and since subsidization will account for \$1,000,000 of the deficit and since it is a question of feeding the whole Colony, I think it is the duty of hon. Members of this Council to assist Government in finding ways and means of increasing the revenue of the Colony. I for one would like to see the Budget balanced and when it comes to the question of the surplus money I think it should be left alone and should be applied especially to productive measures. I think that if Government would take Members into its confidence we would be able to arrive at some means of increasing the revenue of the Colony.

Mr. JACOB : I have listened with considerable interest to the hon. mover of this motion and I was hoping that more details would have been given so that not only hon. Members of this Council but also the public would have become aware of the very great need for continuing this measure which was started in 1942. I am not quite sure what would be the total cost to this Colony or what was the total cost in 1946, and what would be the total cost in 1947 if we continue as we are doing.

The PRESIDENT : May I interrupt ? The proposal is that we should not spend more than \$1,000,000.

Mr. JACOB : I understand that, but I have various figures here and I do not know what measures would be taken. Unless Government looks at this matter carefully from day to day it would not be possible to keep this figure down to \$1,000,000. It could not be done in 1946. I think Members of this Council should be taken into Government's confidence and be given a review of the situation from month to month. The approved estimate for 1946 was \$750,000 and I would like to hear now what was actually spent, what this Colony would be asked to contribute, and whether the Imperial Government would be asked to contribute anything towards the expenditure for that year.

When it comes to 1947, I have a list here—an extract from the Departmental list—and the estimated expenditure on subsidization includes the following items :—pickled beef—\$285,418; cooking butter—\$111,820; salt fish—\$332,122; flour—\$896,400; lard compound—\$11,700; margarine—\$29,160; condensed milk—\$256,077; diesel and gas oil—\$98,400; making a total of \$2,021,097.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : May I ask where the hon. Member got those figures from ?

Mr. JACOB : They were supplied to me at a meeting of the Unofficial Members of this Council.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Are they the same figures that appear on page 9 of the report of the Economic Adviser ?

Mr. JACOB : Yes.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I ask because that is not a public document and should not be quoted.

Mr. JACOB : It is well that the public know it. On page 9 of Legislative Council Paper No. 14 of 1946—Colonel Spencer's report—there are those figures and I do not know how Government can put down \$1,000,000 in these Estimates. That is what I am complaining about; we just get certain figures put but we do not see that they are maintained. This Colony is committed to the extent of \$2,000,000 for subsidization in 1947 and you are only providing \$1,000,000 here. One hon. Member has stated what the result may be in the event of this subsidy being withdrawn and it seems to me that we should abolish some of these items. This vote is going to be a serious burden on the whole community and particularly on the working classes.

I was never wholly in favour of subsidization because I felt that the entire community would benefit from it. I was in favour of some method whereby only certain people would benefit, but when it comes to subsidization the rich and the poor alike are benefiting to a certain extent. That is why I cannot reconcile myself entirely to subsidization. If you pay increased Customs duty you are getting it back from the goods you purchase. If some of those people who are against subsidization would suggest means whereby certain classes would benefit to a very much smaller extent, I think they would obtain support from nearly every person in the community. If you want to remove subsidization entirely how would those people in the lower income group make out? We have had the cost of living index based on these figures, and the cost of fish, meat and so on are the figures responsible for the low cost of living as shown by the Labour Department.

The moment this subsidization is removed the cost of living would mount up and the poor man would feel it very hard indeed. I am therefore of the considered opinion that subsidization must be continued for some time to come at a very decent figure—possibly three-quarters of a million dollars—but you have here a proposed expenditure of \$2,000,000 and you

are only budgeting for \$1,000,000. I think steps should be taken immediately to reduce this item. Here again, we are basing our entire estimates on the revenue and expenditure figures for last year when we do not know what subsidization is going to cost. At any rate, we are hoping that our surplus balance would be a big one; it must be a big one.

It is the intention of certain Members to budget for a deficit but I feel very much concerned. The best course, to my mind, would be to balance your Budget from year to year and if you find yourself with a surplus and you do not want to reserve it then it could be used for development works in view. Government should decide what to do and should endeavour to balance expenditure and revenue as they go along. If you want to keep subsidization down to \$1,000,000 then you have to reduce some of these items on the list.

That brings me to the point that some of these articles that are being subsidized are not much consumed and I am not very sure whether the subsidies are going to the consumers to any large extent. It would be a good estimate to think that 50 per cent. of the subsidies go to the consumers, but I do not think so. I think hon. Members know what I am referring to. I do not think that in the case of pickled beef, for instance, if the subsidy is removed the cost would rise from 22 to 42 cents per lb. Now, pickled beef is not very much consumed and so it would not be creating a severe hardship if the subsidy is removed. I think the subsidy on cooking butter and salt fish should also be removed.

When it comes to flour and condensed milk I strongly advise that these two items should not be touched. They are consumed by almost everybody and since it should be within the means of everybody to buy them they should be subsidized for some considerable time. As regards cooking butter, lard compound and so on, I think Government should go into these items. I would urge Government not to act too rashly but to continue this subsidy for some time. It is no good building up false hopes and saying this would happen and the other would happen. Subsidiza-

tion came in 1942, as between 1940 and 1941 the people were paying increased prices. If prices go down the people—especially the working-class people—would benefit. I think this Council ought to know what amount, if any, the Imperial Government would contribute towards the total suggested to us in the first instance.

I think the Imperial Government ought to contribute everything above the \$1,000,000. The people in England are benefiting to a very large extent and in various ways from this Colony, and this subsidy is one of the ways in which they are giving this Colony back something for what they are getting and have got. I think they should be asked to contribute the amount over and above \$1,000,000 as promised, and that this entire list should be subsidized. If the Imperial Government does not care to give any amount over and above the \$1,000,000 then I would ask this Government to begin at once to reduce subsidization so that we would know at once what Government is committed to in 1947.

Mr. ROTH : I am fully in agreement with the keeping of subsidization during 1947. I was surprised to hear the hon. Member who has just taken his seat say that salt beef should not be subsidized. It is not only the people in the towns and villages that one has to consider, but also those who work in the interior where this item is very largely used.

Mr. JACOB : May I correct my hon. friend ? I suggested an increase on what is being provided in these Estimates. If you are prepared to put up the \$2,000,000 here then I would agree.

Mr. ROTH : The hon. Member suggested that flour and condensed milk should be subsidized because they are being used by everybody. Is subsidization only for the coastlands and not for the residents of the entire Colony ? I hope Government would see their way to continue it.

Mr. RAATGEVER : I did not intend to make any remarks today, but in view of those expressed by the hon. Member for North Western District and which have caused me much concern, I am going to suggest that we vote a certain amount—

say \$500,000 for six months—and that we should review the matter at the end of that period. It seems to me that there is something in what the hon. Member has said and the great fluctuation of prices in Canada might cause this amount to reach nearer \$3,000,000 than \$1,000,000. I suggest that we vote \$500,000 for six months.

Mr. HUMPHREYS : I do not think any harm would be done by adopting the suggestion made by the hon. Nominated Member who has just taken his seat. We are all agreed that subsidization should be continued for some little time, but we do not know what revenue is going to be like in the next six months. I do not like the idea of voting \$1,000,000 blindly and if we do so we might find that the whole amount has been spent after the first six months. I think, therefore, that we should vote the \$500,000 and at the end of six months we would be able to see how much revenue has come in and also know what the Imperial Government intends to do in the matter.

I am against asking the British Government to pay any more money for subsidization. Great Britain has her hands full at the present time and I think it would be unfair to ask her to do more. I do not know, however, that it would be wise for us to vote the \$1,000,000 now, and therefore I support the suggestion made by the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Raatgever) and hope that all hon. Members would do likewise.

Mr. LEE : I desire to add my support to the suggestion that we vote \$500,000 for the continuation of subsidization and review the situation in May next. I would also ask that control be removed so that merchants would have a free hand to import goods from whatever source they can get them. I think Government should review the situation and, if necessary, do away with subsidization also. Of course, the cost of living would go up in that case and taxation and wages would also go up. We have not had any definite promise from the Imperial Government and that should be brought to their notice.

