

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)
Order in Council, 1953.)

FRIDAY, 25th JANUARY, 1957

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT

His Honour the Speaker.

Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford,
O.B.E., Q.C.

Ex-Officio Members:

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. F. D. Jakeway, C.M.G., O.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney General,
Mr. G. M. Farnum (Ag.)

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. F. W. Essex.

Nominated Members of Executive Council:

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid,
C.M.G., C.B.E., (Member for Agriculture,
Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Member
for Communications and Works).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E.
(Member for Local Government,
Social Welfare and Co-operative De-
velopment).

The Hon. R. C. Tello

Nominated Official:

Mr. J. I. Ramphal

Nominated Unofficials:

Mr. T. Lee

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

Mr. C. A. Carter

Mr. E. F. Correia

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb

Mr. H. Rahaman

Miss Gertie H. Collins

Mrs. Esther E. Dey

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

Mr. R. B. Jailal

Mr. Sugrim Singh

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.

Clerk of the Legislature —
Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature
Mr. B. M. Viapree (Ag.)

Absent:

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Mem-
ber for Labour, Health and Housing)
— on leave.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj
— on leave.

Mr. W. A. Phang — on leave.

The Speaker read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting held
on Thursday, 24th January, 1957, as
printed and circulated, were taken as
read and confirmed.

PAPERS LAID

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Jake-
way): I beg to lay on the table:

The Statements of Accounts of the
Georgetown Mariners' Club for the years

1954 and 1955, together with the Director of Audit's certificates and reports thereon.

TRIBUTES TO THE LATE
SIR JOHN WADDINGTON

Mr. Lee: Sir, before you proceed with the Order of the Day I ask leave to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Orders to introduce a motion with respect to the death of Sir John Waddington.

Sir Frank McDavid (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines): I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Orders suspended.

Mr. Lee: I beg to move the motion as follows:

"Resolved, That this Council records its profound regret at the death of Sir John Waddington, G.B.E., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., and Member of the Legislature of this Colony, and requests that an expression of the Council's sympathy be conveyed to his widow and relatives."

As hon. Members know, Sir John Waddington was formerly a Colonial Secretary of British Guiana and I think this Colony owes him a great debt. He was among the many who tried to push this Colony to the forefront through development. His effort in this direction was so recognized that when he went on leave abroad the Colonial Office deemed it advisable for him to return on resumption and assist in carrying out the development programme laid down for this Colony.

I was, and I am sure other Members were too, sorry to learn of his death. There was a time, I recall, when he took part in debates in this Council

Chamber. Sir Frank McDavid was a Member of the Executive Council then, as he is now. Sir, this Council can be proud of Sir John as a former leader in this Colony.

Sir Frank McDavid: I desire to second the motion. It came as a shock to me when I learnt of his death, first thing this morning. Like Mr. Lee, I think this country owes him a debt of gratitude. His name will always be linked with the 1953 British Guiana Constitution, one which at that time was more advanced than any other in the British Caribbean region.

I was associated with him, as Mr. Lee indicated, intimately so, when he was Colonial Secretary, and later when he came here from Barbados and assumed the office of Acting Governor. There is a little bit of interesting history in that. It was on account of Sir John Waddington's courage that the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board came into being. It was 1939, during the war, and a few of us put our heads together, agreeing that the time was ripe to create a single-selling organization. So many people had thrown so many obstacles in the way of creating such an organization before the war that when the war came about we decided to use the opportunities afforded under the powers of the Defence Regulations and bring the Board into being.

Sir John took his courage in his hands and signed the regulations although at that time we had no reason to believe that the operations of the Board would be a financial success. I can remember seeing him at Government House and presenting him with a draft of the document setting out the formation of the Board. He stood with his pen poised for a moment, then he said: "I will sign." That was the birth of

the Rice Marketing Board. So that, quite apart from his recommending what has come to be known as the Waddington Constitution, we owe him a debt of gratitude for courageously sponsoring what has become an institution of which we are all very proud.

He was a perfect gentleman, a wise and experienced administrator and a man who was sincere in all his dealings with the people, in whom he greatly believed. I join with Mr. Lee in expressing condolence, and I hope that the resolution will tender some measure of sympathy to Lady Waddington.

Mr. Speaker: Would any other Member like to speak? I would like to say a few words. I remember when he was Chairman of the Transport Advisory Board. At that time I was myself a member.

I recall incidents which only go to show that the place of a man's birth may or may not have some influence on his future life and characteristics. He was born in Bermuda and was a Rhodes scholar.

When he came here recently he told me he had never had any experience of the Legislative Council previous to his assuming the Colonial Secretaryship here. He told me that when I gave evidence before the Constitutional Commission. Whatever British Guiana may be, it cannot be doubted that it is a place where people can get a great deal of experience in a short time. So we can be pleased of that.

My sympathy goes out to Lady Waddington and other relatives.

The Speaker read the motion.

Motion put, and carried, all Members standing.

AGREEMENT WITH B.W.I. AIRWAYS

Mr. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works): I beg to move the following motion:-

"Be It Resolved: "That with reference to Sessional Paper No. 13/1956 this Council approves of the conclusion of the proposed Two-Year Management Agreement with British West Indian Airways, Ltd."

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, there has been a great deal of misunderstanding and misrepresentation as to the nature of the discussions that have been going on between Government and B.W.I.A. about British Guiana Airways. The general impression, as I have heard it expressed from time to time, appears to be that Government is handing over British Guiana Airways to B.W.I.A. There is no truth in that statement, and I would be the last person to take part in such an operation. The time has now come when I am in a position to make known the true facts in this matter.

When Government purchased British Guiana Airways in 1955 it was agreed that the Company should continue to operate for three months so as to give Government a chance to adjust itself for the taking over of the air transport services of the Colony. To the embarrassment of Government, the Company demanded a final settlement a few weeks after the decision was made to buy them out and disregarded the gentleman's agreement to carry on for a period of three months.

This unfortunate attitude forced Government to seek outside help to avoid the discontinuance of the service, and B.W.I.A. offered their services.

