

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 15th November, 1935.

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

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. E. J. Waddington, C.M.G., O.B.E.

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

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

Major the Hon. W. Bain Gray, C.B.E., Director of Education.

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

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo (Eastern Berbice).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

The Hon. A. R. Crum Ewing (Essequibo River).

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

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

The Hon. S. H. Seymour (Western Essequibo).

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 14th November, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

Mr. JACOB gave notice of the following questions :—

MAGISTRATES.

How many Magistrates have, within the past four years after examination by a Medical Board in this Colony as to medical fitness to be accepted as a contributor to the New Widows and Orphans' Fund, been rejected?

TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS.

1. When did the Transport and Harbours Department receive locomotives "Sir Wilfred" and "Sir Graeme" and when were they assembled, also the dates when each started to work?

2. What amount has been spent for repairs on each for every calendar year since, and to 30th September, last? The amount for supervision, labour, and materials to be given separately for each completed year and to 30th September, 1935.

PETITION.

Mr. GONSALVES laid on the table a petition from certain inhabitants of the Colony praying that the law relating to pensions of members of the British Guiana Militia Band be revised.

THE ORDER OF THE DAY.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1936.

TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS.

THE CHAIRMAN: When the Committee adjourned yesterday we had passed Head V. of the Transport and Harbours Department and we are now due to consider the Bartica-Potaro Road Service.

Mr. CRUM EWING: This Bartica-Potaro Road, sir, from the point of view of an investment, was intended to help the mining industries of the Colony and also to minimise the loss of lives in the rivers. At present this road is not serving either of these purposes. To begin with, freight rates on machinery, an item required for permanent improvement, are so prohibitive that we can take our material up by the river cheaper, using as fuel gasolene duty paid at the rate of 2½ cents as compared with the freight rate 2½ cents per lb. I have in mind that in 1934 there was a 2 ton drill which is naturally necessary for determining the value of the Potaro river bed. That drill cost me 55s. per ton landed in the Colony and the freight was about \$26 from London as compared with \$112 from Bartica to Garraway Stream. At the present rate the cost of transporting a dredge to a point around Garraway's Stream bridge would be in the vicinity of \$20,000. Most of the Companies operating there have been giving Government a fair amount of assistance to make this road a permanent asset to the Colony, but we have reached the stage where we are so thoroughly dissatisfied with the service that we propose to reinstitute our boat services with high powered motors, which will do the trip in about 22 working hours at a much cheaper rate and at our convenience with our staff which averages about 22 men per boat.

I asked a gentleman, who is operating largely in that district and has just come down from there, what is the present condition of the road and he said "It is no longer there. All that is left is the bridge." His opinion, which is also mine and of several others who have spent a great portion of our lives in the interior, is that Government blundered when that

road was put there, due to the fact that proper engineering ability was not brought into play. In certain parts of the road are patches of dead sand which could have been overcome, I will not say by engineering ability to be obtained locally only, but from road engineers who have had experience primarily in Africa and had service in the British Empire during the War. Two of my engineers who have gone over the road have told me that it is impossible for this road to stand up under any conditions, and that it is impossible for vehicles of any class to stand up to the jarring for a period of more than six months. Most of the lorries are dismantled in the garage at Bartica and four have proved absolute failures on the road. When we opened the road we tried the Thornycroft lorries, which were inspected by two or three engineers, who have said that these lorries were used at the Front under much worse conditions than exist here and never gave any trouble, and they could not understand why we did not continue to use this type of lorries.

I am not criticising without offering suggestions. One engineer suggested that with the close proximity of vegetation near the road it would be possible to send gangs of men along the road to cut and bind fascine and lay it parallel across the road. Another engineer suggested that we should put in a 2 feet thick concrete base in the dead sand and let that be a concrete driving track. Another suggested that we should construct a hardwood light rail with flanged metal wheels on our lorries. He actually gave an estimate of about £150 a mile with examples of the type of rail now being used successfully in Mesopotamia where there are about sixty miles in operation. In the Belgian Congo there are also lorries of a similar type. I cannot advise and can only make suggestions, but I do know that we can obtain more for sleepers and greenheart for rails, and that is all that is required to try out 10 miles of road.

Coming to the Bartica-Issano Road, I do not know what is the object of that road. I have been told that it is to ameliorate conditions in the falls. Loss of life in the Mazaruni has been minimised and for the last five years has been almost negligible, and it is due to the fact that we are using high powered motors and skilled

captains who are very rigidly examined before certificates of competency are issued to them. When Mr. Leggate made his survey he did not stop at Issano. His objective was to cross the Wiamu and come out at the Tibocu Fall. Issano is one-third the distance to our workings and I cannot conceive any of the present people operating sending freight by that road. That road was cut before a proper survey was made of the area. I went through the topographic line cut in February this year, and in speaking with them one or two officials agreed with me that it would be of very little service in the development of the mining industry in the Mazaruni district. The only conclusion I can come to is that on the Board of the Transport Department there is no one who has gone past Bartica, with the result that there is none capable of giving advice as regards hinterland transport. If we are to cater for the investment of capital on a large scale there is a much easier route which can be utilised at a very much cheaper rate than the present road. From Bartica to Garraway Stream we are paying 1 cent per lb. for freight by river and gasolene cost us 52 cents to that point, whereas for carriage by the lorries the charge is 2 cents per lb. and the gasolene used cost them 18 or 19 cents per gallon. Although the necessity for new lorries exists I am reluctantly compelled to vote against the expenditure, unless Government is prepared thoroughly and immediately to investigate what is the best means of improving the road before putting a new fleet of lorries on it.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I should like to endorse every syllable of the hon. Member. I had an opportunity of going over this road only once, and it would take a lot to make me go over it again in a lorry. That was on a pleasure trip. I can hardly conceive how anybody could travel on that road by means of lorries laden with heavy machinery and things of that sort. Before any attempt to build that road was made it was proposed to build a railway into the hinterland. One of the grounds urged against the road was that it was going to be built through a sandy desert, and the section of the country through which it was to run was known to be always flooded in times of heavy rainfall. It stood to reason therefore that after every heavy rainfall sand would

cover the whole roadway and we would always have to be making a new road. That argument was not considered to be good enough and the road was built. In travelling over the road you are going over sand and corduroy—and there was a deep ditch—going up and down all the time and racked to death. Lorries were never made to go over roads of that nature, but to go over smooth ground with a rocky foundation. I cannot conceive how any class of engineers, if they knew the country, could have advised the building of this road. Government acted on the advice of engineers and cannot now abandon the road. That is the misfortune. So much money has been sunk there. The hon. Member for Georgetown North, who is a mighty economist, might be able to suggest whether it is possible to lay rails on tiles and in that way get a light railway. The road was a mistake and a light railway of any sort would have been better. There is a forest of good wood, but that wood cannot be taken to Bartica or Georgetown because it cannot be got out. In any case this is a matter that should be investigated because Government cannot go on dropping money into the Devil's hat.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. Member for Essequibo River add to his criticism of this road what he meant when he said the road is no longer there? Is it so cut up or what?

Mr. CRUM EWING: It is in such a state that it is.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I should like, first of all, to congratulate the hon. Member for Essequibo River on his clear exposition of the condition of this road. It is often said that Members generally speak destructively and not constructively, but I do not think it can be said that the hon. Member has not offered constructive advice in connection with this matter. So far as I am concerned I prefer to deal with the estimate before the House. I endeavoured in my previous remarks to point out that the estimate as framed, particularly in connection with the Bartica-Potaro Service, will not result in a working profit, and I propose to the best of my ability to prove that statement. I have no intention whatever to cry over spilt milk. A good number of us, including myself, have agreed that this road has served some purpose, and in

some respect improved the development of the country. But I hope that the suggestions of the hon. Member for Essequibo River will receive the consideration of Government before any further additional expenditure is incurred in connection with the service. The hon. Member made reference to the fact that the lorries operating on this road consume gasolene duty free. It would be interesting to know how much revenue is lost in that direction.

THE CHAIRMAN: What does the hon. Member mean by "lost"? It would be paid out of Government funds eventually in any case.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It is lost to the revenue from the point of view that if the Service was operated by a private individual he would have to pay duty on the gasolene. Government, on the other hand, is allowed to use it free, and I think I am right in maintaining that it is a loss to revenue. Those of us who have been Members of the Council for the past five years will appreciate that these estimates are not correctly framed and do not prove the true position. Apart from the money that was borrowed from the Colonial Development Fund for this road, which, including the expenditure for 1936, from figures before me amounts to \$663,393, a further sum of \$30,442 has been borrowed from that source for lorries. That money will be repaid by the Colony. As a matter of fact a portion of it is already in our Budget for 1936, but I can find nowhere in the estimates of the Department a refund to the Treasury of their proportion of the money borrowed for the purchase of the lorries. The first sum borrowed was \$14,400 and there has been an additional loan of \$16,042. We are not getting any more money from the Colonial Development Fund for this purpose, but it is proposed next year—I have not yet heard where the money is to come from—to incur a further capital expenditure of \$15,000 for the purchase of new lorries. I should like to be informed whether that will be paid by the Transport Department from current revenue, or whether it is proposed to raise another loan for the amount.