Some of the merchants have accumulated money and are willing to go to other markets to buy goods, and unless that is



done how are we going to raise revenue. We can buy goods from the U.S.A., Argentina and other places and we could protect ourselves by tariffs. Great Britain, I agree, has sufficient burdens of her own but we should not be restricted as to where we must buy goods from.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : I do not think this Council has been given sufficient information to enable it to decide this important question of subsidization at the moment. We have heard that the items subsidized last year cost over \$2,000,000 whereas we are being asked to place \$1,000,000 on the Estimates for subsidization next year without any information as to whether the British Government is prepared to carry out its obligation—I say obligation advisedly—to this Colony. Subsidization in this Colony is the baby of the British Government. When it was introduced the British Government promised that if we foot the bill up to \$600,000 they would be prepared to make up the difference to the extent of \$3,000,000. In the course of his speech delivered here on November 13 last, His Excellency the Governor, dealing with this question of subsidization, said that the Imperial Government intended to relieve us of more than \$1,000,000 of this burden.

As I have already stated, it is not fair that the Imperial Government has not given us any indication up to now as to whether it is prepared to contribute to this item to the extent originally promised. That contribution influenced me at the time—and I think it also influenced other Members—to accept subsidization in 1942. I say there is an obligation on the part of the Imperial Government to continue that policy towards this Colony. If we do not get that contribution and if we can only subsidize two of these articles what would be the position? I am just thinking that we might be in an awful plight in this Colony and that the expenditure of \$1,000,000 might be a waste of money because it might not be effective in reducing the cost of living.

I am at a loss to know how to exercise my vote because of lack of information—whether we are going to receive any contribution from the Imperial Government

or not. I am driven to the conclusion that I would support the figure as printed in the Estimates and ask that a review of the situation be made three months hence when we might be able to get information from the Imperial Government as to whether they would assist in caring this “baby”, or whether it would not be of any interest to them if the baby dies. If we do not get a contribution from the British Government we would have to spend far more than \$1,000,000 in this matter and that might result in chaos in this Colony—disorganisation of every industry—because on the cost of living depend the affairs of the Colony in so far as prices are concerned.

As regards prices, arrangements have been definitely settled by the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board to sell the produce of this Colony to certain West Indian islands by contract for a term of five years. When that agreement was entered into I feel certain that no member of the delegation which dealt with the matter had the faintest idea that the cost of living would have been increased within a short while. If subsidization is taken off it would affect the rice industry greatly and it would also affect the price arranged upon with the West Indian islands. As a matter of fact, every industry in this Colony would be affected if subsidization is taken off and the cost of living index would be higher than it is today. In other words, there would be chaos and disorganisation among the industries in the entire Colony.

Mr. VEERASAWMY : Since I have had the privilege and honour to be a Member of this Council I have been amused, amazed and disappointed. That may be due to my limitations. As far as I am concerned I am willing to support Government for the excellent reasons offered by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, but there is one point that is worrying me. On all sides I have heard complaints that the poorer classes are not satisfied that they are getting the full benefits of the good intention of Government in subsidizing those various items, and that is my greatest and only concern. I am prepared to support the item as it stands, but I have a duty not only to the people whilst I am here but also to Government. One of the

most level-headed Members of this Council, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Critchlow, in the course of his speech used the word "trouble". In taking my seat I assure Government that trouble is nearer than Government and hon. Members of this Council believe is really possible. I am willing to support the item as it stands.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I would not have risen to speak but for the suggestion that was made by, I think, two hon. Members, that the vote of \$1,000,000 should be reduced to \$500,000. I have risen, sir, to point out, if I may, the weakness of that suggestion. If the matter had been given full consideration by those Members who made that suggestion, they would certainly have come to the conclusion that I and, perhaps, every other Member have come to, and that is that by reducing the figure of \$1,000,000, which is put down on the Estimates, it would amount to an abandonment of Government's subsidization proposals.

Mr. RAATGEVER : To a point of order ! I have not suggested reducing the amount at all. I suggested that we only vote \$500,000 for six months. The full amount will be voted eventually. \$500,000 for six months is one half of the amount asked for a year. It is very simple. Apparently the hon. Member cannot understand it.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I think, I am entitled to say I forgive the hon. Member for having made those remarks because, perhaps as one of the youngest Members of the Council, he is not very familiar with the way Government's proposals come before the Council. He probably thinks that the suggestion he has put forward, as he said, for six months is one that will meet the case. I hope I will convince him that, however good his intention may be, his suggestion of \$500,000 for six months will not meet the proposals as I understand them. Before I proceed, I wish to make my position perfectly clear. At the very beginning in 1942 when Subsidization, as a matter of policy, was introduced in this Council, I was opposed to it, and I think I was opposed to it on a subsequent occasion. I gave reasons and, I believe, sound reasons at the time for disagreeing with that policy. But the position today has

changed. It seems to me that once we accept Subsidization as a policy we have from time to time to consider very carefully how and when we should remove it. I venture to suggest that any attempt at this stage either to reduce or to remove it altogether would be very bad timing. If hon. Members would recall, last year apparently presented a favourable opportunity to do so when Government came with the proposal. At that time it was hoped that our Subsidization bill would not exceed \$500,000. As a result of changed circumstances which were entirely unexpected, that figure rose to \$750,000 and even then, although the picture was not as gloomy as it subsequently turned out to be, Government seemed to have had very great faith that the figure would not have been exceeded.

The hon. the Colonial Treasurer has told us what has happened since that time, and I think it would be correct to say that the circumstances that have arisen warrant the continuation of this policy. It was unfortunate in my view, but I think those circumstances may be regarded as temporary. However, I would not like to say that the position will right itself in four, six or nine months. I hope it will be possible for it to do so, say, by the end of the year. If that is the case, then perhaps when we meet here again to consider the Annual Estimates of this Colony it may be possible to reduce this figure considerably if not to remove it altogether. As I said before, sir, the question is one of timing in my view, and I think I am entitled to express my view. I think the time is inopportune for Government to abandon the policy which has now been going on for some time, because I can see that it will not only bring about inflation which we have been endeavouring to curb all these years but, as the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has said, we will be bringing it about at the wrong time.

The suggestion has been made that we should carry the burden. I think it was the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara who made it. I would like to say the same thing, but the fact remains that we cannot afford it and we have to obtain assistance from the Imperial Government.

I am not one of those who accept the view expressed by the hon. Member for Western Berbice, that Subsidization is a policy of the United Kingdom alone. The hon. Member was not quite right when he said that. It had been adopted actually in other countries where the same fear of inflation seemed to be looming ahead. Reference has been made by the hon. Member for Essequibo River to the removal of Control and, if I understand him correctly, he seems to think that if Control is removed altogether we would be able to meet the Subsidization bill quite readily as a result of increased revenue resulting from increased importations. I would like to tell him as a commercial man that no one would welcome the removal of Control more than I. There again I have to quote the hon. the Colonial Treasurer: "We are not absolute masters of our own house." Control is not a thing that belongs to the Colony of British Guiana alone. The world is still short of many essentials and many Economists are trying to devise means to make what is worth having go around. So long as these conditions exist I am afraid we have to do the best we can with the Control we have at the present time. Like him, I am looking forward to the time when it will be possible to remove all these restrictions on importations. We want to buy what we are able to buy and from whom we care to buy. I believe in freedom of trade more than the hon. Member, who happens to be a professional man and not a commercial man.

Mr. LEE : To a point of correction ! We are supplying timber, sugar and bauxite, and if there are controls in the world we can command those controls by bartering.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I think, sir, I have to use the words of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Veerasawmy, the hon. Member has not only surprised but amazed me. It is not quite so easy, as he thinks, to use our greenheart or bauxite to barter in that direction. I do ask him to think a little more carefully before making statements of that kind. I think the best course this Government should adopt is to carry out this policy, and Members would be well advised to support Government's motion that \$1,000,000 be provided for this purpose. But I am going to agree with the

hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus). I am a little uncertain as to what the position is going to be, and I am going to urge on this Government that some reply be obtained from the Imperial Government as to the amount of assistance we can hope to receive from them. I do not believe in groping in the dark, and I must admit quite frankly that I see no reason even at this last stage for the Secretary of State, or whoever is responsible on the other side, still finding it difficult to inform this Government as to whether or not we can carry on the policy of Subsidization as we have been doing these past years.