[Mr. Kendall]

That is how B.W.I.A. Limited came into the picture, and these are the circumstances which forced Government to commence negotiations with a view to employing them as managing agents and advisors for our air transport services. All through the discussions we have had with B.W.I.A., we made it quite clear that under their management British Guiana Airways must continue to operate as a Government-owned bush service and that employees and users of the service must both be protected.

I take it that Members of Council have had an opportunity of studying the draft Agreement attached as an appendix to Sessional Paper No. 13 of 1956 which was formally laid in Council on the 9th instant. It will be clear from this that the arrangements proposed in this Agreement did not provide for the handing over of British Guiana Airways to B.W.I.A. It merely provides for the employment of B.W.I.A. as this Government's Managing Agents for a limited period of two years. As I have pointed out in the White Paper, the Governor will retain full charge and direction over all matters of policy and only the functions of management will be entrusted to B.W.I.A. It will be the duty of that Company to ensure the proper operation and to promote the use of British Guiana Airways services.

There are certain features of the arrangement that deserve special notice. Clause 3(1) of the draft Agreement seeks to safeguard the position of all persons employed by the organisation at the date when the Agreement comes into effect. This clause will make it impossible for any such employee to be dismissed or have his conditions of service altered without the prior approval of the Governor. Indeed all rules and regulations deal-

ing with disciplinary procedures in general will be subject to the approval of the Governor.

One of the fears I have heard expressed against the management of B.W.I.A. is that this Company may increase the operating costs of the services by introducing unnecessary frills and luxuries that the people of the Interior can ill afford. Clause 5 (1) of the Agreement will ensure that B.G. Airways will operate on a budget approved by Government from which there can be no variation without approval, except in the case of emergencies. On the accounting side B.W.I.A. are being required to present to the Governor monthly Profit and Loss accounts.

One of the most important features of the Agreement is the provision in clause 7 requiring B.W.I.A. to submit to the Governor, within one year from the coming into operation of the Agreement, a comprehensive report on the operation and future development of this Colony's domestic air services. This report is to embody a forecast of our potential air transport requirements for the next ten years. I cannot stress too much the importance and the need for a report of this nature as a foundation for our plans for the future. For such a report to be of value it must come from a source that possesses not only considerable experience in airline operation, but has available the requisite resources of technical, managerial, statistical and accounting skill. Under the Agreement these skills will be brought to bear on our particular problem. The results will be presented to us in a report which by itself would have cost us a considerable sum if it were to be secured purely on a consultative basis. It will now be available to us as a part of the management arrangements and at no additional cost. With

the help of this report and the data it will embody, we hope to be in a position to reach a decision as to the future ownership of the airline; that is to say, whether it is to remain a Government organisation or be converted into a Company in which the Public will be able to acquire shares.

As far as the general management provisions are concerned I wish to assure members that the need to bring fresh blood into the management is no reflection on any individual. Indeed I shall ask members not to view this matter on a basis of personalities. The fact is that we have reached a stage in the development of our internal air services that calls for planned development under expert guidance, and I say this without any reflection whatever on the past or present operations of the Company. Indeed I would be among the first to admit that the creation of our local airline was a magnificent achievement when we take into account the limited financial resources and the pioneering conditions under which the airline came into existence.

The overall cost of this new management agency to the Organisation is \$30,000 a year, as normal expenditure. This I consider an extremely reasonable charge when we consider the salary paid in the past for the management of the organisation, together with such contingent expenditure as entertainment allowance, retainer to New York Agents, etc., etc. In addition to management proper and the report I have already mentioned B.W.I.A. are to provide, free of charge, any air transportation by its own aircraft that may be rendered necessary in the performance of its obligations under the Agreement.

In conclusion I would like to emphasize once more that there is no

question of handing over B.G. Airways to B.W.I.A.; there is no question of converting the airline into an expensive luxury line. The rights of all the present employees will be strictly protected. The management is for a limited period of two years. Finally I wish to add that in conjunction with the legal officers I and my Ministry have devoted a considerable amount of time to this matter and I am now satisfied that the arrangements embodied in the draft Agreement are very much in the interests of the Colony.

Mr. Farnum: (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): I beg to second the motion.

Mr. Correia: I had expected to hear much more from the hon. Mover. The main point at issue in this motion is the draft Agreement by the Government with the B.W.I.A. to manage the affairs of the B.G. Airways Ltd. I will try to let hon. Members around this table see the absurdity of this motion and the Agreement, which I rise to oppose. In July, 1955, this Government bought over B.G. Airways Ltd., to run it. We were told in Finance Committee that Government was making the purchase and that B.W.I.A. would be invited to come in and advise us. The hon. Mover will remember that in Finance Committee we told him in no uncertain terms what we thought of the proposal. We told him that we opposed it because they were going to bring people here for us to teach them to teach us to run our concern. The hon. Member then promised us a White Paper. That was 18 months ago but this promised White Paper was only laid two weeks ago, and as a result in the past two weeks I had to do much research.

Your Honour will excuse me if I say that this White Paper is a

[Mr. Correia]

mockery. The hon. Member and Government have no regard for this Council, as if they did, they would have given us a more comprehensive White Paper instead of allowing us to dig into history for records. I can give this Council the history of B.G. Airways gleaned from Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1948 (a Report dated 11th November, 1947). A better document you can never find. It is a very lengthy report and I shall quote briefly passages which I shall pick out here and there from it. In 1934 Mr. Art Williams arrived in British Guiana with a Wasp Ireland Amphibian plane. I shall read just a short portion of Page 3 of this Sessional Paper:

"a few experimental and advertising flights were made in 1934, permission having been granted to him in October, 1934. During 1935 the plane was put into regular operation as a "taxi service". Late in 1936, Mr. Williams acquired a second plane of similar type which was put into service . . ."

At this stage I may mention that the present manager of B.G. Airways, Mr. Harry Wendt, arrived in this Colony to join Mr. Art Williams. Referring to an arrangement between Government and B. G. Airways, the Sessional Paper states:

"the work of the Commission was immensely facilitated and expedited, indeed it is scarcely too much to say that it was made possible by the fact that a very large part of the transport requirements both for personnel and stores had been undertaken by the local air service operated by Mr. Williams . . ."

