

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL****FRIDAY, 21st MARCH, 1947.**

The Council met at 3 p.m., His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

**PRESENT.**

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

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

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. F. W. Holder, K.C.

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

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

The Hon. C. V. Wight, O.B.E. (Western Essequibo).

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

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

The Clerk read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 20th March, 1947, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

**PAPERS LAID**

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Parkinson, Acting) laid on the table the following documents:—

The Fifty-Sixth Annual Report of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce.

The Report of the Administrators of the Patoir Fund for the year 1946.

**ORDER OF THE DAY.****COLONIAL EXPENDITURE  
INQUIRY**

The Council resumed the debate on the following motion by Mr. Raatgever:—

"WHEREAS this Council views with grave concern the tremendous increase in Colonial expenditure and the heavy financial commitments in connection with Developmental Works also the subsequent annual recurrent expenditure for maintenance of the said works;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Council urges on Government the desirability for the early appointment of a Committee of this Council to consider carefully and report to Government how expenditure can be reduced in 1948 and subsequent years."

Mr. de AGUIAR: When the Council adjourned yesterday I was dealing with the Working sub-Committee which was proposed by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer. But before I deal more fully with that aspect of the matter, I wish to digress for a moment to make reference to certain comparisons, which I subsequently learnt were made by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer in the course of his speech in Council yesterday. I understand, sir, the hon. the Colonial Treasurer was trying to make comparison between Government expenditure and the profit earnings of the commercial community. I did not get the correct figures quoted by him, but I form the impression that he was trying to make a very clever comparison, although it was not analogous to the point at issue. Perhaps I should have allowed the reference to pass unnoticed because I hardly think the hon. the Colonial Treasurer really meant this Council to take his remarks very seriously, but certain Members of this Council are inclined to do so and, perhaps, I may be allowed without taking up too much of the time of the Council just to make a few brief observa-

tions on the comparison he was trying to make. I understand he quoted Government expenditure at a certain percentage and he also quoted the profits earned by the commercial community since 1939. Perhaps the object of the comparison was in order to show that whilst it is true that Government expenditure has increased to a very large extent the percentage of profits earned by the commercial community was larger still, because the percentage he quoted in so far as the profits earned by the commercial community are concerned was much larger than the percentage he quoted in the case of the increase of Government expenditure.

I will start off by saying that that was not a fair analogy to make, because in arriving at the comparison the hon. the Colonial Treasurer undoubtedly omitted some very important factors in both cases. He has not taken into consideration—first of all I must assume that he obtained those profit figures from certain quarters and I do not think he had enough time to take into consideration—the several reasons which no doubt resulted in the high rate of percentage. He has not for example taken into account, I suggest, the number of commercial houses that paid no Income Tax in 1936 but paid in subsequent years. He has not again, I presume, taken into consideration the fact that trade in the Colony has risen two or three times what it was in 1939, and in consequence he did not take into consideration the large increase in the circulation of money as a consequence of this general buoyancy in trade. Therefore it was not a fair comparison for him to make and, I suggest, before he had tried to make that comparison he should have taken those very important factors into consideration. If he did. I am not too sure of the effort he was making in trying to show that Government expenditure, although it had risen 93 per cent., is analogous to the profits earned by the commercial community. It is not at all analogous. Had he been fully aware of the position he might have also informed this Council that the average percentage of gross profits did not benefit the commercial community to the extent that he wanted this Council to believe. I do not propose to labour the point. We are not discussing the profits of the commercial

community today, but I merely want to make that brief observation so as to correct any impression which may have been created in the minds of Members as the result of the remarks made by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : May I rise to a point of explanation just to say that I did not either defend or attack the community in question? I merely stated a fact, and that fact was that the inflation which has taken place has permitted an increase in the global profit of that community between 1939 and 1945 of 150 per cent. It is merely a fact. The total profits earned in 1939 were higher than Government expenditure increase in 1939.

Mr. RAATGEVER : Excuse me ! He said 240 per cent. higher !

The COLONIAL TREASURER : 240 per cent. before taxation and 150 per cent. after taxation, and I used that as a yardstick for defending the increase in Government expenditure which was 122 per cent.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I am very grateful to learn from the hon. the Colonial Treasurer that it was not in the form of an attack but more in the nature of defence. Every individual is entitled to put up the best form of defence he knows. If the hon. the Colonial Treasurer in defending this matter thinks it is wise to use that, then I have very little more to say on that score. I would like to make reference to what the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) referred to yesterday in the course of his remarks merely for the purpose of record. He told the Council that he had paid a visit to the Livestock Station and was perfectly satisfied it was not a success. The hon. Member mentioned that to me and, of course, he is entitled to his opinion. What I would like hon. Members of Council to know is, that is not the majority opinion of the Members who accompanied the hon. Member for North Western District on that visit, neither is it the opinion of the Technical Officers who are in charge of the scheme. But, as I said before, it is the hon. Member's opinion and he is entitled to express it. I only think it is fair that Members of Council should know the other side of the picture, because

a recommendation is about to be sent in for the continuation of the scheme, and again, if the hon. Member so desires, he will have an opportunity to express his disapproval of that proposal.