The PRESIDENT : I can give the answer—His Majesty's Treasury.

Mr. de AGUIAR : There again, quite frankly, I do not want to know who is His Majesty's Treasury. I do not want to refer to the history of this matter at all. I have purposely refrained from doing so, but if you tell me that the Secretary of State, or whoever is the proper person on the other side, has to approach the Treasury, then I am going to suggest that the Treasury should receive its instructions from the proper person so that an early decision can be made. This is the point I wish to make. We cannot afford with a commitment of slightly over \$2,000,000 to accept the principle of Subsidization merely because we are willing to provide \$1,000,000 on the Budget. I think we should know where we are, and the sooner we know that the better. Therefore, in supporting Government's proposals I am going to make this qualification—that this question be brought back to the Council for review some time in April or May—and I think May should be the latest when it should be brought back. By that time, as I understand the position, the whole of this \$1,000,000 or the greater part of it will have been spent on the present basis.

I think that is a late enough period for us to be informed as to whether we can carry it out for the rest of the year. I fear that unless we receive that decision from His Majesty's Treasury during the month I have stated, we will be forced either to carry it on for the rest of the year on our own account—and I do not

know where the money will come from— or we will have to make up our minds and drop it altogether unless, of course, something occurs in the meantime which may reduce the cost as at present estimated. I cannot urge too strongly that the decision of the Secretary of State on this question of assistance is vital to the issue. It is very vital because I cannot conceive how it is possible for this Colony to carry a bill such as it is, unless it is assured of assistance and unless it knows early that assistance is forthcoming and that readily. We cannot allow him, much as I would like to give the Secretary of State as much time as he wishes to have in this matter, to postpone his decision much longer than the time I have mentioned.

Reference was also made here by certain Members to the articles to be subsidized. If I may, I would like to make this observation: Those Members who made reference to the two particular articles — flour and milk — are quite entitled to do so, but it must be borne in mind that these two items are consumed, perhaps, in a greater quantity by a certain section of the community than by the others, and the only way you can obtain a balance is if you select other items where you can distribute that balance proportionately and, may I suggest, fairly. I make that observation because one Member—I think it is the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob)—in the course of his remarks stated that flour and milk are used by all sections of the community. He is quite right in that remark. Of course, he quite rightly stopped there, but what he omitted to state was that possibly those two items were used in larger quantities by one particular section of the community and not by all. Had he said that, then it seemed that to be fair and equitable he would have had to go on and say, that in order to maintain an even distribution of Subsidization we must introduce it for items in which there will be a more equitable distribution of the cost over all sections of the community. I hope I have made that point perfectly clear. If it is not, I would be very pleased indeed to throw further light on it. Finally, in supporting Government's proposal I do want to urge once again that

an early decision be obtained from the Secretary of State, so that we can know exactly where we stand in this matter before this year gets older.

Mr. RAATGEVER: With your permission, sir, I would like to move formally that this vote be carried out at \$500,000 for six months. I had made the suggestion and I now formally move it.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I suggest that the hon. Member move it as an amendment. This is a motion on the Estimates.

Mr. THOMPSON: I am supporting the motion as it stands, and in so doing I feel I am fully discharging my duty. There is one thing I do not understand, and that is, whither are we drifting really. Subsidization of certain items was reduced last year because we were satisfied that the Grow More Food Campaign was placing us on very happy ground. Now that we have done that, we have thrown out the vote for the Grow More Food Campaign by which Subsidization was helped. I have promised to accept the majority decision of Unofficial Members, but I must say that I am not happy in that position. I am wholly in favour of balancing the Budget and on that score I am prepared to accept certain taxation proposals. As a compromise, Government should meet Members and hear what they can offer further, but to go on year after year with an unbalanced Budget is too easy a policy. I think we should come together and by all means endeavour to have it balanced. I do not see that we can hope to have it balanced in 1948. If we have more than we want it would be a saving to the benefit of the country, but I do not object to a strict eye being kept on the accounts. I will be no party to stalling the Administration if I can help it. If my vote can prevent that, I am prepared to give it in that direction. I can be no party merely to removing items that will be necessary. Emergencies will arise. Are we to meet on every such occasion to give permission before it can be done? I think we should do everything to push the country forward and support the motion as it stands on the Order Paper.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT : I am supporting this motion, but for the life of me I cannot see that any useful purpose will be served by voting \$500,000 for six months. The Estimates are for a year. I do not know whether it is the wish of Members that we should come into the Council every six months and go over the Estimates. If that is their wish they would not find me here. The motion distinctly says "Continuation of Subsidization Measures during the year 1947 to an amount not exceeding \$1,000,000." We are telling the Treasurer that we are not voting more than \$1,000,000 for Subsidization for 1947. That is quite clear. There is no ambiguity about it and, therefore, there is no necessity for all the talk we have had here today. I want to say that I have gone into it. No one can say what the revenue is going to be, but in respect of expenditure you can guard against any excess that may be done. I am asking the Treasurer not to have in his mind any supplementary estimate for this purpose, as I will certainly refuse to vote for it. Let us give him a cheque for \$1,000,000 over the whole period of a year.

One other question that strikes me very forcibly is this : Members come into this Council—I regret I have to say it as the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Critchlow, happens to be a friend of mine—and tell us about people and trouble, and that trouble is nearer at hand than we think. That is sheer balderdash, maybe a political claptrap. I detest things like that in the Legislative Council. They get into the Press and are circulated all over the country. It is not the right kind of thing. I am supporting the motion for a period of twelve months, and that is what all sensible Members should do.

Mr. KING: I have never been in favour of Subsidization, but I was convinced a few weeks ago that in the interest of a certain class of the community—not the labouring class—Subsidization is essential until conditions become normal. I am absolutely convinced that the labouring class of this country is losing all sense of the value of money. I see them in the course of my life spending their money in a happy-go-lucky way and that is largely due to Subsidization and the somewhat

benevolent Government that exists here. The people who really suffer in this Colony are not of the labouring class but those of the middle class, who get a fixed income every month with absolutely no prospect of increasing it except through the kindness and generosity of their employers, who are not often generous. Those are the people who are suffering. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Critchlow, talked about the labouring class causing trouble. He knows about them, and so do I. I know the mentality of the people. I know that if left alone they would do nothing, unless they are stirred up by others who have other ideas about the advancement of the Colony.

I am prepared to recommend to Government, as has been suggested, that the sum of \$500,000 be voted for the purpose of Subsidization, but I very much doubt from what has been stated in this Council that \$500,000 is going to last six months. Unless we get help from the Imperial Government it seems to me that \$500,000 will go in three months, if it would take \$2,000,000 for this Colony to carry Subsidization through the year. It seems to me that the time has come when the people of this Colony should not look to the overtaxed and overburdened citizens of the United Kingdom to support any measure of expenditure in this Colony. England has been extremely good to the Colonies, though facing a tremendous burden of taxation. Why should England be called upon to give \$1,000,000 to this Colony for Subsidization? I do not think it is fair. I feel the time is coming when Subsidization will have to go, and I think the sooner we make up our minds and let the people of the Colony be warned that after this advance Subsidization will disappear, the better it will be for them. The sooner the people are made to realize that the money spent within the last four or five years on Subsidization will not be available any longer and that they will have to apply it to their cost of living, the better it will be.

It is not that the cost of living has risen so much in this Colony, but the standard of living has risen. The standard of living of the labouring class has undoubtedly risen. I think the people are



entitled to an increased standard of living, but when that has increased they should not go shouting around that the cost of living has gone up.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : The hon. Member is not quite correct. I do not want to interrupt him, but the increase of rent strikes one in the face and indicates that the cost of living has increased.