This was referring to the British Guiana — Brazil Boundary Commission.

Sir Frank McDavid (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines): May I ask what the hon. Member is reading from? Is it the Report of the Commission of which I was the Chairman? He may tell the Council what is the Report.

Mr. Correia: It is an historical record of the initial enterprise of Major Art Williams in instituting air services in British Guiana and of the subsequent relations between the Government and the British Guiana Airways Ltd. The same Report was issued as a Sessional Paper on the Agreement which was made by Government with the B.G. Airways Ltd., on the 17th of December, 1955. It was referred to in *Hansard* of the 16th of December, 1948 at page 30, Message No. 1. I was referring to the good work Major Art Williams did for the Boundary Commission. On Page 4 of the Sessional Paper it states:

"Another distinct advantage of an air service lay in its value for ambulance purposes, a matter of great importance in a country such as British Guiana where the transport of serious cases to hospital or the bringing of medical aid in emergencies to the camps in the Interior was a matter of great difficulty otherwise than by air, and often involved serious or even fatal delay . . ."

I am referring to this as a brief history of B.G. Airways. I shall now quote Paragraph 5 on page 3 of the same Sessional Paper:

"The advantage of maintaining internal communication by air had been forcibly impressed on Government's attention around that time by an occurrence in the Rupununi District which illustrated that when necessary the work of any medical mission which might have to be sent to the area would be enormously facilitated by the provision of regular and rapid communication by air . . ."

On Page 4 paragraph 8 reads:

"In January, 1938, a committee consisting of the honourable the Colonial Treasurer and three unofficial members, Mr. R. V. Evan Wong, Mr. W. S. Jones, and the late Mr. W. A. Walker, was appointed by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Wilfrid Jackson, to explore the possibilities of ensuring an internal air service for British Guiana. This Committee was instructed to discuss the matter confidentially with Mr. Williams to ascertain the probable revenue and expenditure involved and the minimum assistance that

would be necessary from Government. The Committee submitted a confidential Report in April 1938, containing their recommendations that Government should negotiate with Mr. Williams for the continuance of his air service for two years from the 1st of January, 1939 on the basis set out in that Report."

The first contract between Government and B.G. Airways was dealt with in the Sessional Paper. At page 7, paragraph 10 states:

"A contract embracing the terms agreed upon was then concluded on the 30th of June, 1939, between the Government, Mr. A. J. Williams and the British Guiana Airways Limited (the operating Company established by Mr. Williams) to come into force as from the 1st of October, 1939. This was approved by the Legislative Council by Resolution No. XXV passed on the 25th of July, 1939, whereby the Council also undertook to provide the necessary funds for the subsidy . . ."

I cannot find the time to read that Contract. A second Contract was entered into by Government with the Company, the terms of which were approved by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and signed on the 1st of February, 1944, by the Government and the Company. It was approved by the Legislative Council by Resolution XLI passed on the 14th of March, 1944. The following were some of the conditions in the second contract and I quote from Appendix I, Recital 2

"2. Under existing arrangements between the Government, the Company and Major Williams, the Company operates two Wasp Ireland Seaplanes (owned by Major Williams) and two Grumman Amphibian aircraft on the following services:

- (a) Charter services at prescribed hire rates with the Wasp Ireland Seaplanes under a formal agreement dated the 8th of February, 1944, and expiring on the 30th of September, 1947, providing for the payment to the Company by the Government of an annual subsidy of \$34,560.

(b) Regular scheduled services between Georgetown and the Mazaruni and Rupununi districts with the Wasp Ireland Seaplanes at prescribed fare and freight rates under a supplementary agreement providing for the payment to the Company of an additional subsidy in respect of the services equivalent to any deficiency between actual receipts and receipts computed at charter hire rates.

- (c) A regular Georgetown—Mackenzie "Shuttle Service" (connected with the services of the British West Indies Airways) and charter services with the Grumman aircraft under tentative arrangements providing for the payment to the Company by the Government of cash advances of \$1,920 per month against a subsidy to be subsequently determined to cover the net on the deficiency operation of these services to the 31st of December, 1946."

"3. The Company will operate with the Grumman aircraft a temporary Georgetown—Atkinson "Shuttle Service" connected with the services of the British West Indies Airways to be inaugurated on the 1st of October, 1946, in substitution for the Georgetown—Mackenzie "Shuttle Service" (referred to at (c) of paragraph 2 above) under special arrangements with the British West Indies Airways Ltd."

During the war years, from 1942 to 1945, Mr. Art Williams was drafted into the American army and during his absence B.G. Airways was properly managed. In August, 1944 a part-weekly service between British Guiana and Trinidad was established. There was a growing need for internal air services also, because at that time the Pan American seaplane service was not available. British Guiana would have been cut off from the air service and Government was asked to secure an agreement with the company to ensure that service. Government loaned to the company \$50,000 to purchase a Grumman plane and \$15,000 to improve the ramp. A second Grumman was afterwards purchased because a single aircraft was inadequate for proper transportation service to the

interior. Of these planes one was a used Grumman from Natal and the other was a damaged Grumman from Belem, which was for spares. This damaged Grumman was eventually reconstructed by our mechanics and the company was able to have a third Grumman in service.

B.G. Airways applied to Government in 1946 for a further advance of U.S. currency equivalent to \$100,000 (BWI) to purchase from the U.S. two Douglas DC 3 (C47) freighter planes with spares available from U.S. war supplies. The purchase was made by Major Williams in the U.S. and the two planes, N.C. 50311 and N.C. 50312 were flown to the Colony; one arrived in November, 1946 and the other in March, 1947. The Government agreed later to give the company a deficiency grant, which lasted until 1955 when the showdown came and we had to buy B.G. Airways for \$800,000. I do not grudge the money that has been paid to Col. Williams because he gave yeoman service to this Colony and he played a great part in opening up its interior.