THE CHAIRMAN: It will be found on page 9 of the Appendix—the last item.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Yes, sir, it is there. It is included in the net deficiency this Council has to vote. The point I was making is that the Colony has borrowed from the Colonial Development Fund the sum of \$30,442 for the purchase of these lorries, and I should like to know how are we going to get this money back from the Transport and Harbours Department. If what the hon. Member for Essequibo River said is correct it seems that the whole of that \$30,000 is lost. What provision have we made for the replacement of those lorries? I see provision made for only \$2,500. I have been told that the lorries are in a state of disrepair. What provision has been made to offset the initial capital expenditure? I would be the last person to suggest that this road should be scrapped. I think it would be a step in the wrong direction, indeed it would be a backward step, but I would advise that before any further capital expenditure is incurred, either for maintaining the road or for the purchase of lorries, Government should reconsider the whole question in the light of what has been said this morning, in order to see whether some other steps should not be taken to carry out the original intention which led to the building of this road.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it will facilitate discussion if the Colonial Secretary replies and elucidates certain points which have been raised.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir, a good deal of the debate has dealt with the state of the road and the survey of the route for the road, and on these points I am going to ask the Director of Public Works to speak later on. With regard to the rates, sir, the statement of the hon. Member for Essequibo River was not quite correct. He gave the figure of $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents from Bartica to Potaro. That figure of $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents is from Georgetown to Potaro, and the rate is 2 cents from Bartica to Garraway Stream. That works out at \$44 a ton from Bartica onwards, as compared with \$60 when freight was carried by Sproston. That rate works out at the figure of 4 cents per ton per mile, and I think that, having regard to the country over which this traffic is going, it must be realised that there is really no profit in carrying on at that rate. As

Members are aware, the road to Issano will be finished before very long, and consideration is being given to the question of transport from Issano further up stream. The whole question of rates for the roads and for the river will be reconsidered *in toto* as soon as this new line of traffic is opened.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River has told us that there are practically no lorries that can move along the road at present. Of 24 lorries 20 are in commission at the moment and serviceable and four are under repairs. He also criticised the type of lorries and made suggestions in regard to another type, and said that in other parts of the world, including the Belgian Congo, those lorries were used with very great success. The question of the type of lorries was very carefully considered, not only by our people here but in close consultation with engineers in England who are conversant with the state of affairs in many countries of this nature, and their advice is being taken as to the type of lorry that should be used. I suggest to hon. Members that we cannot get better advice in regard to the type of lorry to use than what we are getting at the present time. That is all I wish to say at the moment, and I will ask the Director of Public Works to make a few remarks in regard to the roads.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): Sir, the construction of this road has been the subject of severe criticism of all and sundry. We have had criticisms which have been very much against it; we have also had criticisms from others who have been in its favour. I can hardly believe the statement of the hon. Member for Essequibo River when he says that the road is not passable. It is now eight months since I went over it myself, and, even had no maintenance been carried out at that time, I do not think it at all possible that it could have gone west as suggested by the hon. Member. There are several methods that can be used, and several methods have been used, when the maintenance of the road was under my jurisdiction. We tried out every possible economic means to put down a surface that would be satisfactory for the traffic that was going over the road, and my opinion is that the only economic satisfactory means of keeping this road in condi-

tion for the traffic is by the use of corduroy, much maligned by the hon. Member for Berbice River.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River stated that one of his engineers, who had been a Sapper in France—I happened to belong to the same Regiment and was also a Sapper in France—had suggested fascines. If that engineer had made more than a superficial examination of the road he would probably have found the remnants of fascine made years ago, so that the suggestion is not one that has not been tried out. Fascine is very suitable for taking traffic over bog and is used for road development in countries such as this. The use of corduroy is a step further in my opinion, but I do not think that a technical discussion in this House will serve any good purpose, and I do not propose to pursue the question. I assure the hon. Member that I would be only too pleased to meet his engineers and discuss their views with regard to road construction and maintenance. I am prepared to see them at any time and discuss the matter, and we may be able to come to some satisfactory conclusion. I ought to state that I purpose inspecting the roads in the interior after the Council rises. I shall then be able to report on the condition of this road from my point of view, which I hope will be more favourable than the report we have received from the Member for Essequibo River.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: This is one of those rare occasions on which I find myself in sympathy with Government, and that is because I am one of those Members of the Council who strongly advocated that this road should be constructed and maintained. In spite of the difficulties at present of keeping the road in repair and the high cost of transportation, the road is going to be a great asset to the Colony. It is really beginning to be one of the big highways into the interior. I quite agree with all that has been said by the hon. Member for Essequibo River as regards the present condition of the road and freight charges, and I urge on Government to make every effort to reduce freight charges as much as possible, because considerable revenue is lost by boats taking freight instead of the lorries. I am informed by the General Manager of the Transport Department

—and I was convinced that at present it is not practicable—that there is no revenue coming to Government as profit on freight as goods are practically carried at cost. We know as a fact that it cost \$9.50 to carry a barrel of cement over the road, and it does not require a Mathematician to say that no industry can make headway when it has to pay such terrific charges for freight.

It is true that the cost of maintenance of the road is tremendously high, but it is reported that a great deal of money is wasted as the result of the road gangs not performing any work at all. That is a matter that the Director of Public Works should enquire into because I am assured that it is a fact. Now that mining concerns are getting ahead with the gold industry, especially in the Caburi and Potaro river, every effort should be made to encourage them to transport machinery and other requisites as cheaply as possible. If Government were tomorrow to decide to throw open the road to the public, I think you will find the Companies doing a considerable amount of work on it themselves, but they are not going to do it while Government hold the monopoly. One would expect Government to co-operate with them, because the road would be used as a highway and would be of use to the public. I also ask Government to consider whether it is not advisable to issue licences to persons operating there to use their own vehicles.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I understand that I made the statement that the freight charge is 4 cents per ton per mile. I should have said 40 cents.

Mr. WALCOTT: I am not going to talk about the road when I have not been over it or to speculate on engineering problems, but I am going to ask Members of the Council to take their memories back a few years. I appreciate a good deal of the criticism that the hon. Member for Essequibo River has levelled at Government because I believe his criticism was unbiased, and a little co-operation with him by the Transport Board would probably make for better results, but I am particularly concerned with getting memories back six or seven years. I was interested in the Potaro district at that time and the cost of transport then, to say nothing of

the difficulties, was somewhere between 4 and 5 cents per lb. Operations in the district had practically closed down because there was not sufficient traffic to warrant the continuance of the very imperfect service by boats and other means *via* the Demerara River. What strikes me is that although the Colonial Transport Service is criticised as charging a very heavy rate—naturally we would all like it to be lower—the fact remains that while the freight rate by water may be 1½ cents per lb. to-day it is a very imperfect service.

It may be that with the use of high powered in-board motors on the rivers the risk to life must be minimised, but the fact remains that there is a distinct risk, and I would prefer to travel by road as I think most people would. But above everything we have to remember that these boats could not take up heavy lifts. When the boats had to cross the rapids and go over the falls these heavy lifts became almost impossible of handling. No one can handle 2 or 3 tons of cargo at 1½ cents per lb., and I am sure that my hon. friend is thoroughly honest and will appreciate and confirm what I say. We also have to take into consideration that when this road was started we had a good deal of unemployment in the Colony, and one of the reasons that influenced our late Governor to start the road was to find an outlet for unemployment in Georgetown. In addition to that I believe he thought the road would be an easier means of communication with the Potaro, which undoubtedly has proved to be the case, and further that miners would be able to get up there easily. They could walk if they don't want to go by lorry. Since this road has been started there has been immense development of the gold industry in the Potaro district. I believe that my hon. friend is going to benefit by it, and I hope he will.