I am sorry the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, is not in his seat, because I wish to take him up on a few matters he mentioned yesterday. But again, sir, I may be permitted just briefly — I am not going to reply fully as I would have liked had he been here—to say something about them for the information of the Council. He said, for example, that whilst he was in England some gentleman in the Colonial Office spoke to him about the Rice Marketing Board Ordinance, and his statement to that gentleman was that the Board was not in the best interest of the producers. Well, sir, I would have thought that by this time that hon. Member is satisfied that he is one among the very few persons in this community who will say that the Rice Marketing Board, as presently constituted and as it was during the war years, is not the best thing for the producers in this Colony. The hon. Member has tried on several occasions by propaganda and by agitation of all manner and means to bring about discord among the producers and has failed. I have no doubt he will continue to fail so long as the organization, as I know it, functions in the way it has been doing for these past years and as it is doing until today. I do wish that the hon. Member will hear these words of mine and satisfy himself that he is only one of the very few that still feel that the Rice Marketing Board is not functioning in the interest of the rice producers of this Colony.

Mr. JACOB: May I rise to a point of correction? These expressions of opinion carry us nowhere. I may tell the hon. Member that a large majority of the rice producers are not co-operating.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I do not know what the hon. Member means by "not co-operating". I do not know whether he means they are resisting the proper working of the Board. I do not know what he really means by not co-operating," but I do know this: The co-operation promised to the Government of this Colony by certain Members of this Council results in

resistance. If that is the meaning of the word "co-operation", then the hon. Member is entitled to his opinion. But I repeat, the non-co-operation that he speaks about is all new to me. Of course, there are certain people who wish to do what they like and, when they find they cannot do so, they raise their voices in protest. But they are in the minority and very soon, I hope, they will find their voices will not even be heard in their own districts. The same hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, made reference yesterday to the Guiana Match Factory. I made a note of his words. He said:

"Their efforts were spent only in making money and were doing nothing to explore the possibilities of obtaining supplies of materials in the Colony to make matches other than match-wood."

I venture to suggest that the hon. Member went out of his depth completely. I thought he was going to tell this Council of something that he was perhaps familiar with, but I will not deal with that matter at all. Had he made reference to a subject with which he was familiar then, perhaps, there would have been no need for me to take him up on it. But when he said such things to the Council yesterday as he did, he was entirely out of his depth. I do not know whether he thinks the head of a match is made out of diamonds, or gold, or timber, or manganese, or bauxite, or columbite-tantalite, or scheelite. In short, I am not aware that it is possible—certainly not from all the reports of the experts I have read or heard about—to obtain the chemicals that are required in the manufacture of matches in this Colony. I go further. I am not aware that the chemicals that are required in match manufacture are produced even in the biggest countries of the world where matches are being made. They always have to import the chemicals used in the manufacture of matches. When you have Members of this Council getting up and talking sheer nonsense on subjects they know nothing at all about but merely for the purpose of stirring up some kind of propaganda against an individual or a company on which they wish to vent their spleen, it is time for them to be told the other side of the picture and in no uncertain terms. I am not going to

refer to his remarks about absentee-proprietors, though he said that over and over again in this Council. The same Member talked about absentee-proprietors, spirit dealers and the commercial community being parasites. Would it surprise the hon. Member himself to know that one of the strongest advocates in his own camp that has advocated a "Drink Less Rum" campaign has recently applied for a licence to sell spirits?—

The PRESIDENT : I sympathize with the hon. Member's desire to put his points, but they are entirely on another matter and not the motion by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever. They have really nothing to do with this particular motion.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I agree with you, sir, but the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, was given a great deal of latitude in speaking about absentee-proprietors, the parasitical commercial community, satellites and all such things. I do not want to deal with all of them, but I think it is time the community knows the type of individual who goes around this country stirring up that kind of propaganda—drink less rum. He comes here and supports a "Drink Less Rum" campaign, as it was called, and immediately after applies for a spirits shop licence. And he is going to get it too. Good luck to him. I wish he does, because if that gentleman does I would like to see the Member who will get up here and have the effrontery to accuse the spirits trade of some of the things as have been done in the past.

Lastly I want to remind the same hon. Member when he refers to the commercial community as being parasites, that this commercial community, as in every community, is performing a service in the way he has performed a service to the community in printing a "rag" for sale. The commercial community is performing a service and is entitled to its due. Every man to his own order, says Holy Writ. I am a merchant. He is, I believe, a newspaper writer. I do not know, but whatever is his calling he is entitled to the benefit of his service, but it is unfair, unkind and unjust for these personal references to be made in this Council to further one's ends.

I come back to the subject and to conclude. I was referring to the suggestion of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer about his Working sub-Committee and, I think, I have said sufficient about the fears I have in Government forming or the Governor forming a Working sub-Committee outside of this Council, as it were, to examine the Estimates.

The PRESIDENT : I do not think it is outside this Council!

Mr. de AGUIAR : Within the framework of this Council it is true, but still outside of it. I was talking about the dangers I see ahead in setting up another body in that form and, I think, I went on to suggest that perhaps a better way to form this Committee is that the Finance Committee itself should form one or more working sub-committees if more than one is required.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : My suggestion was only one Committee. I personally would prefer the Finance Committee as a body, but unfortunately the quorum of that Committee is nine.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I understood the hon. the Colonial Treasurer to say he wanted a special committee appointed by the Governor or the Government, and that will be a Standing Committee. I do not want a Standing Committee at all. My idea is this, sir. If the principle is accepted that the finances should be filtered through a Finance Committee, there is nothing wrong in the suggestion that the Finance Committee itself as the occasion arises appoints three or five Members to go into a particular question and come back to the Committee and report their findings. In that way—I may be wrong—as I see it the rights of this Council will in no way be jeopardized. I would like to remind the hon. the Colonial Treasurer of something he said, and that is why I feel so strongly about it. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer talking about this Working sub-Committee said, it will report its findings to the Governor. That is just where I thought there might have been a bit of constitutional privilege involved, and that is the reason why I am against it. I would like this sub-committee to report back to the Finance Committee so