The Sessional Paper before the Council is No. 13 of 1956, but may I remind Members that it was promised to us over 15 months ago. I will go through it paragraph by paragraph. Para. 2 states:

"In July, 1955 this matter was the subject of consideration by Executive Council who after careful deliberation agreed that negotiations should be opened with Messrs. B.W.I.A. Limited on the above-mentioned lines for the operation of the airline for the two-year period, and that it should be made clear to B.W.I.A. that any reluctant contract would be for a limited period... "

In July, 1955 this matter was before the Executive Council. I want to stress that date — July, 1955. It is 20 months since Government has been

running B.G. Airways. Was it B.W.I.A., managing it in this interim period? No. They were invited, but they had to wait until they see something in black and white. We in British Guiana are accustomed to seeing them lose \$1½ million a year and our airways on the other hand run at a profit every year. I do not like to say this, but I have to.

The question is, who should teach who? I think they should invite us to show them how to run a service. During the first year we made a substantial profit, and I take it that we may be able to make a profit of \$100,000 a year.

Members: Oh, no.

Mr. Correia: I have the figures the Financial Secretary gave us in 1956 — \$88,000 for the first period. Then we are making over \$100,000 a year in profit.

The Financial Secretary: I would like to know which figures the hon. Member is referring to.

Mr. Correia: I am sorry; it was before the hon. Member's time.

The Financial Secretary: I would still like to know which figures.

Mr. Speaker: Does anybody know which are the figures and what they represent?

Mr. Correia: I will now quote from para. 3, the favourite paragraph on my hon. Friend (Mr. Kendall):

"This arrangement for the management of the airline by B.W.I.A. was considered most advantageous to Government in view of the fact that it would make available to the local airline the full management resources of British West Indian Airways Limited including those of its technical and commercial operations, together with the use of any of the agents' own facilities such as overhaul, maintenance, accountancy and statistical, as may be considered desirable."

My hon. Friend stressed this paragraph when he quoted it. The paragraph is nicely put. But I would like him to tell me who have been managing B.G. Airways all the time and who have been running it safely. They, the staff of B.G. Airways, trained over the past 23 years, and they can run B.W.I.A. if they are put to it.

“Furthermore,” (para. 3 continues) “it was essential that during this interim period the management of the organisation should be in the most capable hands available.”

It was the B.G. Airways staff, lest this is overlooked, that has kept the planes in the air for the past two years and since the purchase. I will leave the rest of the White Paper to be pulled to pieces by other hon. Members, but I will add now that the agreement is an absurdity, an insult — it is not even an “agreement.”

Clause 1 (3) states that:

“The Governor shall have full charge and direction over all matters of policy connected with the Air Transport Services, but subject thereto and to the terms of this Agreement B.W.I.A. shall be responsible to the Governor for all aspects of the operation of Air Transport Services.”

It is very easy for the management of any concern to make things so difficult for employees as to make them get dismissed for insubordination.

There is apparently no limit to the number of employees which the B.W.I.A. can bring into the B.G. Airways Ltd.

The Chief Secretary: It is limited by the Budget.

Mr. Correia: And I suppose the B.W.I.A. will prepare the Budget.

Mr. Kendall: And Government will ratify it.

Mr. Correia: All I can say is that the B.G. Airways will be a dumping ground for misfits and nincompoops; men whom they cannot sack will be transferred here and Government will have to carry the dead.

Mr. Ramphal (to a point of order): Sir, I object to what I consider to be unparliamentary language.

Voices: No, no.

Mr. Correia: I will skip some of these clauses (in the Agreement) although I intended to make remarks on them, and will go on to clause 7. The question of safety is referred to (in clause 3), but we can boast of water in relation to the B.G. Airways. For 23 years the service has operated in this Colony without a single casualty; can any airways service in any other part of the world boast of a better record? I doubt it. Further, it can be proved that this service was both efficient and economical. We have a most efficient staff operating the B.G. Airways and yet this Government wants to bring in people so that we can teach them to teach us. In one clause of the Agreement we are actually being told what type of plane we should get and the type of service we should run. It took us 23 years to develop this service and I should like to know how could the B.W.I.A. be in a position to tell us anything about it.

I should like to make one more point before I close my remarks. I should like, with your permission, Sir, to refer to *Hansard* of December 17, 1948, col. 33, in order to give some figures relating to the operation of the B.G. Airways. Within nine years — from October, 1939 to September, 1948 — the B.G. Airways operated a total of 9,610 flying hours and carried 2,360,936 lbs. of freight, and also carried 7,288 passengers during the same period. In 1956 alone the

[Mr. Correia]

freight carried amounted to 6,314,596 lbs.—three times the quantity transported during the nine years referred to. Why has Government hidden these facts from us? Why is Government trying to jet-propel this “baby” over the heads of the people in this Colony. I must confess that I cannot understand the ways of Government.

I am not objecting to the amount of \$30,000 being asked by B.W.I.A. as managing agent for the B.G. Airways; the amount is comparatively small. If they had a domestic concern like ours and were in a position to run B.G. Airways, it would have been a different matter. I, personally, feel that the B.G. Airways has a properly arranged service, hence the \$30,000 will be spent to open a school to teach others to teach us what will only benefit B.W.I.A. The amount mentioned is only for the purpose of opening a “school” for the benefit of the B.W.I.A. We have already developed a good domestic service in B.G. and my opinion is that we should keep it and run it ourselves profitably for the benefit of the country.

Mr. Luckhoo: I think the hon. Member (Mr. Correia) who has just spoken with a great deal of emotion was actuated by a very strong feeling which has not come from him as an individual, but which has permeated the entire community since it became known that there was a proposition to put the management of the B.G. Airways in the hands of the B.W.I.A. That feeling is one which has been created; it is one which has arisen spontaneously and with good cause. What is the position? Here we have in this country the B.G. Airways operating for over 20 years under conditions which are peculiar to this particular territory — conditions which are not to be found in any of the

developed Caribbean territories. Although we have had this service being operated by local men for over 20 years, so far as we have been able to judge as laymen, they have done so efficiently and effectively. Over this long period there has been an accumulation of knowledge and experience. There has been the usual method of trial and error, and out of this we have the present set-up—the benefits of a background and experience of very many years. When the B.G. Government, two years ago, acquired the B.G. Airways, if they felt that it was incumbent upon them to permit B.W.I.A. to manage the Company, one would have found some reason for such action during that period of time. But, when after two years we find that the service continued to operate smoothly and satisfactorily—without any financial loss—then one must hesitate to effect a change such as that contemplated by this motion.