Criticism is good, and I believe that the criticism of the hon. Member is genuine, but in criticising Government measures of this kind we must be perfectly fair and take the thing as a whole and not in part. It is always easy to criticise any schemes in part, but sometimes it is very difficult to criticise it as a whole. I have already referred to the fact that the road was constructed in a measure to relieve unemploy-

ment. I will now point out that the returns of gold from the Potaro have increased tremendously. Further, to-day I can get a letter up to the Potaro and receive a reply in four days. When I had to send letters by boat I did not know whether they would get there or not, and if they did get there it would be two or three weeks before I could get a reply. There is yet another advantage. Small people—and many of us speak about the small people—can get stores from Georgetown at the lowest possible prices and not be fleeced by those whom I have heard frequently referred to as “the dishonest big shop-keeper in the interior.” They can get supplies from Georgetown every other day, and get them in small quantities at the same rate as for large quantities. That is a very distinct benefit. It is a benefit to these small people that we cannot lose sight of, many of whom I know are making a living which they would have been unable to do without the convenience of this road.

One Member referred to the fact that the lorries were giving only two or three years' service on the road. I do not think that the average lorry on the East Coast road gives much more service than that. It is not so many years ago that the East Coast road was in such a condition that I could not travel two miles an hour on some parts of it, and my high powered motor car did not last more than three years. If, then, a lorry lasts two or three years on this so-called impassable road, the road must be rather better than it has been described to be. In fact, I was made to believe that it was so bad that I have not had the temerity to travel over it yet. I notice that the travelling allowance to the Colonial Secretary is only \$50 for next year. If the Colonial Secretary has to go over this road very shortly he will need an amplified allowance if the road is as bad as it is represented to be. I would like to congratulate the Transport Department on the work they have done on this road. They have a very good Board, to say nothing of the personnel, and for their excellent service in an undertaking for which they have not been specially trained they deserve better consideration than they have received.

Mr. WOOLFORD: The speech which has been just made is a most valuable

contribution to this subject, and I may say at once that the hon. Member has anticipated me in almost every respect. It is now 35 years ago since I visited the Potaro district. I then left Georgetown by steamer and went as far as Wismar, crossed by the train service to Rockstone and spent the night there. I left at 6 o'clock in the morning in an open boat, exposed to the weather, for Tumatumari where shelter was provided for the night. I travelled from Tumatumari to Potaro Landing also in an open boat with two professional men and a Member of the Executive Council. On arrival at Potaro Landing we were conveyed by a donkey cart to the property of the Rhodius Syndicate, where there were two or three mining syndicates in operation. The journey then was far more difficult and far less comfortable than on any portion of the journey over the present road. Those conditions continued to operate in this Colony for a number of years. The consequence was that the Potaro as a gold producing district failed entirely to attract any notice. Then there came a time when there was a complete interruption of the service and it was not possible, except at the will of Messrs Sprostons, to get to the Potaro at all.

The position in which the Government was placed at that period is perhaps beyond the recollections of a good many persons in this community. But communication was held up. Government was threatened with reprisals with respect to the continuance of the contract, a cleavage occurred in consequence, and in this room there was a long debate as to what should be the best expedient to adopt. We were offered by the Government a service to Kurupukari on the Essequibo River. This was not favoured and after considerable discussion this particular route was determined on. What is the result? To-day one can leave Georgetown, have a pleasant journey by steamer to Bartica, spend a comfortable night's rest there and then proceed on, I admit, a somewhat uncomfortable but a safe journey by road to Potaro. It is now possible for one to leave Bartica and be in the heart of the Potaro district the same night. I have done it myself and Members of this Council know that is the true position. Is that to be compared in any way with

conditions which previously existed? Is it going to be said that it is not an advantage for persons, whether their interests lie beyond Bartica or not, to be conveyed to this district in safety and comparative comfort by means of a road? Is it to be said that the thousands of men who are there now earning a comfortable livelihood are to be deprived of that privilege? Does the hon. Member for Essequibo River know what the Savings Bank deposits of these men show? Does he know of the residences in Plaisance and Buxton built up by the prosperity gained by them by working for gold in the Potaro? Is the hon. Member not aware that there was a time when these men, apart from being unemployed, were practically starving? I know of many instances where men to-day have their wives and homes in that district. Is that not a condition of things of which we ought to be proud?

In my view much of the criticism of the state of the road is justifiable, and I attribute it very largely to the fact that the Public Works Department is not in a position to place in charge of the road an Engineer to supervise its maintenance. As we all know, the Transport Department was mainly concerned, until recently, with the conveyance of passengers and traffic. It is now a question of policy, which Government is considering, as to whether the maintenance of the road should be under the Transport Department or the Public Works Department. It is a matter of opinion whether there will not be better supervision under the Public Works Department, but it does seem to me to be of advantage that the Transport Department should have the oversight of a road over which their lorries pass from time to time. But that matter is at present receiving the careful consideration of the Board and some decision will be arrived at sooner or later. It may be expected that some material improvement will be effected in the condition of the road with the co-operation of the Public Works Department.

When it is suggested that we should abandon this service and leave the opposition to run their own service entirely, the fact is overlooked that it is within the power of Government to prevent such a course. The present service from Bartica to Rockstone is being maintained at con-

siderable risk to life and Government should not permit it. It is also known that the journey involves considerable delay and increased charges in some cases to those who support it. Cargo has to be sent from Georgetown to Bartica, transhipped by boat to Rockstone, and from there by boat to Tumatumari where it is again transhipped to another boat before reaching its destination. Is it economic for proprietors in the Potaro to send a conveyance to the Potaro Landing to handle cargo which has been handled so often and at great risk of damage than to have it taken to their doorstep in a lorry, even though it is carried over an uncomfortable road? This may suit some proprietors, but as a general custom it will not prove acceptable. I deprecate the idea that when the Transport Department is doing its best to meet the wishes of customers they should be constantly threatened with opposition. I do not think it makes for the encouragement of a happy relation between the Board and its patrons.

Some comment was made by the hon. Member for Berbice River about woodcutters along the road being unable to get their wood transported to Bartica. My own acquaintance with the conditions of life of these squatters along the road has been that they have been induced to take up these allotments in the hope that it will provide them with a permanent living. It is now known that the quality of the soil there will not offer them that, and their only remedy for relief at the present moment is by engaging in wood-cutting. I am in a position to tell the hon. Member that the Department is not only doing its best to convey that wood to Bartica but is purchasing that wood at a price which the wood-cutter cannot obtain elsewhere, but the time will come when all the available wood has been stripped off the land and these people will not be able to earn a living at all. The best thing they can do is to put up with present conditions, and the Department will continue to do its best to purchase their produce. I would like to add that the Board of Directors have kept in close consultation with the best engineering experts in England in regard to the most suitable type of lorry or vehicle to be used on the road, and the General Manager, who has been on leave, has had the advantage of an interview with

the Engineers. His local knowledge must have been of great benefit to the Engineers and final decisions arrived at, whether in regard to the use of Ford lorries or any other, will be carefully considered by the Board and the best and most suitable lorry employed in serving the public.

Mr. CRUM EWING: I hope none of the Members of the Council understood me to say that the road should be abandoned. It was never my intention to have created that impression either. My criticisms were directed to the manner in which the road service is being operated, and I also suggested a possible solution to relieve the present situation. If a Company is operating in the Potaro river, what is to prevent that Company from shipping machinery in a cargo boat by river? The point I desired to make was to suggest that consideration should be given to whether there should not be a special rate for machinery and things used for permanent operations, such as galvanised sheets for instance. The freight rate on galvanised sheets is ridiculous.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member for Berbice River tried to inveigle me into a trap. Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread, and I am not going to make a fool of myself on this occasion. The criticism to which we have listened has really been no criticism of the Transport Department or of the Board as it exists. The criticism, as I see it, has been more or less an attempt to be helpful. The first point is the cost of transport. That has already been answered by the Colonial Secretary. The next point is the type of road. I think hon. Members are afraid that as traffic grows and the country is opened up this road will be quite incapable of dealing with the traffic it is hoped to handle over it. The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara suggested that the road might be the beginning of the opening up of the interior for greater things. I am afraid I am not so optimistic. I am also afraid that a road of this kind could never be used for anything of that kind. The criticism of the hon. Member for Essequibo River was that there was nobody on the Board with sufficient knowledge of the interior. I think that is a very good point. I do not know of anyone on the Board with a knowledge of the interior which is necessary to deal with questions of this nature that might

crop up. I am informed that Mr. Evan Wong is on the Board. It is true that Mr. Evan Wong has a good deal of knowledge and therefore can be of great assistance to the Board.