Mr. KING : I never said that the standard of living has not increased, but I say that the cost of living has increased. I would say that certain classes in this community are living at a very much higher standard today than they were four, five or six years ago, and I defy anybody to disprove that. I do ask Government to accept the suggestion that \$500,000 be spent on subsidization for six months. If the British Government decide that they should not assist this Government any longer then Government should come back here in three months—not six months—and see what they could do. What is going to be the position if this motion is accepted? Government would have \$1,000,000 to spend and would be telling the people they hoped to get some assistance from the British Government.

The PRESIDENT : May I interrupt? This Government has not got any definite promise from the Imperial Government as yet. We are asking the Council to give us a vote of \$1,000,000 to bargain with.

Mr. KING : That is news to me. I understood that the British Government promised to find the balance of the money so long as we voted a certain portion of it.

The PRESIDENT : If the hon. Member understands that he could not possibly have understood the speech by the Colonial Treasurer at the opening of this debate.

Mr. KING : If we are going to bargain with the British Government on the question of subsidization then I think the sooner the people in this Colony understand that the better it would be for us. I certainly understood that subsidization would have cost us \$1,000,000 for the year 1947, and although in principle it is not altogether a bad thing I think Government

would be well advised to accept the suggestion that we vote the sum of \$500,000 for six months and review the situation at the end of that time. If we do not get any assistance from the British Government—I do hope we will get some—Government would have to come back to this Council and I would be prepared to spend another \$500,000 so as to give the people some relief, otherwise at the end of June subsidization would disappear.

The position in this Colony is very unsatisfactory. The British Government have apparently decided that they should not help this Colony any longer and if they have decided to do so without any warning we would be faced with a burden of \$2,000,000 for subsidization. I appeal to this Government to consider the matter very seriously. It is far better to let the people understand now that subsidization is coming to an end, rather than give them the impression that they could be happy for another year at least and not worry over it. I am supporting the amendment that the vote be reduced to \$500,000 and that the situation be reviewed at the end of six months.

Mr. WOOLFORD : I hope I will be permitted to make a few remarks on this very important question. When the proposal to subsidize certain items was first raised mention was made of flour and I then stated that it was my view that it was an important article of diet—carrying indeed some importance to each and every Member of this Council—and that it was right and proper that it should be subsidized in some measure. I still remain of that opinion. I do not think anyone has pointed out—it might have been more explanatory—but I happen to know that the importation of flour during the past two years has exceeded what it was in 1939. I am not attempting to examine the reasons for that but it is an important matter now that we are subsidizing this item that we should do so for an entire year and for the estimated weight according to the average consumption. The average consumption in this Colony amounts to 360,000 bags per annum and it is a matter for consideration that if we are to continue subsidization we should do

so to a greater extent than we did before the emergency situation arose.

I think the logical inference to be drawn from the speeches of hon. Members is that we would not be justified in doing so, but I have risen to point out that so far as I know flour is being imported into the Colony at the present time to a greater extent than before the War and in my humble view if you are attempting to subsidize the cost of living to the people it is important to remember that they are consuming more flour now than they did in pre-war days.

Mr. JACOB: I have here the Commercial Review of November, 1946—covering 11 months of last year—and it shows the importation of flour at 142,922 bags up to November, 1946, as against 229,003 bags for 1945. That shows that in 1946 a far less quantity of flour was imported into the Colony than in 1945.

Mr. WOOLFORD: It seems a pity that whenever the hon. Member rises to correct me his correction is based on wrong premises. I said "pre-war." I believe he is a merchant, I am not a commercial man but I have had dealings with commercial men and I am not aware that they have ever got the better of me. In the practice of my profession I have often come across cases of the crassest ignorance on the part of commercial men. Of course, it is by such men that we lawyers live. (Laughter). In the old days there was a British Guiana Bank and there was also another bank known as the Colonial Bank. In those days accommodation was very easy to obtain and when poor people like myself could not meet their overdraft they would borrow a cheque from a friend and would pay it back the next day. It was never refused by the bank and, of course, your account was good again.

When it comes to the point before us, my own view is that this is the time—and the most opportune time—for imposing the proposed tax because people have the money to buy and they might not have it in another two years. When that time comes we may consider subsidization again, but let me pursue what I have risen to say. The highest factor in this proposed expenditure is flour and I would like, if I

had the time, sir, to examine this control and distribution of flour. I, like the hon. Member, was born in this Colony and was prone to observe the habits of our people. It is one of my habits, and I will tell this Council what has been passing through my mind. The other day a shipment of flour arrived from Trinidad and it was distributed late at night. I live in a quarter of the town where most of the dray carts have to pass and I think it is a matter for grave consideration whether permits for flour should continue to be granted in quite the same way. In other words, unless the working people can obtain bread—wheaten bread—in a sufficient quantity and to that extent, flour might well be controlled, but what do we find?

In this community, bakers not only make bread but they make sweet bread as well, and they sell cakes—and they put currants in those cakes. I doubt whether it is better to continue to ignore a condition like that when so large a proportion of the flour is being utilized for the making of not only bread but, I think, to a large extent, a very luxurious form of bread. I think it precludes the woman in the market who carries on an honest trade and who sells to the poorer classes her bakes and so on. We all know what a bake is; it is a kind of bread, unleavened, and it goes a long way towards making a toothsome meal for some people with fried fish. These people cannot obtain permits and have to go down very often at nights to some shop in order to get delivery. These are the people I would appeal for.

If you can deflect some of that flour from the Control Board and devise some means whereby it could be sold in the markets and the cookshops, the people would get what they require to cook in the small ovens or the improvised ovens that they use. You will find that so far as food is concerned and in so far as flour is used as an article of diet we could satisfy ourselves with the existing supplies and could, to some extent, make them a happier people instead of making them queue up in the way they have to do outside of the bakeries. Why shouldn't we do that? These people should be given facilities from time to time to obtain a greater amount of flour *per se*. I say that the major quantity of flour goes

to the larger bakeries which cater to subsidized people like myself—and even to the extent to which we are being subsidized I think it would be an easy matter if greater control and greater latitude were given to the Control Board by way of permits for taking flour. These people cannot be confused with others.

The ordinary person who sells in the market ought to be able to go to any firm—Bookers or Sandbach's—and get flour in Water Street. Then the poor man would not have to wait outside baker shops only to find that his wife or his paramour or his sister—whoever does housekeeping for him—did not get any. I hope these remarks would lead to a widening of the distribution of this commodity. Some of us have been always able to obtain our bread without any difficulty. I have always been able to obtain bread throughout the War—ordinary white, wheaten bread.

The PRESIDENT: Brown bread is better.

Mr. WOOLFORD: It is more wholesome. We are a luxurious people. I agree that it is more wholesome but you are not going to get our people to eat much brown bread; I think it costs a little more money to the manufacturer. I am going to make a statement which might surprise a good many people about this article we are subsidizing—salt fish. When I was a young man this fish was tabooed and refined people never served it to you. It was served to cooks and others in the kitchen—no one ever confessed to eating it. Salt fish and plantain was the meal of the poor man. For some reason or other, one finds that the higher the price of a food in this Colony the greater the demand. One hon. Member says the more the people like it, but that is not so. There are some people who like to spend their money that way.

I have heard it said "why eat salt fish when it has no nutriment?" Two or three years ago I was opposed to spending money to subsidize it, but Dr. Platt told us here that it is a very nutritious article. The source from which this article comes is another thing that confounds me. Here is a fish, which comes from a place adjacent to Canada—it comes from a Brit-

ish Colony—and yet we have to buy it on the dollar exchange. Here is where the complexities of commerce fret me — an article which comes from a British Colony—Newfoundland—does not enjoy preference in this Colony. Those hon. Members engaged in commerce should do something about it.

Mr. FARNUM: I am definitely in favour of the retention of this \$1,000,000 for subsidization. I think quite a lot has been said and hon. Members have been quite solicitous of the welfare of the poor man but there is a class of individual they have overlooked and that is the middle-class man. I think subsidization would keep the cost of living down for the middle-class man as well as the poor man and, therefore, I support it entirely.