Hon. Members would certainly like to know, if there is a change to be effected, whether we are going from our present status to something which promises and augurs well for the future—to a management which would give greater opportunity for the development of our service. If so, then I would say it is deserving of consideration. But, to turn from the B.G. Airways with its operations which were carried on satisfactorily over the last 20 years, and to switch to B.W.I.A. one must make the comparison and ask whether they are conversant with our local conditions and whether they had been operating in territories such as we have (in B.G.). The answer comes, unequivocally, “No”. One is therefore at a loss to know why this must be forced down our throats—to leave the present management and to hand over on a platter of silver, the operation of

our Company (B.G. Airways) to another concern. Our service is a domestic pioneering service, while the other is an international scheduled service; and what possible experience can the management of this (latter) service have that it should induce us to accept the forms of this Agreement—an Agreement which, I say, all hon. Members should reject today. If it were a question of requiring a manager for the affairs of the B.G. Airways, or a question of bringing an individual whose presence and personality would be of great value to our service, then it would have been worthy of consideration. If we were looking for such a person, however, it would have been reasonable for us to pick one from a domestic, pioneering service operating under similar conditions to those of the B.G. Airways.

Mr. Luckhoo: Who would we invite? Would we not go to a service operating under like conditions and invite them to come here in that capacity? Would that not be the natural procedure if it were necessary? One is asked to vote for this Agreement which is presented to us for our agreement to hand over that which we have seen grow here from a little infant to the concern which it is now, a big, strong, healthy boy. When one looks and sees the services which those who are presently in control of our B.G. Airways are rendering, one wonders whether it is fair to them that this concern should be removed from out of their hands and placed in those of B.W.I.A. One does not wish to enter into personalities, but I think I would be lacking in my duty if I do not publicly pay tribute to the services which Mr. Wendt has rendered to my mind not only to B.G. Airways, not only to this Government but to the

Colony of British Guiana. I would like to know if this Government has enquired from the people who are in control now, as to how they view this particular Agreement, because they are the people who have a tremendous amount of experience and are serving the country at this moment. One can speak on and on for a long time on this matter, but I do not propose to do that.

I would like, however, to say that my hon. friend, Mr. Correia was very bold and, I must say, was right when he referred to the Sessional Paper on this matter as being unsatisfactory. One looks and sees in the very first paragraph the alleged reason for asking us to accept this Agreement and give our sanction to it. It says:

"In view of the past history of B.G. Airways Limited, and the special nature of the relations with Government over a number of years it was considered impracticable to embark on the selling up of such a company on the basis of the data available. The most suitable course seemed to call for an interim period of two years during which the concern would be managed under contract on behalf of Government by an experienced airline operator"

The words of the opening statement are so nicely put together but they convey nothing. They are pointless, meaningless but beautifully put together. What is the "data"? What is the "past history"? What is the "special nature of the relations with Government"? What are the circumstances? Are we not entitled to know? Surely those facts, if they are there, let us know. Take us into your confidence. Have we any reason why this "most suitable course" should be adopted as against the other course which naturally should follow from the state of affairs as we know it? Why should this be the natural course? If we have the data, then give the reasons so that

[Mr. Luckhoo]

we can come to that conclusion? On and on one can go. But let me ask my very good friend, the hon. mover, whose smile at all times is refreshing even when under fire, which is a good trait I appreciate and pay him a compliment for it; the question to which I would like to get an answer is — is it a fact that B.W.I.A. operate at a considerable annual loss? Are we not entitled to know the financial status of B.W.I.A. — whether they make a profit or a loss a year. It is an ordinary but necessary business question. I ask my hon. friend what has been the annual loss of B.W.I.A. since its inception? If the answer is that they have been losing money over a number of years consistently, is it not courting serious financial loss for us to hand over our concern to B.W.I.A.? That is a question we would like to have answered. Let us have the facts on a question of that kind so that in our consciences we may be able to determine our stand in such a matter.

Is it not true that B.W.I.A. is operating virtually as a monopoly for West Indian flights? I can answer that because I know as a fact that although their rates are higher we are forced to accept them and to travel by B.W.I.A. in the West Indies. One wonders why B.W.I.A. should get all concessions here.

If I knew that the staff of B.W.I.A. was familiar with the kind of services provided by B.G. Airways, I would view the matter differently. But let us not completely fool ourselves, this is not a case of a new concern which we are starting, but one which has already started off on a correct footing. This is not the case of a business or operation with which we are not familiar. What is being handed over to B.W.I.A. to run is a growing con-

cern which is in operation and is carrying on satisfactorily. That is a very important factor for consideration, and one asks whether Government has given it that adequacy of consideration it deserves.

I have read this document, this Agreement, and my criticism can be great, but I will just make two observations on it. There is stated in a clause —

“B.W.I.A. shall as soon as possible carry out an inspection of the aircraft, stores, spares, and equipment of British Guiana Airways and submit to the Governor...”

I would like to make a comment on that. I would like to inquire whether at the time of our Government acquiring B.G. Airways whether Government had an inspection of the Company's aircrafts and other equipment or whether it is suggested they were not made available to the Government by the Company. Secondly, the Agreement does not mean that the rates and fares presently existing will continue and cannot be increased. If the operation and entire staff of B.G. Airways are taken over by B.W.I.A. it would mean more expenditure. We can well see what is now a mere suggestion might become a reality, and that is there would be increased rates and fares. I hope I will be proved wrong. Time will prove my prognostication of increased fares.

The last point before I take my seat is this. This is supposed to be an Agreement for two years, but let me say that I fear we will find years from now, perhaps 20 years, the management and operation of B.G. Airways is going to remain firmly in the hands of B.W.I.A. Hon. Members would be making a sad error of judgement if they were to accept this Agreement handing over our

concern to B.W.I.A. without the requisite experience of this particular type of service to justify it. If we accept this motion we would live to regret it.