Another point which was made by the hon. Member is the cost of getting machinery to the district. Many years ago when the development of the mining industries arose the great objection one always heard was that it was quite impossible to get machinery there. I think much of the interest shown in the interior to-day is due to the construction of this road; if it does nothing else it has helped to open up the country. Whether it is likely to remain as a road or not is a matter open to question. The Transport Department run lorries over the road and collect dues and it is only right that they should maintain it. I do not know if that is a wise course, however, because I am not aware that they have officers with much experience of roadmaking. That is the primary object of the Public Works Department, and I feel at times that it is a mistake to take that duty out of the hands of the Public Works Department. I may be criticising unfairly some officer of the Transport Department, but I do not wish to do so as I think they have done very well. The point is that Government started the road and have to go on with it, and the only question is how are they to do it in an economical way with the increasing traffic.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have had a very useful discussion and I think the Transport Board will agree with me in saying that. Before we pass on I wish to add two details. Government has undertaken an experiment between Ford and Morris lorries to see which would react better to the existing conditions: that is to say the lorries are on order but not yet on the road. The other detail is with regard to the upkeep of this road. I entirely agree—and I think we all agree—that an officer with engineering experience will be necessary to supervise the maintenance of the roads in future. The length of them is such now that it would be uneconomical not to put the large amount of money required for their maintenance under expert supervision.

Sub-head 3—Training Officer and Pilot, \$1,920.

Mr. ELEAZAR: This sub-head is creating some apprehension in one's mind. One wonders how it comes to pass that so many new offices have been created within the last year. In this Department they have been training pilot apprentices and for the current year a sum of \$540 was voted for that purpose. For next year and years to come we are to be saddled with a Training Officer at a salary of \$1,920 rising to \$2,400. I understand that there is no necessity for the creation of this office and the importation of an officer of this class. I have read somewhere that an officer with deep sea knowledge is required. In this country our misfortune is that we always want people to do work that we have not got to give them to do. We have no steamer that travels from here to Barbados or Trinidad, yet we want an officer with deep sea experience to train our pilots to run along the coast and go up rivers. This officer will know nothing about our problems, our coastlands and rivers, but we want him to travel in the deep sea where we have no use for him. Perhaps Government are anticipating the time when the country would be opened up and our steamers would not only sail up and down our rivers but would also make ocean-going trips, but those days are too far away for us to embark on this expenditure. I want to know whether Government cannot find it possible to appoint a local man to this post. Your Excellency will perhaps be surprised to know that there is at present in this Department an officer, a native of the Colony, who took the trouble, no doubt in anticipation of the creation of this job, to go to England and successfully sat the examination of the Board of Trade for a Master's certificate.

Mr. AUSTIN: To a point of correction. The officer was born in Barbados. (Laughter).

Mr. ELEAZAR: I don't know where he was born, sir, but he belongs to this Colony. At any rate, whether Barbadian, Buxtonian or Berbician, he had the foresight to live in British Guiana, go to England and obtain the certificate of the Board of Trade for the identical purpose of training. In obtain-

ing the permission of the Board of Trade to sit the examination the officer was told that it was impossible for him "to get through," but he took his chance and got there. That officer is still in the Service, but here is the suggestion to bring somebody from abroad. More than that we have a Commodore, who is unquestionably a native of the Colony, with a knowledge of the routes along the coast and up the rivers superior to that of any other man in the Colony. The Commodore has trained several men in his time, but we still want to bring a man from outside at the same salary as he is getting at the present time. The next move will be to place the newcomer over the Commodore himself.

We get too many birds of passage coming to this Colony, and sometimes birds of prey. Here we have two officers capable of performing this work—I do not suppose they have been consulted—and in order to throw dust in our eyes we are told that an officer with deep sea experience is necessary. An officer with deep sea experience to teach what?—to teach young men when the Commodore will have to teach him before he can teach others. I hope Your Excellency will see the necessity for striking out this item. I cannot conceive that Members of this House have a monopoly of wisdom and when they get on these Boards they can make a pronouncement without anybody else having a say in the matter. I am going to ask Members of the Council to set their faces against an item of this kind. For this year we are paying \$540 for training apprentices and for next year that item is increased to \$700.

THE CHAIRMAN: Has the hon. Member looked at the explanation against the item?

Mr. ELEAZAR: There is not much about that. I am only calling attention to the fact that the item has been increased. My complaint is that at the present time we have men capable of training apprentices. They have given good services in the past in that direction, and if given the opportunity with perhaps a little more remuneration they can continue to train the apprentices. We are not economising after all and I am strongly against the appointment of an outsider. I under-

stand that the Commodore is merely manager of the wharf. If that is all he is doing he can be seconded, or another person appointed to manage the wharf, for the purpose of performing these particular duties.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member for Berbice River regards this vote as being intended to procure a man to train pilots. That, of course, is not the intention of the post at all. The main object is to train the steamers' crews. His work also will embrace the training of pilots, but the primary part of it is to train the personnel of the steamers so as to improve the standard of their efficiency. It has been found that the training of the steamers' crews now leaves much to be desired, and such a state of affairs is apt to lead to accidents of a minor nature. Although they may be minor so far as accidents are concerned, they may be very costly so far as the Transport and Harbours Department is concerned, and it is very necessary that there should be somebody on the staff capable of imparting proper knowledge of seamaanship. I may say in that connection that the capital investment represented by these steamers is \$710,000 and it is a matter of great importance that the crews of these vessels should be men properly trained to take care of them. A man such as we will require will have to possess practical and theoretical knowledge and sea experience and hold a Master's certificate. That is to say a man who has served the Merchant Service. I think it is clear that a man of this sort is necessary in a Department having a fleet of vessels representing the capital investment which I have referred to.

Mr. AUSTIN: I do not think there is anyone in this Council who can accuse me of not endeavouring to promote the local man in preference to one coming from abroad, all things being equal. I consider this is what might be called a key position. The pilot who has been referred to by the hon. Member for Berbice River is a very able man. Captains coming to this port with the Harrison boats prefer to have him on their bridge to any other pilot, but they cannot always obtain his services. The men under Pilot Walcott do not inspire the same confidence, and it

is for that reason I think that there should be brought out a man, who has had experience of deep water navigation and possesses a Master's certificate, to train the younger generation in the responsibilities of piloting steamers into the Demerara, Essequibo and other rivers.

I would like to refer to one other remark of the hon. Member for Berbice River. Pilot Walcott came down here to join the Police Force. This Colony has educated him in pilot's work and he is doing it very efficiently. There is no reason why someone should not be brought down here from Canada or the United Kingdom and taught as Pilot Walcott has been taught. Members who are hoping that this Colony will progress and export much more than it is doing will consider the advisability of having a relief officer or pilot who can undertake the duties of training the younger generation in bringing ships into the harbour and taking them out to sea. Another point is that the Harbour Master and the Training Officer should themselves be pilots. I do not think it is right that the Harbour Master should take his assistants on the bridge of any boat when he is in charge of that boat. He should be able to pilot a schooner, a man-o'-war or any other boat into this port. Unfortunately that is not at present done.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am sorry to be drawn into this discussion, but I have not heard either from the Colonial Secretary or the last speaker who is responsible at present for the training of these men. If there is somebody in the Service who is responsible for the training of pilots, the inference is that he is incapable of doing the work assigned to him, but nothing has been said to show that is the case. I look upon the appointment of any highly paid man with a great deal of suspicion, and upon this particular appointment as the creation of the post of Deputy Harbour Master which was abolished. This House should satisfy itself as to whether a Deputy Harbour Master is required. Another point I should like to mention is that I gather that the officer has been already selected.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not the case.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I hope, sir, it is not the case, because I shall vote against the item.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I move that the question be now put.

Mr. SEYMOUR: Before the question is put, sir, I desire to make a few remarks.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am bound to put the question under the Rules of the House. If Members do not wish it to be put they will vote against that motion. Does the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara wish that his motion be put?

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: I find myself in a difficulty. There is no question before the House. This is merely a discussion on the Transport Department's estimates.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I appreciate the desirability of having an officer of this nature, but I am inclined to view the matter in another way. There are men in England who take boats around the North Sea, many of them not fully qualified but good navigators. We have not such deep rivers here to require first-class officers, and I do not see the necessity for this officer. We do not get ships coming in every day and from what I know he would not be fully occupied. I understand that his duties will not be to train pilots but to train crews in seamanship. We do not have much work around this coast, and I think it is overstepping the mark to bring in another officer who will eventually go on the pension list. We are borrowing all the time and should not make this appointment.