that not only the three or five Members of that sub-committee will have knowledge of their findings but the whole Finance Committee in session will have the knowledge. I do wish to make my position clear. I am not suggesting, not by any means, if that report reaches the Governor it may not find its way back to the Legislative Council. I am not suggesting that, but there is that possibility of a report of the sub-committee going to the Governor and not finding its way to the Finance Committee, and in that way what we are trying to do, or what I understand from the hon. Mover we are trying to see, will not be achieved. We are trying to see whether we can give more assistance to the Government in reducing the Colony's expenditure. That is the whole object behind this motion. That portion of it I support. If the hon. Mover of the motion wishes to make an amendment along the lines I have indicated, I can assure him he will have my whole-hearted support.

Dr. SINGH : I am in agreement with the primary object of this motion, but not the set up. It is true, sir, that this Colony is burdened with heavy commitments, the expenditure on which needs the scrutiny of a small competent committee, and I agree with the suggestion made by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer that a small committee be selected from the Finance Committee, men who are competent enough to scrutinize the expenditure of this Colony. I agree with that suggestion.

Mr. THOMPSON : Sir, I think, I am still young in this honourable Council and I am anxious to have directions from the Chair. I do not know whether we can in every speech before this Council proceed along personal and other lines. I find we are discussing a motion before this Council, and just for information I would like to know whether it is the privilege of a speaker to indulge in personalities or matters that are not relevant to the motion before the Council. I have been hearing a good deal about privilege discussed, and I just ask that for my own guidance so that I can find myself proceeding along the right lines.

The PRESIDENT : The answer is, of course, that the Chair allows as much

licence as possible to the speaker. If the personalities become offensive the speaker is called to order, but if they are relevant to the discussion then the speaker is allowed to carry on. The Chair allows a speaker to have his say, and it is really the degree of irrelevancy or personalities of which the Chair is the judge. I cannot take it further than that.

Mr. THOMPSON : Thank you, sir. As regards the motion before the Council I was wondering how many committees we are going to set up. When we are discussing the Estimates there should be a strong Finance Committee with many Members in attendance, and I feel that such a strong committee will be able to do all that is necessary. This Committee has been already formed, and I think that its scope—if the Committee meets monthly—will be quite sufficient to cover all the ground intended by this motion. That Committee, I expect, will be permitted to go into all matters of expenditure and will be able to check up and put a curb where necessary, so that it will not be worthwhile to establish yet another committee. For that reason I cannot support the motion as it stands here, because I think we should have the Finance Committee carrying through in all phases. That Committee meets monthly, and I do not think there is anything it will not be able to thresh out.

As regards the story by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob), I am at a loss to know definitely what he wants. He has pronounced against Advisory Committees, but they are only useful if he happens to be at the head of affairs or if his suggestions are adopted.

Mr. JACOB : May I rise to a point of order? The hon. Member began by talking about personalities.

The PRESIDENT : I must say that I do not regard the hon. Nominated Member as being out of order.

Mr. THOMPSON : The hon. Member for North Western District, as I have already stated, denounced all of these committees. He has not only pronounced their death-knell, but he has set out definitely to see that they fail. Now we have the Finance Committee and, I think, the

hon. Member was the first to come out of it. He absented himself from the meetings and saw to it that the Committee did not function. I am serving on various Committees, and I make bold to say that I give conscientious service. I am not here to slate the Administration but to assist, and in any Committee on which I am serving if I find that there are legitimate expenses I shall be prepared to carry them through. If the hon. Mover of the motion is prepared to amend it to the effect that we use the Finance Committee to do the work he wants, I am prepared to support it. I am not prepared to support the establishment of another committee.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : I have an amendment to put shortly before this Council which ought to be acceptable to all parties. I desire to say that it was never the intention of the hon. Mover of this motion, or of myself, or any other Unofficial Member that the object of this Committee should be to curtail any development scheme or any useful scheme Government may bring forward for the welfare of the people of this Colony. The whole object was to curtail expenditure in Government Departments if it was possible to do so. There is no doubt that we are—and every person in this Colony is—very much concerned over the increasing cost of administration. It may be that it is inevitable and nothing can be done to curtail it, but I imagine that Government should welcome a suggestion of this kind because, if this Committee which, I take it, will be a sub-Committee of the Finance Committee, examines the Estimates and finds it is possible to reduce expenditure, Government's position would be made much stronger. Speaking as an Elected Member, I will say that if certain Members—I do not mean the Nominated ones or the hon. Member for North Western District—who are on the Finance Committee feel that no reduction in expenditure can be made, I refuse to accept that. I do not think this Committee should be a branch of the Finance Committee but, rather, that it should be nominated by Government. If that is done, the whole Legislative Council would be more satisfied with the report submitted than if it was made by any sub-Committee and, I feel sure, Government

would benefit by the appointment of such a committee.