Dr. Fraser: I am unable to support this motion proposed by Government. Since Government's purchase of B.G. Airways and again early in last year the hon. Member promised us in Finance Committee that he will let Members have a White Paper on the purchase of B.G. Airways. If this Sessional Paper that has been handed to us early this month is the promised White Paper on B.G. Airways, I consider it most unsatisfactory. In fact I think it is an insult to the intelligence of Members of this Council, for it is barren of all information relating to B.G. Airways except the necessity to enter into an agreement with B.W.I.A. If it is not the White Paper promised by the hon. Member, then it is a gross discourtesy by the Ministry of Communications and Works. It displays an utter disregard for the wishes of this Council. Paragraph 2 of this Sessional Paper states:

"In July, 1955, this matter was the subject of consideration by Executive Council who after careful deliberation agreed that negotiations should be opened with Messrs. B.W.I.A. Limited on the above mentioned lines for the operation of the airline for the two year periods..."

It is now eighteen months ago and B.G. Airways has been carrying on extremely well throughout that line. I am a Director of a Company that uses B.G. Airways services extensively and since its operation has paid a matter of \$21,000.00 in freight. So I know what I am speaking. In paragraph 3 of this Sessional Paper it goes on to state the commercial and technical advantages that would accrue to B.G. Airways. The hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo, has expressed

himself quite fully on that point. I would like to support what he has said. B.G. Airways is landing on airstrips on the open savannah B.W.I.A. is an international airline accustomed to airfields and aerodromes, which has not the opportunity to obtain experience of the kind of work that is being carried out by B.G. Airways in the last 15 to 20 years. So I fail to see the commercial advantages we will obtain from B.W.I.A.'s management.

When it comes to the technical advantages, I think the record of B.G. Airways speaks for itself. It is a record of very few accidents over the 20-odd years of its existence, and that is something we cannot disregard. Who have kept B.G. Airways planes in the air all these years? Its technical men. Who else are we to seek? According to paragraph 5 of the Sessional Paper, it is provided that an annual fee of \$30,000 is payable to B.W.I.A. as advisers and managing agents during the period of the Agreement. If that is all, it might not be so bad, but if we look at the Agreement, at paragraph 2, we will find that we will have to pay salary, allowance and part of their pension to any personnel B.W.I.A. may second to B.G. Airways. The Agreement goes further than that, and at paragraph 9 (2) states:

"The Government shall pay to B.W.I.A. in respect of its services as General Sales Agents commission on all sales made as such Agents at the rate of 10% for passenger services and 7½% each for freight and charter services..."

I would like the hon. Member for Communications and Works to say what these amounts will come up to annually — he has last year's figures and he can give a good estimate from those. To my mind it will come up to about \$100,000: \$30,000 as the annual retainer, \$10,000 or \$20,000 for

salaries, pensions and allowances, and so on — \$100,000 or more. By the time we are finished we may be paying \$200,000 — not \$30,000.

Government bought B.G. Airways in 1955, and in July to December of that year a gross profit of \$88,000 was realized, including \$17,000 as commission paid as agents of B.W.I.A. If in six months that gross profit can be made, then it can be doubled in a year, but as a subsidiary of B.W.I.A. a profit may not be made at all. It shows that, as Mr. Luckhoo said, when Government took over the B.G. Airways it was an established concern. The commercial concerns using it are satisfied after nearly two years. Why should we need another concern to run it for us? If Government feels it needs advice, then it should get advice and pay separately for it. It is the technicians who have contributed to its successful running and I feel we are capable of carrying it on. I have no regrets in not supporting this motion.

Rev. Mr. Bobb: I would like to carry this debate in another direction and avoid repeating what has been said by the speakers before me. In the opening paragraph of the Sessional Paper reference is made to the fact that Government had in mind forming a local company on which both Government and the users of the concern would be represented. Let me say that I have no regret in giving my support to the Government in July, 1955, to purchase the service. I have watched with a great deal of interest and satisfaction the manner in which that service has been conducted, and if bouquets are to be handed out I think the Member for Communications and Works should be congratulated for the manner in which

he has directly assisted to make the service so acceptable.

It cannot be gainsaid that the White Paper as it stands suffers in many respects through inadequate information to enable Members of this Council to make up their minds as to how they should vote on the motion; but references have already been made to that. The first paragraph states:

"In view of the past history of B.G. Airways Limited and the special nature of its relations with Government over a number of years it was considered impracticable to embark on the setting up of such a company on the basis of data available."

Those are the material words in this connection; I do not think it is necessary to labour the point. What I am particularly concerned about is this: and I shall put it in the form of a question. Is it necessary for Government to contemplate the formation of a company? The necessity is not referred to at all in the White Paper. We need to know why this approach is being taken. I regard it in this way: a man has been running his business for a long time. The time has come for him to turn it over to someone else. It may not be in the interest of the prospective buyer to get the same man to assess the business. Instead it may be better to get an independent person to do so. B.W.I.A. could be regarded as that independent person who will give a working opinion of the service with regard to the future arrangements to be made. We have just taken over this service. The present management has conducted it in a very satisfactory manner, and if there are any bits of information not known to this Council, I think it should not be difficult for the Member to tell us what they are. Apart from that, it is desirable to have an

airline service that is indigenous to this country.

We have no evidence so far that Government is failing in the part they are playing in the conduct of this service. Is it then necessary for Government to form a company? That is the first question we have to settle; then we can go on to the second and consequential question: and that is, who will advise? We can arrive at a decision by using an operating company as a consultative body. Should that consultative body be a company operating in the area or in another area?