I am also in agreement with the hon. Member for Western Berbice when he expresses fear that if subsidization is removed it might affect the contracts entered into for the supply of rice to the West Indian islands. If it is removed I think it would force those people whose principal item of diet is flour to use a greater amount of rice than they do at present, and it might also have the effect of discouraging them from planting as much rice as they would have done otherwise. As regards the Budget, I am certainly in favour of its being balanced. My opinion is that we are on the eve of development of our country and I do not think anything should be put in the way of that development. If the Budget is not balanced I think it would be throwing obstacles in the way of development.

Mr. JACOB: If Your Excellency would permit me, I have some import figures about flour here and I would like to refer to them.

The PRESIDENT: Are you going to make a speech?

Mr. JACOB: No, no speech; only figures. In 1938 the total was 185,693 bags and, roughly, that is 15,000 bags per month. In 1939 the total went up to 202,000 bags and in 1940 it was 189,000 bags. Now, the estimate is 15,000 bags per month. That is what we would be allowed, and therefore the statement that we are importing

more now than before the War is absolutely incorrect. That was supplied by the Publicity Officer through the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. WOOLFORD : My statement was not denied either by Col. Spencer or the hon. Member for Central Demerara whose business experience is very considerable, and I am now able to tell the Council that that is a fact.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : It seems to me that we have to balance the Budget for the year 1947. Government should give an undertaking that this matter would be reviewed after six months and I do not know that it would affect the Budget if we vote \$500,000 now, because we would probably have to find the other \$500,000 by a supplementary estimate. I have only risen to answer one or two points, one of which was made by the hon. Member for Essequibo River. I would ask him if he has ever heard or gone into the question of exchange. I do not think he has ever read the Congressional report which we got as Members of the Executive Council, and heard how the American legislators thought they were giving us some food.

I have deplored in this Council Members referring to the question of the overburdened taxpayer of Britain. It seems so illogical when the very persons in England to whom they refer are saying "We have not done anything for the people of the Colonies in the past, and we are going to do it in the future." They did not do anything in the past, they are doing very little in the present and, I think, they will do very little in the future. That is my view. The Labour Government are going to get economic pressure from the capitalists and so will not be able to do what they intend. So that is no argument when you are talking about Subsidization.

The PRESIDENT : I totally disagree with the hon. Member.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I am entitled to my opinion. As a matter of fact, when the opportunity arises I will give more details on that point. We who have been born here and grew up here have had very little from the Imperial Government in the past and we are not expecting to get much more. What

they are doing under Colonial Development and Welfare for us is going to leave us in a hopeless position. That is the view I have held for the last three or four years and I will continue to hold it. As far as Subsidization is concerned, I think, it is necessary that we should do something on our own if we are going to try to keep on our own legs. That is the reason why I am supporting this \$1,000,000.

The PRESIDENT : If the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, wishes to press his amendment I would give him an opportunity to do so. The consensus of opinion is not in favour of it, but the hon. Member can have full opportunity to press it. Before he does so, what I wish to say is simply this: The reason why Government requires the vote to be carried at \$1,000,000 for 1947 is to show His Majesty's Government that we continue in our earnest desire to pay our share of Subsidization. For the last two years we paid \$1,000,000 and His Majesty's Government contributed all expenditure above that figure. If we do not show in 1947 that we are going to spend \$1,000,000, the chance of getting that assistance from His Majesty's Government would be very remote. If we show we are going to do our bit by carrying it out at \$1,000,000 then, I think, we have quite a fair and good chance of getting assistance above that figure. I entirely endorse the request of the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) and other Members that this matter be reviewed in about four to six months' time. I am not particular whether it is four months or three months, as that will suit me. It will certainly come back to this Council. Government is reviewing the position every day but cannot come to the Council every day. Does the hon. Nominated Member wish to move his amendment?

Mr. RAATGEVER : I am asking my seconder whether he desires it to be put.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : Yes.

The PRESIDENT : I will therefore take the amendment first which, I think, is the proper procedure. Does the hon. Member wish to speak on it?

Mr. RAATGEVER : No, sir; nothing further. I have said all I had to say.



The PRESIDENT: The question is "That this Council recommends and approves of the incurrence of expenditure on the continuation of Subsidization measures up to the end of June, 1947, to an amount not exceeding \$500,000 to be met from Colony funds."

Question put, the Council dividing and voting as follows:—

For: Messrs. Raatgever, King, Humphrys and Gonsalves—4.

Against: Messrs. Veerasawmy, Farnum, Thompson, Roth, Peer Bacchus, Percy C. Wight, Dr. Singh, Critchlow, de Aguiar, C. V. Wight, Woolford, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—14.

Did not vote: Messrs. Lee and Jacob—2.

Amendment lost.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You have given an undertaking, sir, in connection with the representations made to the Secretary of State. I would like to say that Government will come back to the Council very soon even if the reply to our representations is unfavourable. We will have to come back for a review. In view of the circumstances now of spending more than \$1,000,000, we will come back for a review and also if the reply is unfavourable.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: To a point of explanation! Am I to understand the hon. the Colonial Treasurer to mean that if within four or five months His Majesty's Government inform us that they cannot help us, then this Government will come to this Council for another \$1,000,000?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No, sir. The representations have been made to the Secretary of State already and the answer should be received within a very short and reasonable time. If that reply is unfavourable then it is the duty of Government to come to the Council and report the circumstances at once. In other words, the review will start if the reply is unfavourable. But whether the reply is favourable or not, there will be a general review.

Mr. GONSALVES: Is it the intention to do away with it?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Without the assistance of His Majesty's Government we will have to think over the matter again.

The PRESIDENT: It will then be up to the Members of Council to decide what to do.

Motion put, and adopted.

## 1947 ESTIMATES

### COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1947.

### MISCELLANEOUS—(b) SUBVENTIONS, ETC. OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL

#### Item 2—Secretary of State's Funds—

*London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, \$480*

*The Bureau of Hygiene and Tropical Disease, \$480.*

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am asking that this vote be increased by \$160 and carried out at \$1,120 instead of at \$960 in order to make provision, at the request of the Secretary of State, for the grant to the Bureau of Hygiene and Tropical Disease to be made on the same basis as in 1946.

Question put, and agreed to.

### GRANTS IN AID OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH

Item 13—*Imperial Agricultural Bureau, \$2,357.*

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that items—

7—Annual Grant to Entomological Research Committee, \$480.

8—Grant to Imperial Mycological Institute, \$480.

10—Contribution towards the Imperial Economic and Shipping Committee, \$1,129  
be deleted and that they be replaced by a



new sub-head "Imperial Agricultural Bureau, \$2,357". The total of the three, items which I am deleting, amounts to \$2,089. We have been advised that the work of these Bureaux has been consolidated under one organization, and the Secretary of State requested us to make this increased provision of \$268 for this year and for a period of five years. I may say that all these organizations are under revision and have to plan in advance on a five years' Budget.

Question put, and agreed to.

*Item 55—Subsidy to British Guiana United Broadcasting Company, Ltd., \$6,500.*

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I would like to draw the attention of the Council to the note against this item— "Based on collections in 1946. The whole of the amount collected is refunded to the Company." That is using very strange language. What happened is this: Government made an agreement with this Company to grant it a subsidy, subject to this Council's approval, of an amount equivalent to the revenue derived from radio licences. The Company framed its policy and budget on the expectation of getting the full amount. I am not sure what the total amount of the revenue for last year is or will be for the current year. I think, it will probably be a sum of about \$7,000. I would like to get an expression of opinion or at least an assurance from this Council, that if and when we come back to provide any excess on this vote, which is the balance of the corresponding excess on the revenue vote, it will be supported. In support of this I want to say that from Government's point of view the Company is doing exceedingly fine work. It was a major item in the local war effort. It is still struggling and is not yet making any money. It would be a pity if the Council does anything to make the Company stop its good work. I am merely asking for an assurance that if the receipts from radio licences exceed \$6,500, the Council would vote on the other side a corresponding amount to be paid to the Company in excess of this \$6,500.

Mr. RAATGEVER : Members feel that a limit should be placed on the amount. This Company should be subsidized with, we think, a maximum contribution from the Colony of \$6,500, and any sum received in excess should be retained by Government for its own use.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : The hon. Member has himself spoken and he says "We." I ask for an expression of opinion. Perhaps it would be best for him if the position arises to bring it forward as a substantive motion at the proper time.