One cannot help thinking that opposition to a motion of this kind, while it may suit the purpose of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and others, is an indication that Government is endeavouring to hide something. We do not want to believe, however, that Government is trying to hide something and does not want an investigation into its affairs. The object of this Committee will be to see whether any reduction can be made in Departmental expenditure. As regards development, anything put forward by Government will have to come to this Council for approval or otherwise, and I was horrified by the insinuations which were uttered by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, in dealing with this matter. He took every possible opportunity to indulge in personal attacks on Members, absentee-proprietors and everybody except members of the M.P.C.A. I submit that it is outrageous for that hon. Nominated Member to have attempted to say that the merchants in this Colony are blood suckers and parasites. He went so far as to say that the pawnshops, cookshops, rumshops and so on are all parasites and that the capitalists have various satellites. I am not going to be personal, but it may be suggested to the hon. Member that from the point of view of parasitical tendencies he need not go as far as the merchants in Water Street and, perhaps, if he looks a little nearer home he would be more satisfied as to who are parasites. I think it is bringing this Council down to a very low level, when you have an hon. Member getting up and accusing the whole merchantile community of being parasites and blood suckers.

The PRESIDENT : I would like to intervene at this stage and say that the hard words spoken by the hon. Nominated Member about merchants are nothing like the hard words spoken by the hon. Member for North Western District about Government. (Laughter).

Mr. HUMPHRYS : Granting that is so, the hon. Member for North Western District can look after himself. The point I am making is that it is not fair and proper for the Member to attack the mem-

bers of the mercantile community like that when they are not here to defend themselves.

The PRESIDENT : The hon. Member has only referred to merchants during this discussion, but he has been saying things about Government all the time.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : Government is represented here and can reply, but the absent merchants in Water Street cannot reply. They have to rely only upon the one or two Members they have here. If the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) attacks Government, I think the Government through the Colonial Secretary or the Colonial Treasurer can always reply and, I think, the Colonial Treasurer has done so on one or two occasions in the past. But I think it is a breach of privilege on the part of a Member to attack the members of the mercantile community as has been done here. It brings this Council down to a very low level indeed. As the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) has stated, merchants have been giving valuable service to this Colony, and when the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) speaks of absentee proprietors I wonder where this Colony would have been without the absentee proprietors. I do not see why all these things should have been brought into the discussion of a motion asking Government to appoint a Committee to go into the question of expenditure. I think this motion should be adopted, especially as we have cleared the air and removed the impression that it is an erroneous attempt on the part of certain Members to curtail development. That seemed to have been the idea which the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) had, but there is no intention whatever to curtail any welfare or development scheme. I will back any scheme intended to be carried out with money that we can provide.

Mr. WOOLFORD : The first time I became a Member of the Legislature of this Colony I heard in this very Council Chamber the determination expressed by many a speaker that the expenditure of Government must be curtailed, and I have from time to time heard many references made to the mistakes made by preceding Councils in not giving particular attention to

this form of Government expenditure. I recalled quite well one hon. Member—quite a young man who had been reared as a planter and who possessed a determination which remained with him to the end of his public life—who made every effort to tackle this matter in the old Combined Court—the Court which in those days dealt with public expenditure. He made attacks particularly on the item “Travelling Expenses”. If hon. Members would look back at the Hansard for 1918-1919 they would find that the hon. Member always attacked that expenditure. It was under Government forms for more than \$300 but he got it reduced, I think, to \$300. That hon. Member knew, however, that it was a waste of time to attempt to reduce Government expenditure, and he ought to have been in this Council nowadays when other Members have always been of that feeling. While I myself thought it was desirable to do so, I have had to admit that with the combined efforts and the special inclination and ability of men who like myself have had some commercial training we are unable to do any such thing. I mention these facts because this attempt is nothing new. I may mention the names of Mr. Mackey—then a partner of Booker Bros.—then you had Mr. Gwyther, Mr. Priest, Mr. Russell Garnett and Mr. Laing who was Chairman of the British Guiana Bank. That Mr. Laing was the father of our present Commissioner of Local Government, and he was very respected not only because of his ability as a banker but also for his knowledge of the Colony. He was a Member of the Executive Council as well. Then you had one of the most respected men in Water Street—Mr. Jacob Garnett. They were all men of undoubted ability to inspect ordinary accounts and so on, but yet the expenditure continued to increase until Members became almost as silent as I am—not in admiration of the increased expenditure but in the full knowledge that it is almost impossible to stop the increase. I cannot recall many of the Committees because there was then only one Elected Member on the Executive Council and he was the late Mr. D. M. Hudson. Now we have a Council in which the Elected section are in the majority, and every item of public expenditure is put forward in the Estimates for approval of the Council.

I will tell hon. Members the difference between the age of which I am speaking and this one: In those days the Elected section had a greater and wider opportunity of examining the Estimates which were presented to them in printed form, and instead of being put on the table at the Annual Session an interval of at least three or four weeks was given to examine them. Therefore, when His Excellency convened the Council many of the Members would have prepared replies in the Elected section on Government's policy. I have had the privilege of seeing the amendment which the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) proposes to move and of discussing it with those who have taken an interest in this matter. I first suggested—and I still suggest—that what has happened as a result of examination of the last Estimates be taken as a model for the future. Those Estimates were examined by a Committee of the Executive Council and that Committee reported to the Executive Council which in turn submitted a report with the Estimates in printed form for the benefit of this Council. Now, that examination of the Estimates was done in collaboration with the Heads of Departments, but there was the disadvantage of not having the whole Elected Council to consider them and that, I think, is the weakness in having it done that way. I am very definitely and strongly in favour of a Finance Committee for the task suggested. In other words—and I will not give up the idea—I think the Committee should be a Committee of this Council. I feel almost inspired to make the prophecy that unless that is done we will have the same result and will have to meet finally in this Council to consider whether this item or that should be passed. I feel that if by some method shortly after the Departmental estimates are prepared a constituted Council can meet and be given an opportunity to consider them along with the Heads of Departments—and after all Government has granted requests of that kind whether or not we succeed in reducing public expenditure we would, at least, have the satisfaction of knowing that the Estimates have been properly examined and that we have been properly informed as to Government's proposals.