There is where we need important information. I think there will be much difficulty in the motion going through if we cannot be satisfied with answers to these questions, and I would like to suggest that the hon. Member in his reply should weigh that fact in his mind. I am not expecting him to answer my questions at the moment, because I am quite sure that all the discussion and examination of data which have gone into the preparation of this Sessional Paper will have to be reconsidered before a satisfactory answer can be formed as to the necessity of forming a local company—

Mr. Correia: Undemocratic'

Rev. Mr. Bobb: It is democratic for me to express my view and that I do without fear or favour. I am asking if it is necessary to form a local company to operate the service when it can be operated as at present by Government.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: It is not unlike me to come into a debate at the "tail end" This afternoon I feel a sense of victory when I see ardent and staunch federationists who are willing to capitulate to the rest of the West Indies, and thus surrender rights

which are not just 23 years old but pretty nigh a century-old talking my language. I shall be pardoned if I say this is a moment when I feel some degree of satisfaction — even pride. My friends in this Council have only recently been talking in favour of a British West Indian shipping service, civil service and so on. Why not a West Indian-run B.G. Airways? It sounds inconsistent. However, leaving that point alone, I have always paid great attention to the classical story of the wooden horse of Troy and so I have always feared the Greeks and the gifts they bring. There is some attempt to bring about a monopoly in our West Indian air passenger and freight service. The success that B.G. Airways has achieved in this short space of time undoubtedly has caught the eye of the outside world, particularly that of the airline operated by B.W.I.A. and it is their plan, as business, to try and establish a monopoly extending here if they can. Basically I am against monopolies. I believe that when this Government decided to purchase B.G. Airways there was some reason for it, and the whole object of that purchase would be defeated if this arrangement is agreed to.

As has been pointed out before, our country has its geographical peculiarities. We have gone to some expense in constructing airstrips all over the country, and I have not heard of any complaints by people in the outlying districts against the air service. I would not take the risk of supporting this motion.

I want to say that I believe Government is in possession of some very important data and figures which, for some reason or other, it has not placed before this Council. With all due respect to my hon. Friend (Mr. Kendall) who has presented his case like a lawyer — merely on the pleadings, —

I should like to have, and other members would like to have also, figures relating to the operations of the B.G. Airways. I should also like to know that in this contract there is provision for 10 per. cent. and 7 per. cent. respectively, on passenger and freight traffic.

Mr. Kendall: If the hon. Member reads that clause again he will see that the B.W.I.A. will give us the percentages mentioned for being their sales agent. The situation is not as Dr. Fraser has stated. Apparently he did not study that point very well.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I would like to know—and other Members also—what was the income over a period of six months or a year, leaving out the amount earned by the B.G. Airways, I would like to know how this arrangement (for percentages) works in a programme which is already in operation. From those figures we would be able to glean certain facts and decide whether this arrangement is satisfactory. This Council, I submit, has been put in a position of having to pass a Budget without any relevant information to assist it in coming to a decision. I must vote against this motion: I cannot support it. I do not want to take a plunge in the dark, and if this motion is thrown out it might be from want of the figures which should have been placed before the Members of this Council.

Mr. Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Mr. Lee: It is very heartening to see Members of this Council trying to teach, or calling upon their Ministers to do their work. It is very discouraging to Members to get a White Paper such as this on this very important question. As laymen, how are we to be

guided? There are two different ways in which Government can save its face and I ask that one of them be adopted because this is a Nominated Council. I ask you, Sir, to appoint a Committee to enquire into this matter and report to this Council, or to defer the motion until we get further particulars from Government.

I am telling Government what it can do, and the time is coming when Government might be called upon to do so.

Mr. Carter: Over a year ago the hon. Member for Communications and Works promised the Members of this Council a White Paper on the B.G. Airways. This Paper came to hand a few weeks ago, but to my astonishment and horror it embodies a draft Agreement between the Government of B. G. and the B.W.I.A. proposing B.W.I.A. as advisers and managing agents of B.G. Airways at an annual fee of \$30,000 plus expenses for extra staff and necessary incidentals which they will naturally provide. Because the Government of B. G. from time immemorial always entertained the misconception that everything and anything Guianese was incompetent and inefficient, and thought it fit to open negotiations with B.W.I.A. for the conclusion of a two-year management agreement of B.G. Airways. The terms of the agreement were already settled and were to come into force on January 1, this year, and Members of the Council were invited to confer with Government in the conclusion of the proposed Agreement.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what are Government's reasons for handing over the management of our Air Service to B.W.I.A.? Does Government believe that the present management is incompetent? If so, why couldn't a Committee be set up comprising

of persons interested in the operation of the B. G. Airways, to inquire into its operations and management and to make recommendations for improvement rather than Government's deciding to conclude an Agreement like this? Is Government more competent to make recommendations for the improvement of the B. G. Airways than its users and operators? If it is Government's desire to improve the Airways, who gave Government the idea that B.W.I.A. were more competent to be their advisers and agents? What experience has B.W.I.A. with bush life and 'plane transport service? So far as I have discovered, they have no experience and, as a matter of fact, they have been failures in managing their own affairs. I have made extensive research into this question and I am sorry to say, but it is a fact that their Manager-delegate in this Colony has been demoted several times during the past few years for incompetence.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member must not be allowed to say that. He must not make personal references to a man's career. As a matter of fact, the hon. Member cannot inquire into the credentials of such a person at any time and he cannot say that an employee of a Company is capable or not. He can express an opinion as to whether he is capable, but he must not make references to his past career.

Mr. Carter: Very well, Sir, I withdraw the remarks, but it is a well-known fact that the B.W.I.A. has lost money during the past two years. It has seldom ever shown a profit. Did their form of Management not lose \$1 1/2 million in 1955 instead of an anticipated profit of \$2 million, and they called the 1/2 million profits? The interior of our country is not

sufficiently developed to keep our Dakotas fully employed although they do between 40 and 50 charter flights overseas annually. Is B.W.I.A. going to develop the interior or give excursions every week to the interior so as to find work for the Dakotas? What I know is being done right now is that a BWIA salesman is trying to grab our overseas charter flight trade for themselves by offering cheaper rates, and this salesman is to be paid by our Government. This would be nothing else than paying money to compete against ourselves.

Now, Sir, let us examine the situation and see who or what is trying to impede the progress of B.G. Airways so as to make it appear that it really needs other management. Is it not true that in 1956 B.G. Airways needed a pilot—a decision which Government agreed to—and the Director of Civil Aviation and a B.W.I.A. representative went to Canada at the expense of this Government to secure a pilot? A pilot—a Britisher—was selected; he came to British Guiana, and after working for two months (with B.G. Airways) he was offered a job with B.W.I.A., which he accepted. Is it not also true that B.G. Airways brought out a Canadian pilot with similarly high qualifications; but the fact that he was a Canadian was used as a reason why he was not given a local licence by the Director of Civil Aviation? The piece-meal excuse published by the Director of Civil Aviation in the Press of yesterday's date is one that we should not be expected to accept.