Mr. RAATGEVER : I am asking that the amount be given and that a division be taken on the point I have raised. I am speaking on behalf of the Unofficial Members and not personally.

*Item 58—Contribution to British Guiana Airways, Ltd., \$34,560.*

Mr. JACOB : I want to make one observation in regard to this item. I take it that the amount of \$34,560 is only an estimate and that the Company receives payment for work actually performed. Am I correct in that? It is not a lump sum paid to the Company, but when trips are made the Company sends in the bill and the amount is paid to the Company. I think that the use of planes particularly for Officials to go inspecting places should not be so extensive as it is at the moment. It has been told to me that the majority of principal Officers, when they want to go anywhere, go by plane so as to get there and back within a few hours, and they hardly do much inspection. It is not the best thing to do. Take the North-West District. You have a steamer going there every fortnight. It is a most extensive district, and Officials who want to go there should go and return by steamer.

The CHAIRMAN : No officials are allowed to take a plane without the permission of the Governor. If you want to see a place quickly it is always best to go by plane. I speak as Officer Administering the Government, but this item has nothing to do with officers chartering planes.

Mr. JACOB : Then I had better say nothing more ! I was going to make the

point that it is wise when you want to make a hurried visit to do that, but I have known cases where officers go to the North-West District by plane.

The CHAIRMAN: I travel a lot by plane.

Mr. JACOB: Not the Governor, but other Officials have gone there by plane. I say it is rather expensive to use a plane and the Officers benefit by going by the ordinary means of transport wherever those means of communication exist. We have to economise. It is not wise to use a plane where there are other means of travelling. I am not referring to the Governor, or the Officer Administering the Government, or prominent Officials who have to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like Members to be aware of the position. The Governor must give official permission to Officers to travel by plane, and the Governor does not usually give that permission unless several people want to travel and the cost is to be divided between the several Departments' Travelling Votes. There is no indiscriminate use of planes. Every Officer has to get permission from the Governor to use a plane. That reply to hon. Members should be enough.

Mr. LEE: May I enquire whether a new contract is to be made with this Company?

The CHAIRMAN: I think I have answered that before. It is under consideration and is not likely to be made in 1947.

*Item 63 — Contribution towards the Colonial Forestry Scholarship Fund Scheme, \$576.*

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that this item be deleted. It is found not to be necessary. I think the Scheme has expired.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item deleted.

*Item 70 — Special Grant to the Drainage and Irrigation Board in lieu of rates for maintenance of incomplete schemes in Drainage Areas, \$72,530.*

Mr. JACOB: I think there is to be a reduction of this amount. This item and Item 66 — "Special Grants to Local Authorities in Drainage Areas to reduce rate assessments, \$61,211"—should be merged into one, but for some reason they are put separately. Here you have an item put under "Miscellaneous—Annually Recurrent" and it is not really an annually recurrent expenditure. Not only these two items, but there are several other items in these Estimates which are like that. One is an item on page 49—Item 15—"Refund of Revenue"; then there is another on page 87—"Loans from Public Funds, \$57,200". These three items total \$761,730 and are bulked under Annually Recurrent Expenditure thus increasing the Annually Recurrent Vote, and that figure is used later on to show what the expenditure in 1947 will be. I suggest that another Head of the Estimates be used to show these items. "Refund of Income Tax" and "Loans from Public Funds" should be kept separately under extraordinary expenditure so that we can gauge how the annual extraordinary expenditure is mounting up. I think it is absolutely necessary. We have had statements made from time to time showing the extraordinary expenditure over a period of years. It is not fair to burden Annually Recurrent Expenditure with large sums of that kind. Then there are "Advances". I have heard the answer given in this Council on the 13th September, 1946, to Question No. 5 by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, giving certain sums of money advanced to certain people. They are nowhere in these Estimates, and I have taken this opportunity to raise the matter under this Head, as I have gone through the Estimates and have not seen those advances mentioned.

On page 87 you have under "Loans from Public Funds" the items "Loans to Co-operative Credit Banks, \$50,000," "Loans to Student Teachers, \$2,200"; "Loans to Local Authorities, \$5,000". I can find nowhere in the Estimates the loans made to certain people and Unofficial Members of this Legislature. It is absolutely necessary that those things be shown on paper at least, whether the money is recoverable or not. Then we have the question that the loans or

advances were made with the authority of the Governor. We have a Legislature that is impotent and the Governor can do exactly as he likes, and the figures are not shown. One can understand the Governor putting up special warrants and expending money on public matters but not loans. I do not know what the Colonial Auditor is going to do in these matters. It is grossly improper. These few words are quite sufficient. I think the Colonial Auditor should be asked to give an opinion on it, and the Secretary of State should be made aware of it. These things should not be permitted. Unless questions are asked, we do not understand anything. Questions are asked, and answers are given which are very unsatisfactory. When you look for information in the Estimates you find it nowhere; possibly three years hence the item will appear under "Miscellaneous", as money advanced or given as a gift or expended on Village works, all together. **Coming** back to my point, I look upon these figures in the Estimates—and every Member of this Legislature should look upon them—as being correct information under the proper Heads. If we vote anything it should be correct. The refund of Income Tax should not be bulked under "Miscellaneous" and "Assistance to Drainage Areas" should not be here also. I suggest that for the careful and earnest consideration of Government.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I have listened to the hon. Member's suggestion. In some respects I am in sympathy with him. These items are placed under a recurrent Head to show that these grants are the same for three or five years. Particularly as regards the item he is speaking about, it will not appear for more than one or two years more. From its character it is supposed to be an item payable while the Drainage Areas Schemes are not completed, so I certainly hope it will not appear again. As to the other point which the hon. Member was making, I do not know what is the foundation of his speech, I am not sure what is the point he is making. The advances are not in the Estimates it is quite true, but they are not hidden. The annual report of the Treasurer gives complete information on every single outstanding advance, like any advance when issued, and every item—every account on which

transaction has taken place with public funds, is made out and shown outside of the Estimates. Now, the distinction between loans put in these Estimates and those which are not is, of course, that those in the Estimates are long-term loans and not amounts which would be repaid within a year or so. In the case of public officers, however, these are made on their salaries and are governed by specific Regulations.

Mr. JACOB : I can quite understand the Colonial Treasurer not understanding me. Maybe he was not in the Colony when the advances were made; maybe he thinks nothing about them. If he does not know I would ask him to consult his Deputy and he would advise him about them. The Colonial Treasurer says that his annual report covers these things; I wonder whether his annual report gives authority for making advances. No authority has been given; I think Your Excellency understands what I mean.

The CHAIRMAN : Yes, but why don't you say so? Tell us what you are talking about.

Mr. JACOB : I think you do know, sir.

The CHAIRMAN : You tell us; read it out.

Mr. JACOB : Let me first make this point about the annual report. It has been issued far too late for one thing and I suggest to the Treasurer that he begins to write his report immediately and not go roaming around with other people's business. For many years now I have been complaining about the lateness of these Departmental reports and the Treasurer's is no exception to the rule. It does not seem as if he has anybody supervising him.

The CHAIRMAN : He has me, and I think the hon. Member is going a little too far.

Mr. JACOB : No, sir. This Legislature can supervise him; this Legislature can supervise anybody including the Officer Administering the Government. I ask the Treasurer not to set a bad example by writing his report so late. Why shouldn't

I be able to go into the Treasury now and see his report for last year? I think he has brought this all on himself. The questions I referred to were asked by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, on September 13, 1946, and these are included with the replies.

Q. 1.—To which Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council and Trades Unions Officers has Government advanced money, by way of loan or otherwise during the two-year period ending 12th September, 1946?

- A. —(i) The Honourable H. N. Critchlow  
 (ii) The Honourable E. G. Woolford  
 (iii) The Honourable A. M. Edun  
 (iv) D. M. Harper—President Trades Union Council  
 (v) H. J. M. Hubbard—Secretary Trades Union Council.