I have risen to support the proposals contained in the motion and from which, I venture to think, we should not depart. The Standing Committee in the House of Commons is perhaps the most respected of all the Committees, more respected perhaps than the House of Commons itself. The term "Select Committee" has no special significance; it does not mean to conscript wisdom of any special kind. The members are selected in the sense that they cannot be substituted and, I think, we should ask that wherever the opportunity exists the Estimates of Expenditure and anticipated revenue should be examined before they are placed before this Council, and the Committee which examines them should be comprised of the whole Council. I do not think it is advisable to say that this Council should derogate its functions to a sub-Committee and that that sub-Committee should report to this Council. I am sure this cannot be a wise thing to do. If you look at the Minutes of the Finance Committee it would be seen that there was a general desire on the part of Members to attend, and I told that to Sir Gordon Lethem. It was a pity that Committee did not continue, because the meetings were so well attended. I am sorry that Sir Gordon took the view that because the hon. Member for North Western District was absent from a meeting and did not have the opportunity to suggest that a particular item should be deleted — although there was a good attendance of other Members — he and other Members were being denied expression of their views here. I think the hon. Member for North Western District misunderstands the purpose of that Committee. He complains that in that Committee remarks made by Members are not made public, but he has no complaint at all to make against the wisdom of examining estimates of expenditure in that form, and there is nothing to prevent him from rising and speaking on every item. I, personally, feel that Sir Gordon should never have acted as he did. Some Members do not agree with Sir Gordon that what Members say here should be reported even when we are sitting in Committee, but with his particular psychology and manner he thought it best that the Finance Committee should be abolished.



However that may be, I think the draft amendment I have seen meets the various objections raised since it calls for the appointment of an *ad hoc* committee, and we are discussing an *ad hoc* question. This Council resolves itself into Committee and it therefore becomes *ad hoc* in itself. The position of the Council now is no worse than it was before the 1928 Constitution came into being and when the Committee of Ways and Means was formed over which an elected Member presided. Yet, with all the control and commercial ability at our disposal the rising tide of expenditure continued to flow. And, believe me, this expenditure may well be regarded as a sign of progress and development. I think if you examine the position very carefully you would find that this expenditure is associated mainly with the activities of the Development Committee. In commending this motion to the Council I have explained what the Committee will do, and it seems to me to be quite necessary and in keeping with the temper of things, because it will be the function of that Committee not so much to consider what the cost of the proposals will be to us but whether they are likely to assist in the development of this Colony.

You cannot limit the functions of a committee, especially a Committee of Development, and say "Oh, no; nothing must be recommended unless it comes within the findings of this Committee." I do not think the hon. Member meant that, but that is what the motion says. It goes so far not only to ask this Council to agree to an examination of the Estimates for 1948 but of subsequent years. I feel that the hon. Member should withdraw his motion, and if he should do so and frame an amendment it would, I think, achieve the object in view, needful as it is. I know he is determined. If he can do it, I hope he will, but I think he will find it a difficult task. If I may express a hope, I hope notwithstanding his disappointment, if he is asked and accepts nomination at the General Elections, he would seize the opportunity to see how far with the assistance he can gather he can curtail Government expenditure. I wish him good luck.

Mr. RAATGEVER : With your permission, sir, first of all I would like to associate myself with the remarks made by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara, (Mr. Humphrys) with regard to the intention of this motion. I should have dealt with that matter myself, but I did not want to detain the Council. I also intended to deal with the hon. the Colonial Treasurer's remarks as to profits earned by businesses engaged in trade, but the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) has already done so and, therefore, I postpone it for another time. With your permission I would like to amend my motion by substituting for the second part of it the following:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Council urges upon the Government the necessity for the exercise of the utmost economy in public expenditure and the desirability of effecting reductions in the cost of departmental services wherever practicable;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council recommends that draft departmental estimates of expenditure for the year 1948 be prepared in advance and be submitted individually for preliminary detailed investigation and report by a sub-committee to be elected by the Finance Committee; and that His Excellency be requested to give directions accordingly.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : I am going to second the amendment moved by the hon. Nominated Member. I can quite appreciate the alarm of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer at the motion as moved by the hon. Nominated Member which, of course, has given a wrong impression—an impression which was never intended by the hon. Mover of the motion. This amendment has, I think, made it clear that it is not the intention of this Council to ask for a committee solely for the purpose of reducing expenditure, but that such committee should go into the circumstances of each item of expenditure. I feel certain that in certain places that Committee will recommend increased expenditure. If I interpret the intention of the amendment correctly, I think the point raised by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) would be met because of this reason : The Finance Committee will be comprised of the entire

Council and that Finance Committee may in its discretion appoint a sub-committee to enquire into any particular subject. It may require a visit into the country and the Finance Committee will then appoint a sub-committee to go into the matter and report to the Finance Committee comprised entirely of Members of this Council. I do not think, as I have said, it has been made clear by the hon. Mover of the motion and also the hon. Seconder. It is not the intention of Members of this Council in any way to curtail any development work which is in the best interest of the country, and I feel certain that this development programme is being gone into not only by Government but by the entire Council, and any recommendation that comes from that Development Committee will receive the full support of this Council because of the fact that the recommendation will come from the very same Members, as members of the Development Committee, to themselves as Members of this Council.