Mr. JACOB: The point has been made that we need a man with technical knowledge. We have a General Manager at £1,000, a Maintenance Engineer at £500, a Chief Mechanical Engineer at £850, an Assistant Mechanical Engineer at £600, a Second Assistant Engineer at £500, a Harbour Master at £600, and now we want a Training Officer and Pilot at £400. To my mind this Department is already overstaffed with technical men. The Department is losing money yet we are creating further posts that will carry lump sum payments, pension rights and other commitments. We have heard that there

are suitable men at present employed who can undertake this job, and I therefore move the reduction of \$1,920 from the net deficiency of \$47,657.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will put that question as a concrete one to the Committee.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think it ought to be explained for the benefit of Members that the proposal for the appointment of a Training Officer and Pilot has become necessary because there is likely to be a vacancy in the Department by the retirement of a pilot. It is not really a question of a new appointment but a new appointment to fill an anticipated vacancy. It is true that the pay of the post is being increased and a new appointment is being made, but the fact remains that the Pilotage Service at present is undermanned, even if this appointment is not necessary. It very often happens that vessels cannot be promptly attended to and that one pilot is continuously on duty from time to time for a period of days, and opportunity is being taken to endeavour to get an officer who would be able to undertake not merely pilotage duties but also the training of men at present in the Service. The whole equipment of the Steamer Service has been rendered possible by the training the present Captains got from others who served in a similar capacity with Sproston, but the opportunity has never been given to them of imparting their training to the crews under them.

It is well known that during the period of the last 20 or 25 years much remains to be learnt even by the present Captains. Many of the Captains are not in a position to impart the training necessary to their crews, and what the Department is aiming at now is to secure the services of a man who has had the benefit of training on a training ship in England. The suggested appointment is of a man who has had the benefit of that training and considerable deep sea experience, and it is hoped that the benefit to be gained by the appointment of such an officer will be transmitted to the men who are at present being trained. There are no pilots available to undertake the training of apprentices because they are all sufficiently taken up with their own duties. Pilot Walcott himself could not claim to be able to per-

form these duties. I am a native of the Colony and I carefully considered Pilot Walcott's claim, as I am sure other members of the Board also did, and if it were possible to appoint him he would have had preference over everybody else. The General Manager and everyone who has had anything to do with the matter did not overlook his claim, and I think Pilot Walcott himself appreciates that he could not undertake the duties to be assigned to this officer.

Mr. JACOB: To a point of order. We are not discussing the appointment of any particular person.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I quite recognise that, but all this discussion has been centred around Pilot Walcott, who the hon. Member for Berbice River suggested is being overlooked. I therefore think I am quite right in stating the Department's view that his claim has not been overlooked. But apart from Pilot Walcott or anyone else, the necessity exists for an appointment in place of Pilot Venture who is about to retire.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to make one point quite clear. This appointment is the gift of the Secretary of State and no one else, and no appointment has been made.

Mr. WALCOTT: No case has been made out, as far as I see, for the appointment of this officer. Surely the Harbour Master is competent to undertake the duties of coaching pilots after his long residence in the Colony, and when he has to go on leave the senior pilot can act for him so far as the outdoor duties are concerned and the Transport Board could appoint a responsible officer to perform his other duties. I do not think we need an officer of this kind at the present moment. The Harbour Master in a small port like this has ample time and ought to have acquired the necessary knowledge to train these men in his spare time. I do not think the appointment is necessary apart from the question of Pilot Walcott or anyone else.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I move that the question be now put.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before I put the question I want to make quite clear, in

the first place, that no appointment has been made. It is entirely impossible to make it until the appointment has been confirmed by the Secretary of State. In the second place the officer is required to train the crews of the vessels more than he is required to train pilots. It will be necessary for him to travel on the steamers in order to train the crews and officers while on duty. It would not meet the case at all if he merely gives lectures to them in the harbour. This practical training can only be given by a deep sea sailor who has got a Master's certificate.

The Committee divided on the amendment, and voted:—

Ayes—Messrs. Jackson, Seymour, King, Jacob, Crum Ewing, Humphrys, Walcott, Peer Bacchus, Dr. Singh, De Aguiar, Eleazar and Seaford—12.

Noes—Messrs. Austin, Gonsalves, Wight, Dr. De Freitas, Laing, Major Craig, D'Andrade, Mullin, McDavid, Woolford, Luckhoo, Professor Dash, Major Bain Gray, Dias, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—16.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon recess.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that sub-head 2 on page 78 (Extraordinary expenditure on renewals and replacements \$71,000) be increased to \$81,980 to cover expenditure on a new locomotive to replace "Alexandra." This is a revote of part of \$15,000 which was provided in the 1935 Estimates. The order was placed but the whole expenditure cannot be incurred during the year and the additional \$10,980 represents the unexpended balance at the end of the year.

Question put, and agreed to.

TREASURY.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that item 1b (Deputy Colonial Treasurer, \$3,360) be increased to \$3,600. When the Deputy Colonial Treasurer is appointed it is proposed that he should be on a fixed salary of \$3,600 instead of \$3,360 rising to \$3,840.

Question put, and agreed to.

POST OFFICE.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think this is an

appropriate point to bring to the attention of Government the urgent necessity for improvement of the telephone apparatus in New Amsterdam. As far back as December, 1934, and previously, the Berbice Chamber of Commerce asked Government to consider this question, and Government's reply, dated November, 1934, was to the effect that it was not possible to include in the 1935 Estimate expenditure for the purchase of a new switchboard but that the matter would receive the consideration of Government during 1935. It is quite apparent that although the question might have received consideration of Government during 1935—and I am prepared to allow that it has—Government has not given consideration to the desire of my constituency. There are two alternatives. One is the installation of a new switchboard at a cost of \$10,000, and the other the replacement of the existing switchboard at a cost of \$3,000. But the only way in which improvement can be effected is by the installation of a new and modern switchboard. The business position is this. The total revenue from the service in the way of local renters amounts to \$4,000 per annum. Whether or not services rendered to the Police, Hospital and institutions are included in that revenue I am not in a position to say but there are services which are as indispensable as the commercial services, and it must be taken into account that any improvement in the system will also extend to Government Departments.

In addition to that \$4,000 revenue to be aimed at, the position is that if you replace the existing switchboard you will not extend the service. A number of people would be glad to avail themselves of the service, but you have no space for them and under existing conditions you cannot increase your revenue. That does not seem to be businesslike or an economic position. In addition to revenue some \$6,000 is derived from communication on the trunk lines of Demerara and the County of Berbice. I am assuming that any reduction of the expenditure of \$10,000 is unnecessary. I cannot conceive how Government can reasonably refuse the people of Berbice an apparatus of that kind, which also has the promise ultimately of the collection of a similar sum by way of revenue. The Berbice

Chamber of Commerce is a representative body. I happen to know that the attention of Government has been directed to the matter, but for some reason or other I doubt very much whether they have had the benefit of these figures. I therefore ask Government, if possible, before the close of this session or early next year, to introduce a sum of money to provide this great public requirement. I need hardly add that my constituents would greatly appreciate it. There is one other item which must be taken into account. The increased maintenance charges involved in this expenditure is \$360 per annum, one operator at that salary being sufficient. I realise that the expenditure has to obtain the sanction of the Secretary of State, and I ask Your Excellency to make the necessary representations.

THE CHAIRMAN: The matter will have my sympathetic consideration. As the hon. Member has stated, I cannot accept the proposal at the moment. I shall endeavour to get the switchboard by another means, but if that does not prove successful I shall try to see my way to recommend to the Secretary of State that the switchboard be provided out of revenue next year. I cannot say more than that at the present time.

Mr. WALCOTT: May I ask, sir, whether you are going to give some consideration to the telephone service in the East Coast district?

Mr. ELEAZAR: I did not rise to add anything to the remarks of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam because he does things so thorough. We asked the Postal Department some time ago whether it is not possible to extend telephonic communication to No. 63 Village and were told that the Colony has no money. If my hon. friend succeeds in getting the new switchboard installed it might be carried to No. 63.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid that Government cannot undertake any further commitments in this connection in the near future. I am sorry. The point the Hon. Mr. Walcott has raised received consideration recently, and I am sorry that it cannot be met in the immediate future.

PUBLIC WORKS—EXTRAORDINARY.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that item 6 (Erection of a new X-Ray Department) be reduced from \$15,000 to \$7,030. When the amount of \$15,000 was put in the Estimate it was proposed to erect a new building to house the X-Ray. I do not think any Member has any doubt as to the necessity for the new X-Ray, but it is a question of how it is to be housed. It is proposed that instead of an entirely new building the middle floor of the Lady Thomson Ward should be used, and the estimated cost of converting that is \$7,030, of which \$4,500 is for the building itself, the figure that was given to the Select Committee. The additional amount, \$2,530, is in respect of the electrical wiring, replacements, etc.