Q. 2.—What individual sums were so advanced?

A. —They read as follows:—

- (i) £81.7s.3½d  
 (ii) £50  
 (iii) £250  
 (iv) and (v) £359.0s.11d. indivisibly.

Q. 3.—For what purposes were such sums advanced?

- A. —(i) To assist in meeting expenses of travelling to attend the World Trades Union Conference in the United Kingdom.  
 (ii) To assist in meeting expenses as this Colony's delegate to the West Indian Conference at St. Thomas.  
 (iii) To assist in meeting expenses of travelling to India in pursuance of a welfare and educational project in the interest of workers on sugar estates, and of discussion between Mr. Edun and the principals of the sugar companies.  
 (iv) and (v) To assist in meeting expenses of travelling to attend the Trades Union Conference in Paris.

It is not necessary for me to read all the questions, but in the end the reply to question 6—What authority has Government to make such advances?—says

“Approval of the Governor.” My point is that this Council should have approved of the advances and if it did not do so at the very moment it should have been done subsequently. One or two of these persons have repaid the advances—Mr. Critchlow has repaid his and Messrs. Harper and Hubbard have repaid some of theirs.

The CHAIRMAN: Very little.

Mr. JACOB: Mr. Edun is out of the Colony at the moment. I suggest, sir, that this thing should not have been done by the Officer Administering the Government, it should have been done by the Legislature. These things are not correct.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: There is no doubt that all these persons have been given advances from Colony funds without the approval of this Council and I would like to be informed whether it is a constitutional right and whether the Governor has any right to make these advances. I can tell Your Excellency very plainly that outside of this Council there is a good deal of talk and many people are very dissatisfied about this matter. They cannot understand it. All sorts of allegations are being made—probably many of them untrue—but the matter is very unsatisfactory. I think Your Excellency should make a pronouncement now and if it is not too late any approval necessary could be given.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is asking me to pronounce whether my immediate chief acted rightly, but I shall not give an answer. In other words, the hon. Member is asking me now that Sir Gordon Lethem has left the Colony, to say whether he acted rightly. My answer is that I definitely would not do so.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: If you say you do not know and cannot give an answer then you should get a ruling from the Secretary of State. These loans have been given in a way which I think is definitely improper.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like the hon. Member to put the question in writing and I will be quite prepared to put it to the Secretary of State.



Mr. LEE : I am supporting what the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara has said. I think the Secretary of State should be asked to give a ruling in the matter.

The CHAIRMAN : I have already said that I am perfectly prepared, if you put the question in writing, to put it to the Secretary of State

Mr. JACOB : In this case the matter is entirely different. The Members of this Council who are in charge of the Colony's funds are asking Your Excellency to say at the moment, but Your Excellency says you refuse to say anything about your Superior Officer who is not here.

The CHAIRMAN : I have already said in reply to the hon. Member that I am perfectly prepared to put this matter to the Secretary of State, and I suggest that we close this discussion. If hon. Members are suggesting that something wrong has been done, they had an opportunity when Sir Gordon was here to deal with it. This matter has been brought up suddenly to me and long after the Officer concerned has gone. It seems to me that to wait until the Officer goes away and then raise it is not the best thing. At any rate, if the hon. Member puts the question in writing I am prepared to send it to the Secretary of State.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : I shall be very glad, but I want to make it clear that I did not intend to do anything to embarrass Your Excellency. I thought the hon. Member for North Western District would have put the question before.

Mr. JACOB : These questions were asked on September 13, 1946, and that is only three months ago. I think it is right that we should follow this matter up. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, and myself asked questions the same day on practically the same subject. I also wish to say that I do not intend to embarrass Your Excellency, but I maintain that this Colonial Office policy should not be continued.

The CHAIRMAN : I suggest that we discontinue the discussion. I am prepared,

as I have said, to put the question to the Secretary of State if it is submitted.

Item passed.

#### UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I desire to ask permission to move in under this sub-head a new item which would read:— "Contribution towards expenses, \$16,848". Hon. Members may have seen from the newspapers that Jamaica has already voted its share of the contributions to be made in this matter. Under a resolution which was passed on February 7, 1946, we have undertaken to meet our share of the expenses on a certain basis and the amount for the current year is \$16,848. In addition to that, sir, I would like to have the sum of \$700 included in order to cover the expenses of our representative who, as hon. Members know, has gone to Jamaica in connection with this matter. I am referring to His Honour Mr. Justice Luckhoo. I am therefore asking that a total sum of \$17,548 be inserted in order to cover the Contribution towards expenses (\$16,848), and the expenses relating to the visit of the Colony's delegate (\$700).

Mr. HUMPHRYS : I think we should have had some notice of this. Here were we sitting for days and days trying to reduce the Estimates and now—at the last moment—we are asked to vote an additional \$17,000 in connection with a West Indies University, and we find that the original Estimates would be exceeded.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I would not have ventured to bring up this question today, but this was one of the conditions under which very strong support was given to the resolution when it was put before the Council. I think myself that it would be better for it to be done now.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : You are always anxious to have money. Has the University been opened yet ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : No. We have pledged ourselves, however, to give it our support.



Dr. SINGH : I think we are pledged to give financial support under the resolution. It was based on the question of population.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I think that in view of the resolution passed this Council can do nothing but vote this money. I think the only protection is to ask Government to see that we are not left out of the race and that we get our full quota of students when the opportunity becomes available. This is only a corollary to the resolution and I do not think this Council can do anything but vote the amount with that understanding.

Mr. JACOB : I do not think the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara means that the money should not be voted. I should like to know something also beyond voting the money. For instance, the question has been raised about the grant to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad. It is alleged that when students come back they are not given proper opportunities for getting jobs and so on. In this case it is felt that students from this Colony might not get all the facilities desirable for studying at this University. I would certainly vote the money but I want to know what are the exact terms and conditions. We are not going to give people money just like that and let them do what they like with it. At the present moment students cannot get into United Kingdom universities and perhaps when this university is started only a certain number of students would be able to get in. I am not against voting the money, but I think we should ask that the terms and conditions be sent to us.

The CHAIRMAN : I do not know how soon I can get the dispatch around, but if hon. Members feel they want to see it before they vote the money they can do so. I am prepared to do what they want.

Mr. GONSALVES : I would like to see whether at the time when the Unofficial Members were going through the Estimates Government was aware of the amount that would be required. If that is so I cannot understand the position of the Colonial Treasurer.

The CHAIRMAN : I think the dispatch only came last week.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : If Your Excellency says it came too late for us to discuss then there is some excuse.

Mr. de AGUIAR : It is obvious that there is readiness to vote this amount and I am in agreement with it in view of the resolution which was passed some months ago. The hon. Member for Western Essequibo made a very good point as regards students, but I wish to make another point. We accepted the resolution, but I am thinking about the future and would like to know what would be the policy set down. Reference has been made to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture; the vote in that case was a comparatively small one but in this particular instance this Colony has undertaken to contribute towards the cost of running the University in proportion to its population and so on.

I would like to know what would be the probable cost next year or in two or three years' time, unless Members are going to have an opportunity to examine the Estimates. I would also like to know what control would be set up over the University and so on. If we begin in 1947—before the University gets going—with a contribution of \$17,000 then one can readily see what the figure is likely to reach in the next few years.

The CHAIRMAN : I think hon. Members would agree to vote the money all right. If you do not vote it this afternoon it would have to come up as a supplementary estimate.

Mr. RAATGEVER : We are quite prepared to vote it with Your Excellency's explanation, because we are not prepared to vote supplementary estimates in future.

Motion for insertion of two new items (totalling \$17,548) put, and agreed to.

#### COLONIAL EMERGENCY MEASURES

Mr. JACOB : I notice that there is an increase of \$250,000 under the item Subsidization which calls for \$1,000,000. I have some details here and I do not know if they are quite clear, but I take it that a Committee would be appointed to go into the working of the Commodity Control organisation. I think something ought to be done. Control is all right, but there

are many faults in the present method and I would like Your Excellency to appoint a Committee to go into the questions of expenditure and methods of control. I think we can have the whole organisation running on a more satisfactory basis.