I feel, sir, that in this Finance Committee Members will be privileged to elect a sub-committee to go into any particular matter, and it will receive the same support from this Council. Under such a system I feel certain a whole lot of time will be saved both to Government and to Members of this Council. I think we can count upon a shorter period in which our Estimates can be gone into for approval in this Council, because of the fact that the spade-work will be done by the Finance Committee proper with the advice and recommendation of any sub-committee appointed to enquire into any particular subject. For that reason I have seconded the amendment, and I hope that it will meet with the approval of the entire Council; even those Members who were against the original form of the motion, the amendment will now receive their support.

Mr. RAATGEVER : I forgot to mention with the approval of my seconder I was putting through the amendment.

The PRESIDENT : I think the position constitutionally is this : The hon. Member will withdraw the motion which was seconded by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) and

substitute the other motion which was seconded by the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus).

Mr. RAATGEVER : I only withdrew the second portion of the motion with the consent of my seconder and substituted the amendment. The preamble remains.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Speaking on the amendment I want earnestly to suggest to the hon. Nominated Member that he should also withdraw the preamble which is fraught with difficulty and controversy. I think the point was dealt with by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford). The Members of the Finance Committee are Members of the Council and they consider the plans very carefully. It does seem to come with very bad grace that the Council itself should place on record as having grave concern over something done by the Members themselves. I would plead with the hon. Member not to allow that preamble to remain on record. If it is the wish of this Council that it should be put on record, then I would like to move an amendment—substitute the word “*substantial*” for the word “*tremendous*”. It is not true; it is not elegant; it is not proper. I would ask the hon. Member himself to do so, if he supports what I have said.

Mr. RAATGEVER : I am not prepared to withdraw another word. I have reached the limit of withdrawal.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : I do not know if the hon. Mover of the motion has in the draft motion the substitution of the word “*substantial*” for the word “*tremendous*”.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : That was put in in the course of negotiation with the hon. Member, but it was not accepted.

Mr. WOOLFORD : I would like to know if the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) seconded the amendment with that preamble.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : I seconded the amendment, which means I seconded the amendment with that preamble.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I think the hon. Mover of the motion would be

well advised to substitute "substantial" for "tremendous".

Mr. RAATGEVER : I understood the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) was seconding my motion and not the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus). When the hon. the Colonial Treasurer saw me and suggested that Government would accept the amendment, I distinctly stated that I was not changing anything in the first part of the motion, and he accepted it. I am now surprised to hear him move that amendment. When I give my word that I will not accept it, my word is my bond. I am surprised to find the Colonial Treasurer getting up and attempting to say something else.

Mr. WOOLFORD : I rise to a point of order ! When this Council met today, there was on the Order Paper one motion, that as printed. That motion had been seconded by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara and became possible for debate. The position is, the hon. Nominated Member wishes to amend his motion and not to withdraw it. If that is the case, he has to obtain the leave of the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara who seconded the motion. He did not give it when the hon. Mover started to move his amendment. If he has given it, then the hon. Member must second the amendment. But the hon. Member for Western Berbice has done so. You cannot have two seconders to a motion as amended. I submit that is the first thing to be corrected. An appeal has been made to the hon. Member with respect to the preamble. After all the preamble is only the reason for the motion. I do suggest, if the hon. Member wishes the support of the Council, the hon. Member should have the motion properly seconded. I advise him to do so.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : I think I made it perfectly clear that I was in favour of the motion and I backed it up by seconding the motion. I do not like the quibbling over the word "tremendous". The hon. the Colonial Treasurer wants a substitution. It is only a question of whether 18 per cent. more is "tremendous" or "colossal". If the hon. the Colonial Treasurer wants the substitution of the word "substantial," I would advise the hon. Mover

to accept it. The figures are there and speak for themselves—an increase of from \$6,000,000 to \$14,000,000.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : May I make this clear ? When I seconded the amendment moved by the hon. Nominated Member, (Mr. Raatgever), I did not mean to take anything away from the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara that was due to him. As the hon. Member had already spoken, I took the opportunity to second the amendment and to speak at the same time.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : Apparently the preamble, as I tried unsuccessfully to point out to the Council yesterday, has two distinct limits. The first is Colonial Expenditure, whether it is tremendous, substantial or otherwise. It is only a matter of degree. Perhaps they may be synonymous terms. Then the second limit talks about development works. That, I tried to point out to the hon. Mover, is only the function of the Main Development Committee. Are we to have an examination into the expenditure in the Estimates, as we know it and as put before the Council, or are we to have both an examination of the Estimates, whether they are prepared in draft form, in print, or writing, or in whatever form they are put to this Council, and also an examination of the work of the Main Development Committee with all its appendices or sub-committees and various reports ? It is a superhuman task, and no Committee of this Council in my opinion can with any sound reason, unless they spend the whole year on it, come to any conclusion on Colonial Expenditure and the work of the Main Development Committee. They will have to devote their whole time of eight hours a day from now to the end of the year. Members are fully aware of what is being done in the Main Development Committee by the sub-committees. Is this Committee, which the hon. Mover desires to have, to examine the Estimates for 1948 and the work of the Main Development Committee ? Does the hon. Member mean that ? If that is so, I am absolutely against the amendment and against the Committee as it would be useless.