Mr. JACOB: The sum of \$7,030 appears to be a correct estimate. However, the Select Committee went into this matter and we were not able to gather anything definite as to how this amount is to be spent. The Director of Public Works informed us that he was not certain how the money was supposed to be spent because he had certain plans which were incomplete. We look upon this expenditure as far too large to incur upon such a project. It was suggested at one time that the bottom floor of the Hospital building could be used. We think from the information given us that the matter was not thoroughly gone into, and it is hoped that when the amount is to be spent half of this sum will not be spent at all.

Mr. SEAFORD: I understood the Colonial Secretary to say that \$2,500 is to be spent on apparatus. I thought that came under the item for replacement of defective and obsolete apparatus.

Dr. DE FREITAS (Surgeon General): The two items mentioned are absolutely necessary. The sum of \$2,530 is for the conversion of the middle flat of the Lady Thomson Ward into the X-Ray room. The other item is merely for replacing defective apparatus at present used and supposed to be dangerous inasmuch as there is a good deal of leakage to the X-Ray apparatus. It does not matter where the X-Ray room is placed, but the apparatus has to be replaced and the replacement has

to be undertaken as soon as possible because it is dangerous.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: For the construction of offices and quarters for the C.I.D. at Brickdam Police Station a sum of \$17,000 is provided, and it is stated in the explanatory minute "It is proposed to spread the reconditioning over a period of two or more years." We might be told what it is proposed to spend in the second and subsequent years.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): It is the intention of Government to reconstruct the whole of the buildings within the compound in Brickdam, and I think I am fairly correct when I state that the expenditure will be in the neighbourhood of \$60,000 altogether. The buildings are very much in need of reconditioning, and the first expenditure is \$17,000 for the construction of quarters for the C.I.D.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member will appreciate that the expenditure is a large one and more than we can afford in one year. At the same time the buildings in Police headquarters are some of the most important in the town.

Mr. SEYMOUR: The people in the Pomeroy, about 4,000, suffer from the absence of a shelter when the rain is falling very heavily, and I think a small shed erected there would give them some protection from the elements.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the insertion of a new item, i.e., "29. Erection of a new house for Warden, Garraway Stream, \$3,500." The present house has been in a very bad state of disrepair for some time. Consideration was given to the question of reconditioning it, but it was found quite impossible and the erection of a new house will have to be undertaken.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the insertion as item 30 of "Unspecified Works, \$3,000." The insertion of this item will make it possible during the year to undertake works of a

minor nature which may be found to be necessary, such as the hon. Member for Western Essequibo has just mentioned. An item such as that will receive full consideration and will be met from this vote if it is considered during the year that the expenditure is justified.

Mr. JACOB: I crave your indulgence, sir, to ask you to be good enough to consider putting up a shed at Morawhanna.

THE CHAIRMAN: All applications of that nature must be addressed to the Director of Public Works.

Question put, and agreed to.

ROADS AND BRIDGES—EXTRAORDINARY.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I want to congratulate Government on the decision to recondition the De Hoop road at Mahaica. When the rain falls the water from the back-lands accumulate at the public road which forms a kind of barrier. When the flood was on the road had to be cut to get the water out.

Major CRAIG: At the time referred to the water was flowing over the road and we had to cut the road to effect drainage. There are several culverts to be placed along that road.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I wish to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Government in respect of both the De Hoop road and the road between Felicity and Wash Clothes, Mahaicony, and to ask the Director of Public Works to expedite the work as much as possible. It is impossible at present to get padi out and that will continue until the road is reconstructed. The Transport Department is also losing revenue in consequence. Can the Director of Public Works state where the culverts are to be placed? There is great need for these culverts and I regret that Government cannot vote more money for them.

Major CRAIG: The position of the culverts has not yet been decided. They will be placed where they are most required, but I would be pleased to discuss with the hon. Member any particular place.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I should like to call attention to the necessity for macadamising or doing something to the strip of

road at the rear of the butts of the Rifle Range. It might be called an apron to the Sea Wall. The site I refer to is immediately to the west of the gate of the watch-house.

Mr. SEAFORD: It has been suggested that the road should be widened or that there should be one-way traffic. The road is far too narrow for two-way traffic. I understand that there is something up for discussion now with the Town Council.

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND SCHEMES.

Mr. MULLIN (Commissioner of Lands and Mines): With respect to item 1 (2), the estimate of \$7,252 is the anticipated balance of the loan for the Geological Survey. The actual expenditure has been less than was anticipated by about \$5,000 this year. I ask that the vote be carried out at \$12,563, the amount available for next year. There should also be another item of \$21,600, which is the amount of the new grant in terms of the Sessional Paper.

Mr. SEAFORD: Do I understand that the increase of the first item is to bring the total up to \$7,000 of the loan?

THE CHAIRMAN: This sub-head is not very well expressed and should be separated as soon as possible. The Geological Survey loan expenditure will be \$12,563 and the Geological Survey grant expenditure will be another \$21,600, making a total of \$34,163.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): The point is that the figure \$32,140 shown on the revised estimate for 1935 should be \$12,563. It has not been possible to get through with the work and therefore the balance available for 1936 should be increased by \$2,000.

Question put, and agreed to.

EDUCATION.

Major BAIN GRAY (Director of Education): Sub-head 1 (6)—1 Class I. Clerk, \$2,520—is the salary of Mr. Fraser, who was formerly Secretary of the Harbour Board. When the Harbour Board was amalgamated with the Colonial Transport Department the Harbour Board was abolished. At that time the only post to which Mr. Fraser could be transferred was the position of a First Class Clerk in

the Treasury, and he was transferred to that post on the abolition of his own post. The result of that, from his point of view, is a reduction of his salary from £580 to £475 per annum. Not unnaturally, he has made representations that that reduction is not in accordance with the practice, which is almost universal in the case of officers who are transferred from one post to another, that his salary should be left at the previous figure. Government has agreed to his representations and the Secretary of State is also prepared to approve of them. To give effect to it it is proposed that his salary should be shown as \$2,280, which is the correct salary of a First Class Clerk, and until he can be re-employed as a Chief Clerk he should receive a personal allowance equal to the difference, \$540, thus bringing him back to the salary which he received as Secretary of the Harbour Board. That involves a reduction of the salary from \$2,520 to \$2,280 and the insertion of a new item "(11) Personal Allowance to Mr. W. O. Fraser, Class I. Clerk, \$504." I move that these amendments be made.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed.

TONNAGE AND LIGHT DUES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 5 of the 11th of October, 1935, this Council approves of a surtax of fifteen per centum being levied on the amount of Tonnage and Light Dues which shall be collected during the year 1936, under section eighteen of the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931.

This motion, sir, is explained in Message No. 5, which hon. Members have before them. These dues have been imposed now for two years and the state of Government finances does not permit of their being withdrawn. The amount which has been collected for 1934 was \$12,524 and the estimate for 1935 will be slightly more than that because for the first eight months collections amounted to nearly \$10,000.

Major BAIN GRAY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

EX GRATIA AWARDS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 7 dated 25th October, 1935, this Council approves an *ex gratia* payment of \$100.50 being made to the widow of the late P.C. 3052 Gravesande who died on the 24th of December, 1934, at the Alberttown Police Station.

Hon. Members will probably have heard of the somewhat tragic death of this Police Constable. He left a widow and three small children. His service was not quite sufficient for his widow to be qualified to be paid an amount under Government Regulations, and this Council is invited to approve of an *ex gratia* payment to the widow of \$100.50, which represents three months' salary of her late husband.

Major BAIN GRAY seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: One must be thankful for small mercies. This man was in addition to being a policeman a returned soldier. I am not sure that his tragic death was not due to injuries he received in the War. His war service at any rate seemed to have injured his health to some extent. The tragedy has occurred and Government is now seeking to do something for his widow and orphans. Either a year or six months is the period that would have entitled him to a pension. The law was changed only two or three years ago from 15 to 20 years. I think when this man joined the Force he looked forward to a pension after 15 years' service, but at any rate he was only short of that period by some months. I am asking Government to see its way to grant his dependents a little more.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I desire to associate myself with the appeal made by the hon. Member. Within a very short time the officer would have been entitled to a pension and lump sum, and it would be an act of grace very much appreciated if Government can see its way to increase the amount.

Mr. Mc DAVID: The hon. Member for Berbice River has quoted the wrong Ordinance—the Ordinance relating to Public Officers and not the Constabulary Ordinance. Under the Ordinance the widow is entitled to a gratuity after her husband has served 24 years. That is not the case in relation to this particular officer, and therefore he was not entitled to a lump sum by right,

MR. DE AGUIAR: I also join in the appeal. I was endeavouring to find out what the officer was entitled to. His service is short of only five months to complete 20 years, and if he had lived for 20 years he would have been entitled to two years' salary. It seems to be a very hard case and Government might extend its generosity a little further.