### SUPREME COURT

Mr. HUMPHRYS : I would like to ask permission to recommit Head XXXVII.—Supreme Court—in order to enable me to make some remarks. This head was discussed in Finance Committee, but I was away when it was taken. I want to say first of all that Government does not seem to be aware of the fact that the Deeds Registry is very much understaffed while there is an enormous quantity of work to be done there. It is a revenue-collecting Department and I do not think I am wrong in saying Government will find that in 1946 it collected something like \$250,000 in revenue. The clerks there have to be trained and cannot get transferred regularly on promotion. The result is that they are handicapped by way of promotion. I notice that there are two new Senior Clerks to be appointed at \$2,520 each and what I desire to ask is whether these clerks are not senior in service to those who have been appointed in front of them. I feel that they should not be discouraged by having clerks from other Departments appointed over their heads through no fault of their own, and when they are senior in service to those who have been appointed above them.

I think that these two new Senior Clerks should not be receiving less emoluments than those with less service who were appointed senior to them. This Department, as I have already stated, is a revenue-collecting Department. The work on transports and mortgages is very heavy and as regards the judicial side the position is terrific. There is a very large number of cases waiting to be heard and I would ask Your Excellency to consider the question of providing more staff for the Deeds Registry and also to see that if clerks there are due for promotion but cannot be transferred through no fault of their own, more salary should be given to them. They should not be left in an unfortunate position because they happen to know the work.

What happened in the past was that as soon as a clerk remained in that Department for a few years and gained some experience he was transferred on promotion, but that does not happen now. Fortunately, there are some clerks there now who have much experience of the work, but I do not think they should be left in the unfortunate position of having others with less service brought in on promotion above their heads.

The CHAIRMAN : What do you want ? Let us hear.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : I am asking Your Excellency, in view of the present circumstances that these two new Senior Clerks should be given two increments in order to put them on a level with the Senior Clerks in the Department who were appointed before them but who have less service. I am also saying that there is need for more staff in the Department in order to get through transports and mortgages and other heavy work expeditiously.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I have raised that point before. I was surprised on going through the Estimates to see that a certain senior officer was only raised in status within the last three or four years although Government has been getting the benefit of his services. I am inclined to agree very much with the Deputy President when he says that we should have a couple of Elected Members on the Promotions Board. I do not think there are many Departments in this Colony that lawyers do not know about. I support the views expressed by the hon. Member and would suggest that the Chairman or somebody else should go into the whole matter and review the situation. If, as the hon. Member has said, these two officers in the Department are senior to others who have been promoted above them, then that would be absolutely wrong. These officers cannot go anywhere else because it is Government's policy to confine them there as is done in the Customs Department.

Mr. VEERASAWMY : I do not wish to take up any more time in this matter, but I most heartily endorse what the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara has said and I am glad Your Excellency gave us an

assurance as to how promotions would be dealt with in future.

The CHAIRMAN : I gave no assurance about the Promotions Board as far as I can recollect. What I did promise was to give a House Allowance to Magistrates and I am still going into that matter.

Mr. VEERASAWMY : During consideration of the Estimates recently the hon. Member for Western Essequibo spoke about the appointment of clerks and Your Excellency said a certain procedure would be stuck to. That is the assurance I am referring to.

The CHAIRMAN : Oh yes; I remember that.

Mr. LEE : There are clerks in the Registry Department who deserve to be promoted. It takes time to learn that work and when there was a shortage of printing matter and transports and mortgages had to be done I think these same clerks worked overtime. That fact ought to be considered also.

Mr. GONSALVES : Since I am the only legal practitioner who has not yet spoken, I do not want to be left out of this chorus of voices. I desire to endorse what has been said by the various Members. The hon. the Acting Attorney-General can speak of the complaints he received whilst he was the head of the Registry Department. One grouse was that experienced officers were being transferred to the detriment of lawyers and the public in general.

The CHAIRMAN : I think one of the causes of the trouble was that they were never removed.

Mr. GONSALVES : That was the policy some time ago but, maybe, it has been changed. I cannot see the reason for transferring them, however.

Mr. ROTH : I desire to ask permission to recommit head II.—Legislature—in order to ask one question. It is to ask whether Your Excellency has come to any decision with regard to the recommendation made by this Council regarding an increase in salary for the Clerk.

The CHAIRMAN : No; I have not done so. I will give consideration to the

recommendation made by the Unofficial Members of this Council. I only desire to say that where Members are personally concerned with a Department they are rather inclined to say that those clerks are good fellows and are deserving of promotion. You must not forget that Government has to decide as regards promotions, transfers and appointments in the Service as a whole and that makes it exceedingly difficult for the Government, since there may be several Departments where officers have an equally strong claim. I am not very happy when Members speak on behalf of an officer and I am not promising anything. I cannot but remember what one hon. Member said here, and that is, you cannot hope for preferment unless you have a godfather. I was in the country for a fortnight and I read the hon. Member's statement in the Press—that no preferment was given unless one had a godfather. Those remarks were made in the Legislative Council in an open way and now hon. Members are saying that one particular officer deserves an increase. I will go into the recommendation, but hon. Members must not press me to increase salaries on Monday and then curse me on Tuesday for spending more money.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : What concerns me, sir, is the convenience of the public.

The CHAIRMAN : The question of giving double increments to two clerks is a difficult matter.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : I am not a godfather, nor am I a clerk to anybody.

Mr. LEE : When the three Courts are sitting in the Supreme Court three clerks are absent from the Deeds Registry and that is where the trouble comes in.

The CHAIRMAN : I will give careful consideration to the matter.

Council resumed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : As I make it, the Estimates which were placed before the Council were for a total of \$14,254,923. We have added sums totalling \$20,213 and we have deleted votes totalling \$41,825. Therefore, as I make it, the grand total which should now be voted is \$14,233,311. I think we can conclude now

and I am asking that the substantive motion be put as follows :

“That, this Council approves the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1947, which have been laid on the table.”

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. RAATGEVER : Before you put the motion, sir, I desire with your permission to make a few remarks on behalf of the Unofficial Members with regard to supplementary estimates and Government taxation. With regard to supplementary estimates, my hon. colleagues discussed the question generally and we are greatly concerned over the scale of supplementary expenditure presented to the Council from time to time. It was decided not to approve of supplementary estimates in future unless Government submitted the proposed additional expenditure to the Council in the first instance so that we may inquire into them before the expenditure is incurred.

We also feel that the possibilities of effecting economies without affecting the efficiency of the Service should be explored, and that revenue be increased to meet expenditure which has been incurred during the War years, such as the existing liability relating to the control of commodities and equipment of all sorts. Members feel very anxious, sir, about this matter and we are asking you to give an undertaking that these things would be gone into in the very near future. With regard to Government taxation—the proposal to increase income tax on companies and, no doubt, on the higher income group of individuals and so on—we discussed the matter, sir, and after giving it the fullest consideration it was agreed by a substantial majority not to approve of any

increased taxation as proposed by Government.

The PRESIDENT : I would just say that Government has always endorsed the view that supplementary estimates should always receive prior approval in this Council. Sir Gordon Lethem himself adopted that view during his term of office here. I think there are some occasions when supplementary expenditure has to be provided urgently but, generally speaking, I am entirely in agreement with the view that supplementary provision should not appear in any schedule until it is formally approved. I think we should get the approval of Government and this Council, so long as you do not divorce the Executive Council from the Government. Members should have a right to have a full dress debate in such a case and I think that is all I can say this afternoon. If no other Member wishes to speak on the Estimates I will put the motion for their formal approval, but before doing so I desire to thank hon. Members very much indeed for the extremely expeditious way in which the Estimates have been dealt with.

Motion put and agreed to.

MR. C. V. WIGHT CONGRATULATED

The PRESIDENT : Before we adjourn this afternoon I would like to offer publicly my own personal congratulations coupled with the congratulations of hon. Members of this Council to our fellow Member, the Hon. C. V. Wight, on the honour which His Majesty the King has bestowed upon him in the New Year Honours.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I thank Your Excellency very much.

The PRESIDENT : The Council will now adjourn *sine die*.