The PRESIDENT : I think it will be a good thing for the Chair to intervene

and try to clear up what has obviously become a tangle. When the hon. Member moved the original motion, Government had objections to it. I will deal first with expenditure. I am not going to argue whether expenditure increases are great or reasonable. What I do say is, they are due in the main to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Further you cannot have services unless you pay for them. The next point I want to deal with is the control of expenditure. When the Estimates were first laid on the table in 1946 with myself in the Chair, I was somewhat concerned to find that the desire was for them to be discussed by the Unofficial Members divorced from Government, and in order to do what I thought was reasonable I suggested then the appointment of an Economic Committee. However, that was not properly understood, perhaps, and it was not acceptable at the time. The Estimates were dealt with by the Unofficials with great speed and energy, but they were not able to find many major economies, and eventually the Estimates of Expenditure were passed with a very small, if any, reduction.

I see a very great advantage in this Council assisting Government when the Estimates for 1948 are being prepared by pruning them to the bone and, therefore, I see a very great advantage in the proposals which are now before this Council in the form of the amendment which has been discussed around this table during the debate, but I must say that probably the hon. Mover did not realize the full implications of his original motion. The preamble, as it now stands, is objectionable to Government in the amendment. It is objectionable to Government for this reason: I can only repeat in other words what the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight), forcibly said. It just cuts across an existing organization for considering development works. It is the words "Developmental Works" that stink. If the hon. Mover, who has done so much by introducing the motion to get all Members to agree on what Government and the Council can do to curb expenditure, would see his way to delete his preamble and confine his motion to the resolutions which I have before me, I think,

he would achieve the purpose which most of the Council want.

I do not think it is right for a Committee to go into the question as to whether development works should continue when those development works—shall I say—are big schemes, as the Bonasika and Torani schemes, which have already been approved by resolutions of this Council. It would be disastrous to appoint a Committee of this Council to go into the question as to whether those works should continue. That is a matter for the full Council, if the Main Development Committee on receiving recommendations of the sub-committees decide that those works should stop and recommend that to Government, and it is put to the full Council for ratification. It is an important point. I would ask the hon. Member not to regard it as a right. I regret the bringing of controversy into a debate which was gradually coming to an amicable conclusion. I must ask Government to resist, if the preamble is remaining to be put to a decision. If the hon. Member withdraws the preamble, I would accept the resolutions as they stand.

Mr. JACOB : I think I can speak on the amendment, and I am sorry I do not agree with what Your Excellency has stated nor with what the hon. Member for Western Essequibo has stated. I am not going to say the preamble should not be withdrawn, but I look upon this as a very important matter. This Colony is committed to an expenditure of say \$2,000,000 on a particular scheme, and it is found now that the scheme is going to be a disastrous failure after \$1,000,000 has been spent. Are we safeguarding the taxpayers' interest in allowing a further \$1,000,000 to be spent, or should we come back to the Council and say "Let us cut our losses" ?

The PRESIDENT : You can do so, I agree.

Mr. JACOB : The hon. Member for Western Essequibo, to my mind, has been suffering continuously from confusion of thought. I have never been able to follow him in this Council. When he got up yesterday I could not follow him, and again today. The Main Development Committee is composed of all the Mem-

bers of this Council. The sub-committees are composed of Members of the public. The Main Development Committee will have to approve of all these things, and when the hon. Member says it will take a whole year, I am afraid he is talking sheer nonsense.

The PRESIDENT : I must intervene. The Main Development Committee must approve. That is the very point I want to make, but I am not in favour of another committee being superimposed over the Main Development Committee.

Mr. JACOB : I would be inclined to agree with that. I was making the point that the hon. Member for Western Essequibo stated the Main Development Committee will have to submit its recommendations to this supreme Council, and the Main Development Committee is composed of all the Members of this Council. It will have to approve of schemes that have been recommended by the sub-committees composed of Members of the Council and of the public, and I can see no difficulty in that at all, except if the Main Development Committee by only a few members recommend certain propositions and Government accepts them. They should get the approval of the majority of the Members of the Main Development Committee. We should approve of this motion as the preamble has it—heavy Colonial Expenditure and heavy expenditure on development works. I am much concerned about that, because I am satisfied that some of these schemes want a little examination. We may, perhaps, have to spend more money on them or perhaps less, but I do not think they have reached such a stage as to be abandoned. But it is necessary that this Council or, perhaps, the next Council, whether I am here or not, should have to approve from time to time of the expenditure. The new Council can upset the decision arrived at now, so we have to think clearly. I think the motion as worded is in order. You can change the word “tremendous” to “substantial”, but the preamble should remain, because it means that the Members of the Finance Committee in a sub-committee selected by the Finance Committee can go and look into these things and report to the Finance Committee, which will have to

bring the matter to this Council before anything can be done.

The PRESIDENT : The hon. Member should answer my point. What are the other committees there for? It will be just a duplication of work. I entirely agree that if anybody can convince the Development Committee that some of the works should be stopped and that the scheme should be changed, Government would abide with that decision.

Mr. JACOB : We are talking about the works that are going on.

The PRESIDENT : The Chairman of the Main Development Committee has asked the members to report where they think the works should be stopped. There are several professional and technical men on that Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : There is a rule which provides for exclusion from consideration of financial matters which have been referred to an *ad hoc* Committee. That rule was put in for this specific object—so as to pave the way for the appointment of a sub-Committee as part of the Main Development Committee. I merely explain that to show that it is really unnecessary to go much further into that point.