THE PRESIDENT: If hon. Members feel that this amount should be increased the best course would be for those who feel that way to address Government either by motion in this House or by letter. For the moment I am unable to add to this sum, as hon. Members will realise, as this is the amount which has been approved by the Secretary of State as an *ex gratia* payment. I do not wish to adopt the alternative course which would temporarily deprive the widow of the amount given to her by this motion. If hon. Members wish to address Government further on the subject I suggest that they pass this motion now and do so by letter.

Question put, and agreed to.

Major BAIN GRAY: I beg to move:—

THAT with reference to Message No. 2 of the 14th of September, 1935, this Council approves, as a special case, an *ex gratia* award of £100 to Dr. P. G. Barrow, British Guiana Scholar, 1925, towards the cost of University and other fees in connection with his studies in medicine, less the sum of £46. 13s. 6d. advanced to him to meet the cost of his passage to British Guiana and certain of the fees referred to.

The facts of this case are set out in the Message which was circulated to Members when this session was opened. Mr. Barrow was British Guiana Scholar for 1925 and he went to Edinburgh to study medicine. A condition of the Scholarship was that he should pass his professional examination by a particular time, but he did not do so and the balance of the Scholarship was forfeited. Mr. Barrow however went on with his studies under the directions and instructions of his father, and he eventually succeeded and gained his degree quite satisfactorily according to the reports of the Dean of Medicine. About the same time as he completed his course his father died and the Secretary of State advanced him £46 13s. 6d. to enable him to pay the fees incurred and return to the Colony. Government has taken into consideration the circumstances under which he lost the

balance of the Scholarship and the fact that he has completed his course successfully. It is felt that the forfeit should be restored to him to the extent of £100, less the sum advanced by the Secretary of State, to enable him to return to the Colony.

Mr. McDAVID seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. MULLIN: I beg to move:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 3 of 24th September, 1935, this Council approves of the payment of an *ex gratia* award of \$768 to the legal personal representative of the estate of the late Mr. A. J. Cheong, Deputy Commissioner of the British section of the British Guiana-Brazil Boundary Commission, who died on the 4th October, 1934, at Kassikaityu, Rupnuni District.

The circumstances under which Mr. Cheong died are well known to everyone in the Colony. He was seconded for duty with the British Guiana-Brazil Boundary Commission and had done four-and-a-half years' continuous work on the boundary, when he contracted Beri Beri through malnutrition by the use of preserved food and died on his way to Georgetown. He had 27½ years' service, his work was of an exceptionally high character, and he was a most zealous officer and never spared himself in the pursuit of his duties. He did a tremendous amount of pioneer work of railway, road and other survey work. The amount to be voted is the difference of what his lump sum would have been if he had served the maximum pensionable period of 30 years when he died.

Mr. D'ANDRADE seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

SEA DEFENCE ADVANCE.

Major CRAIG: I beg to move:—

THAT with reference to Message No. 1 of 9th September, 1935, the Council approves of the writing off of the sum of \$3,000 being the amount advanced by Government from loan funds to the Sea Defence Board to defray the cost of construction works of a permanent character and of provision being made in the estimates to cover a further advance of \$1,577.61 to the Board against unpaid sea defence rates in respect of Sea Defence District No. 2, which ceased as from 31st December, 1934, to be a sea defence district.

The Message explains the reasons for

eliminating this district out of the Schedule and writing off the money expended on the works executed there. I may state that the flood of 1934 caused a considerable amount of damage to the sea defences of this particular district, and the proprietors themselves did a certain amount of work on the road, particularly with regard to sluices which are not under the Sea Defence Board but are maintained by the village proprietors.

Mr. SEAFORD: I did not realise that this motion was going to be taken to-day. I do not know where it is going to lead us to. Money has been spent in this district on permanent works and maintenance charges have not been paid. It is now proposed to wipe off the expenditure and the unpaid rates. If we do that in this case I am sure that Government is going to have cases of a similar kind from other districts. There are no districts which have paid the full amount and very few which have paid anything at all. There can be only one justification, as far as I can see, for Government granting this concession, and that is that these estates or properties are not really in a sea defence district but in a river district. They are inside the mouth of the Essequibo River and theirs are really river and not sea defences. If Government accept that view I am prepared to agree to the motion, but if it is maintained that the concession is being granted on the ground that the proprietors cannot pay I cannot agree to it, because it means that in every district Government will have to write off liabilities.

Mr. ELEAZAR: When Government intends to abandon Essequibo there is no reason why the people there should be made to pay. Government is correctly advised that these people should be relieved. The flood which occurred in 1934 was a calamity to this country, and any remission of expenditure incurred in relieving any part of the community is well remitted.

Mr. SEAFORD: I do not think the hon. Member realise that proprietors in certain districts have already paid. If Government is going to relieve others those who have paid will ask for a refund.

THE PRESIDENT: It was considered that as this district has ceased to be a sea

defence district and a portion of the arrears was not recoverable this exceptional action should be taken, but it will not serve as a precedent with regard to any district that remains a sea defence district.

Mr. SEYMOUR: You will find that in certain places which are supposed to be in a sea defence district the sea goes in and out forever, and I am afraid that you will have other applications of this nature.

Mr. WIGHT: Arising out of this question I would like to raise a point and ask the Attorney-General to consider it. Government has been dealing differently with different sections of the Colony with regard to sea defences. I am of opinion that after three years a debt for sea defences is prescribed and cannot be recovered. With regard to what has been said of Essequibo I received a letter a few days ago informing me that the sea is running over a place on which I am paying sea defence rates. I am not a lawyer but I like to speculate a little on evading sea defence, and I am claiming that they cannot proceed against me for the rates.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Hector Josephs): I think the hon. Member will find in the Sea Defence Ordinance that sea defence rates and interest thereon are a debt due to the Colony and that the Director of Public Works has a preferent lien over the land in respect of which the rates ought to be paid for the debt due to the Colony.

THE PRESIDENT: In view of the comments made on this motion by Members, and particularly by the hon. Member who is a member of the Sea Defence Board and a Member of the Executive Council, I propose to defer decision on this motion and to pass on to the next if the Council will allow me. Government will bring forward the motion again after further consideration of it in Executive Council or abandon it.

EX GRATIA AWARD.

Major CRAIG: I beg to move:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 4 of 2nd October, 1935, this Council approves the grant to Burton Rodney, a labourer who was injured as a result of an accident which occurred during excavation work on the Bartica-Potaro Road on 20th May, 1933, of an *ex gratia* award of \$302.40 less the sum of \$250, being full pay issued during detention in hospital.

The Message gives more or less the details of the accident. While working with another person stone above them, which had been cracked by a previous explosion but could not be dislodged, suddenly started to move owing to rain and in running down the hill some of the stone fell on them. Rodney was very seriously injured and now, according to the medical report, his earning capacity has been reduced by one-third. The accident happened in May, 1933, and he was in hospital for a considerable time. He is now able to walk about and take a watchman's job, and he has been so employed on one or two jobs at the Public Works Department. This sum is to cover the difference between what he has received and what he would be entitled to under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Dr. DE FREITAS seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It seems to me that if this man was so seriously injured that his earning capacity is now only two-thirds, and would be so for the balance of his life, it is hard for Government to give him only \$52.40 because he has been paid while in hospital. I was wondering whether Government could not give him the whole amount.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In arriving at the figure to be paid to this man consideration was given to the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, and the figures were worked out on the basis set out in that Ordinance.

Question put, and agreed to.

EXPIRING LAWS CONTINUANCE BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that "A Bill to continue certain expiring laws" be read the second time. This Bill proposes to continue in force for a period of 12 months two Ordinances—the Sugar (Temporary) Excise Duty Ordinance, 1932, and the Bill of Entry Tax Ordinance, 1932—which have been continued from year to year since that time and will expire at the end of this year.

Mr. Mc DAVID seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without discussion.

The Council resumed.

Notice was given that at the next meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read the third time and passed. (*The Colonial Secretary*).

BOERASIRIE CREEK BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that "A Bill to amend the Boerasirie Creek Ordinance, Chapter 135, by empowering the Governor in Council by order to combine plantations and vary the acreage of any plantations" be read the second time. The Boerasirie Creek Ordinance contains a Schedule in which are set out the various plantations and the acreages thereof in respect of which the Commissioners could assess the rates. Several of these plantations have changed hands and the boundaries of them have been altered, and the Commissioners applied for an Order-in-Council to assess on acreages different from those shown in the Schedule. It was found that such an Order was not possible under the existing Ordinance and the Bill which is now before the Council is to enable the alterations in that Schedule to be made in order to bring the Schedule into line with existing conditions and conditions as they may alter from time to time.

Major BAIN GRAY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without discussion.

The Council resumed.

Notice was given that at a subsequent meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read the third time and passed. (*The Colonial Secretary*).

EVIDENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that "A Bill to amend the Evidence Ordinance, Chapter 25, with respect to the

reception of a medical report in the Magistrate's Courts" be read the second time. The object of the Bill is to amend sub-section (3) of section 44 of the Evidence Ordinance. Sub-section (1) provides that any document purporting to be a report of the Government Analyst upon any matter or thing submitted to him for examination or analysis and report, for the purpose of any enquiry or proceeding, shall be *prima facie* evidence of any matter or thing therein contained. Sub-section (2) gives power to call the Analyst as a witness. Sub-section (3) applies in the case of any document purporting to be a report by a duly qualified medical practitioner on any injuries received by a prosecutor or complainant in any case involving a charge of injury to the person. That has occasioned a great deal of inconvenience. Medical practitioners report only where the prosecutor or complainant was the subject of the injury. There are a good many cases in which prosecutions or matters of that kind are undertaken by other people, the Police for one and the parents or guardians for another. Clause (2) of the Bill modifies that so as to permit of a report being admissible in similar cases which are the subject of a prosecution by the person or his parent or guardian or by the Police. It is an enlargement of the law and it is useful. The exception is with reference to a preliminary inquiry and the reason why these reports are not admissible at a preliminary inquiry is that they are intended to be a faithful record of the evidence of the deponents as early as it can be obtained, and one of the purposes for which it may be used is in the event of his absence through death or illness or his having left the Colony, in which case his depositions can be read as part of the evidence. The mere report of the doctor would be useless at a trial if the doctor happens to leave the Colony, consequently that is the reason why the preliminary inquiry is excepted from the application of the Bill.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I would like to point out to the Attorney-General a fact of which he may not be aware. Quite recently an instance was brought to my notice where a medical practitioner gave a certificate to a person who was complaining of injuries he had received. The certificate was given 10 or 14 days after the person had been examined. That is not the intention of section 44. The certificate must be written on the same day or the day following the examination. I mention that case because I would like it to be known that practitioners must be careful over the giving of certificates.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is the fault of the practitioner. The certificate should be written, as the hon. Member has stated, on the same day or the day after the examination. To prevent the possibility of such an occurrence, if the Bill becomes law, I shall draw the attention of the Surgeon-General to the fact.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If a person does not go to the doctor until two or three days after the injury and the doctor gives the certificate the same day or the next day it does not affect the question. The person should see the doctor the same day or the day after the injury, but the certificate can be given a month after if the person can pay for it.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am afraid that the hon. Member has not read the clause we are endeavouring to enact into law as if he had read it he would not have made the mistake he has made. There is nothing to compel a man to be taken to a doctor within 24 hours; that would preclude the doctor's certificate from being of any use. The object is to facilitate proof and not to make it more difficult, as would be the result of the hon. Member's suggestion. The important point is that the doctor's certificate should be written on the day of or the day after the examination. That follows the general rule of law.

The Council resumed.

Notice was given that at the next meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read the third time and passed. (*The Attorney-General*).

PLANT DISEASES AND PESTS BILL.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): I beg to move that "A Bill to regulate the importation and exportation of plants and to make provision for the prevention and eradication of diseases and pests affecting plants" be read the second time. I do not propose to detain the Council at any length in regard to this Bill, which hon. Members will remember had reached the second reading during the last session of the previous Council. During the debate one or two Members criticised certain clauses of the Bill as being likely to create hardship on farmers in connection with the notification or detection of diseases or pests which might be notifiable. The suggestion was then made that the Bill might be referred to the newly formed Board of Agriculture for their careful scrutiny in respect of the point which had been raised. That was duly done, sir, and at a meeting of the Board held some time after the whole Bill and its objects were fully discussed. One or two coconut growers were present at that meeting and stated the case for the Bill. After very careful discussion of the whole position the Board of Agriculture, with the exception of one member, found that the Bill was absolutely essential and fair in every respect, particularly to the good farmer; and it is the type of legislation in common use in most of the Dominions and Colonies where legislation of this sort is in operation. The Board therefore recommended that the Bill should be proceeded with, especially because the Department of Agriculture has no power to control an outbreak of pests and diseases of a devastating character. That is to say pests or diseases which are liable to rapid spread and liable to do considerable damage to crops.

Fortunately, in this Colony we have not any large number of these pests which are dealt with in the Bill as a notifiable disease. There is much the same provision in the Public Health Ordinance. The hon. Member for Western Berbice was a member of the Board of Agriculture who took strong objection to one or two clauses I have referred to with respect to the onus resting on the farmer to report the presence of notifiable pests, and soon afterwards a deputation of those interested in the matter waited on Your Excellency and the whole question was threshed out

very carefully and the position of coconut growers and others made quite clear. Your Excellency indicated to the deputation how the Bill would operate and stated that on no account would it be made an oppressive measure, but if it were likely to prove an oppressive measure the Members of the Council would have an opportunity of reviewing it again. Members of the deputation were satisfied with the explanation given and as the result we have before us to-day the Bill, of which I have moved the second reading. I do not propose to go over old ground. Hon. Members, if they have Hansard of September, 1 34, will be able to follow the points I have just touched on. When the Bill is in the Committee stage hon. Members will have an opportunity to raise any point which is not still quite clear, but I think on the whole that the matter has been so well threshed out that there is very little left to criticise now.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clause 8 (2)—Presumption that occupier, etc., charged with offence aware of disease.

Mr. WALCOTT: Who would be responsible for reporting in Kitty Village—the occupier of the lot, the Village Council or the Village Chairman?

Professor DASH: In a case of that sort there are a large number of tenants in the community and the onus will be on them to suspect the existence of the disease. In connection with Kitty we, as a matter of fact, took action almost the first time the pest was observed, and we went back and made a house to house canvass and advised the tenants what to do, but they would not take any action. Not long ago the matter was reported by the Village Council to the District Commissioner and I took the opportunity then to relate the whole circumstances of what occurred at Kitty. We have no powers to compel people to clean their lots when diseases of this kind break out, and I hope that with the passing of this Bill we shall

no longer see that condition of things. Clause 8 (1) says that the owner or occupier of land is to give notice.

Clause 10—Owner of land liable for expenses incurred.

Mr. SEYMOUR: Clause 10 is the source of the whole trouble with this Bill. If I have a disease on my property how can I do what is required of me? There must be equity on both sides. The owner cannot possibly carry out the law as it is proposed in this measure. There should be some means of assisting those who have more than a few coconut trees around their yards.

Mr. JACOB: I endorse what the hon. Member has stated. Another point arises. The owner of the land is liable for the expenses incurred, and for the first offence he is liable to a fine not exceeding \$100 and for a second offence \$240. I do not think it is the intention of Government to drive people out of existence or to abandon their cultivation, especially when pests are beyond their control. I think this clause should be amended.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: How would the Director of Agriculture recover the expenses incurred for destroying pests on land of very little or no value? As the hon. Member for North Western District has pointed out, it is not the intention to take away land from people who are not able to pay. We should make provision to cover the case of a man who owns a small piece of land and is unable to pay.

Professor DASH: It sometimes happen that there is a sudden outbreak of a pest like locusts, which come down almost invisibly overnight in some Colony and eat up the cultivation. In such cases Government have to spend a considerable sum of money and loss is incurred either by loans or otherwise. In this Colony we have a caterpillar which is well known, and all the farmer has to do is to keep a careful outlook for signs of the pest, notify the Department of Agriculture and start to clean up that small attack and nip it in the bud. If he waits until the pest extends he cannot hope to control it.

Mr. JACOB: Up to the present moment the Agricultural Department cannot tell farmers what is the coconut pest and it is impossible to prevent it. When a cockle made its appearance in the North West District some time ago it was very difficult to control it. I know people with 100 acres of coconuts who pay no attention to their cultivation, because it does not pay them to do so and carry the produce to market, and it must be borne in mind that some people neglect their cultivation.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I agree with the principle of the Bill.

Professor DASH: I think hon. Members have missed the point. I do not visualise in this Colony more than one pest that would be made notifiable of one disease.

The Council rose by effluxion of time and adjourned until Tuesday, 19th November, at 11 o'clock.