Mr. RAATGEVER : There seems to be a misunderstanding because I can see nothing in this preamble to show that the Committee for whose appointment I have asked is to go into development works. The motion says distinctly :—

“WHEREAS this Council views with grave concern the tremendous increase in Colonial expenditure and the heavy financial commitments in connection with developmental works also the subsequent annual recurrent expenditure for maintenance of the said works; .....

That is an expression of opinion made by Unofficial Members of this Council. These development works are expected to cost \$12,000,000 and I have read a statement by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer which shows that \$9,000,000 from the 1945 grants will be spent on works which were originally estimated to cost a little over \$1,000,000. In my

opinion they will cost over \$12,000,000. Then the motion goes on to say :—

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Council urges on Government the desirability for the early appointment of a Committee of this Council to consider carefully and report to Government how expenditure can be reduced in 1948 and subsequent years.”

It does not say anything here about going into development works; it does not say that at all.

The PRESIDENT : I think you are interrupting the hon. Member for North Western District.

Mr. RAATGEVER : I was just trying to remove any misconception.

Mr. JACOB : If the preamble is removed you would not be able to deal except in a roundabout way with the development works that are going on at the present time.

The PRESIDENT : But you have got your Committee—the Development Committee—dealing with that. That is the point.

Mr. JACOB : If an assurance is given that we can go into it later, I would be satisfied. My point is that all that expenditure should be reviewed by Members of this Council, because when grants are made by the Imperial Government they are made for the benefit of the Colony, and this Legislature should supervise and control their expenditure. If this motion in its amended form is carried it would mean that all such expenditure could be investigated, and I have no objection to the amendment subject to what the Mover and Seconder have to say. When the Unofficial Members of this Council met at the end of 1946 and went into the question of expenditure, I felt they were doing a real good service to the people of the Colony, and they should continue to do so without official interference of any kind. The Unofficial Members need to co-operate among themselves and with the Government. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer made that point very clear when he spoke, and I agree altogether with him. That is the principle I am fighting for. If we are not allowed to co-operate among our-

selves it would be impossible for us to form a solid block and achieve very much in this Council, but I ask Government whether we have always been allowed to co-operate. I think I have told Your Excellency of one or two cases when you replied that I do not do anything to back your Government up. I will conclude by asking for an opportunity for Unofficial Members to discuss and decide these particular matters. Let us have a partnership in this business, and let us decide on the information given to us.

The PRESIDENT : I am accepting that. Have you read the motion ? It says “.....and report to Government how expenditure can be reduced in 1948 and subsequent years.”

Mr. JACOB : If I have opposed Government strongly in the past, it is because I want proper co-operation in this Council—co-operation of the right type—for the improvement of this Colony.

Mr. HUMPHRYS : I think there is some confusion of thought over the recital and the operative part of the motion. The recital, really, is only an inducement for the adoption of the operative part, and nothing more.

The PRESIDENT : The hon. Mover, I think, has put it clearly because he got up and said he thought the development works would cost over \$9,000,000. If that is only the recital, however, why does he want all of it retained ?

Mr. HUMPHRYS : Because, as I have said, the recital is an inducement for the adoption of the operative part of the motion. It merely shows what the operative part is concerned with.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I was the one who suggested that he should remove this preamble. I knew it was only a recital and was only explanatory, but, nevertheless, I feared the implication of the words, and it is quite obvious that my fear was justified, because one hon. Member at least has suggested that because of these words the sub-Committee to be appointed will be justified in going all over the field. Now, I am in a little doubt as to what I should do. In discussing this motion with the hon. Nom-

inated Member, Mr. Raatgever, I agreed to accept on behalf of Government the amendment on the understanding that he would substitute the word "substantial" for the word "tremendous" in the preamble of the motion. That is why I requested you, sir, to accept it on behalf of Government.

The PRESIDENT : I think you can still do it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I move that the words of the preamble in the original motion be deleted.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The PRESIDENT : There has been an amendment moved by the hon. Mover and a second amendment moved by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer. The proper Parliamentary procedure is to take the second amendment first, and I will now do so.

The Colonial Treasurer's amendment for the deletion of the preamble put, and the Council divided and voted as follows :—

For : Messrs. Thompson, Roth, Jacob, Critchlow, C. V. Wight, Woolford and Dr. Singh, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary —10.

Against : Messrs. Farnum, Raatgever, King, Humphrys and Peer Bacchus —5.

Amendment adopted.

The PRESIDENT : I will now put the first amendment which was moved by the hon. Mover of the motion.

Mr. Raatgever's amendment without the preamble put, and unanimously adopted, the amended motion reading as follows :—

"BE IT RESOLVED that this Council urges upon the Government the necessity for the exercise of the utmost economy in public expenditure and the desirability of effecting reductions in the cost of departmental services wherever practicable;

"AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council recommends that draft departmental estimates of expenditure for the year 1948 be prepared in advance and be submitted individually for preliminary detailed investigation and report by a sub-committee to be elected by the Finance Committee; and that His Excellency be requested to give directions accordingly."

#### ELECTIONS BILL.

The PRESIDENT : I think it is only a quarter to five now, but there is nothing further we can take this afternoon. Next Thursday there will be a meeting of the Finance Committee, therefore, I will adjourn the Council until 2 o'clock on Friday next.

Mr. JACOB : May I take this opportunity of enquiring when the Elections Bill will come up, sir? It has been on this Order Paper for over three weeks already.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : It will be taken as soon as I am ready.

Council adjourned until 2 p.m. on Friday, 28th March, 1947.