The B.G. Airways have two pilots in British Guiana and one in St. Vincent, but we need more. The service has operated smoothly for many years; why should anything be done to prevent it from functioning properly so

as to prove the need for other management? Mr. Speaker, I honestly do not like the look of things. I wonder if hon. Members know that B.W.I.A. will soon be using another type of plane and that their Dokatas will be serviced and put up? Does anyone know whether it would not be said within a year or so after B.W.I.A. take over the management that the Dokatas are no longer serviceable and that the B.G. Government should take them over? It is in my mind, Sir, that the value of our Dakotas will be intentionally depreciated so as to bring about such a situation. If the Dakotas being used by the B.W.I.A. are put aside, it might be found that our mechanics would not be able to service them efficiently, and they might have to be sent North for training. Is it not also a fact that B.W.I.A. are seeking an outlet for their excess staff?

Turning to B.G. Airways, Sir; I think I will be correct when I say that the total amount of cash advanced by Government to B.G. Airways in 1955, after the purchase and as working capital, was \$125,000; while in 1956 B.G. Airways paid into the Treasury the profits on their operation for 5½ months—from July 15 to December 31, 1956 — and that was a cheque for \$82,000.

In 1956 B.G. Airways paid into the Treasury the profits made during the five and a half months of their operation in 1955, that cheque was for \$82,000. That figure is more accurate than Dr. Fraser's figure. The Balance Sheet of B.G. Airways for 11 months' working, January to November 1956, revealed a profit of \$100,000—depreciation excepted.

B.G. Airways belong to us, whether it is still owned by Art Williams or has been bought over by this Government. It has been built

up over a period of years by trial and error, and is now an efficiently operating service. It may be better if it could only be allowed so to be by having faith in it and its possibilities, and confidence in its hard working personnel. Why cannot this Government learn to do things for itself? Why does it persist in a lack of belief in the ability of the people of Guiana and continue to import outsiders to do everything. I know that we have people in this country who can manage B.G. Airways. Why can't this Government learn to be fair and discontinue its habit of giving its people raw deals? Handing over the Management of B.G. Airways to B.W.I.A. would not repent the original sin of the purchase price paid for B.G. Airways, but would make matters very much worse regardless of the safeguards in the agreement and it will eventually become a continuous liability to this Government and the taxpayers like the Transport and Harbours Department, or a subsidiary of B.W.I.A. to the dissatisfaction of the users and public generally.

This attempt on the part of Government is not in the interest of British Guiana or B.G. Airways, and the only ones who are in favour of such a move are the Government, B.W.I.A. and, perhaps, a few persons who are manoeuvring themselves into position to milk this cow dry. The Demerara Bauxite Company, the B.G. Consolidated Goldfields and the B.G. Balata Co. are the largest concerns using the airways and they are very much opposed to it. Why should we agree to it? As a matter of fact one of these Companies is determined to purchase its own Grumman plane and so take away its trade from the new concern. In opposing ideas such as this it has

always been my policy to suggest an alternative in its place. I know perfectly well that this Government knows nothing about running a business. I would rather see B.G. Airways fall into the hands of a private Company. That is something similar to the motion I tabled in this Council in March, 1956 that Government put up B.G. Airways as a public or private Company but retaining sufficient shares so as to ensure its operation is in the interest of the public. The first paragraph of the Sessional Paper states:

"In all the circumstances the right policy to be adopted appeared to be the setting up of a local Company at the first favourable opportunity with the representation of Government and of commercial interests in British Guiana who would after all be the very users of the service, with, if possible, representation also of the operators actually running the service, the general public being given an opportunity to subscribe."

I do not like Government in business at all. I would like the undertaking to be private enterprise which would give the Guianese a little more interest in its affairs, especially since they are allowed to purchase their own shares in it. The only thing I am prepared to do in favour of this Sessional Paper is to support the setting up of a private Company. Outside of that I am opposed to the Sessional Paper.

Mr. Ramphal: I rise but I wish to speak without any emotion whatsoever, on this very important subject. I refuse to impute any improper motive whatever to the Government or B.W.I.A. Indeed so far as B.W.I.A. are concerned, it appears to me that they are the innocent victims of our invitation to come and serve us. As I have said, I want to deal with this subject purely objectively.

As I look back on the history of B.G. Airways as it was told to this

Council in Finance Committee some months ago, it appears that it has got abroad that this Legislature was against Government taking over B.G. Airways. My recollection of it does not allow me to say so. I think we had two very strong objections and they were considered very strong and were seriously voiced in Finance Committee. The way the matter was discussed came under two Heads—Government having not taken this Legislature into its confidence as fully as the Legislature feels it ought to have been taken, and secondly the high price that was paid. Those were the two outstanding reasons that led to the debate as to whether we should take over B.G. Airways. But, sir, we took it over and did so for a purpose.

Before I refer to that purpose, may I be permitted to look at the advantages which would accrue to us by accepting the proposal which is now before this Council. First, we will be providing ourselves with technical experience of a world wide institution. B.W.I.A., if my information is correct, is a subsidiary of an organization of world wide repute and international standing. We shall be having at our beck and call the technical experts of this great institution. Secondly, we shall be providing on a safe basis an avenue of good business—I heard the hon. Member for Communications and Works correct Mr. Sugrim Singh and indirectly Dr. Fraser—but clause 9 of the Agreement does put an obligation on this Government to pay 10% of the passenger rates and 7½% of the freight rates to B.W.I.A. But in clause 11 B.G. Airways has got the advantage of becoming general sales agent of B.W.I.A., and in that sense a great deal of advantage is given to us and to this country. Further, there is provision for relief or emergency transporta-

tion by B.W.I.A. without any extra charge. Those are the advantages that would accrue to us if we accept the motion before this Council.

But, there are objections and they have been very strongly expressed by Members of this Council, and I shall myself repeat them without comment. The first objection is, we were told eighteen months ago there will be an interim period of two years. But in those eighteen months, B.G. Airways have been run successfully and have made a profit. Great fear exists in the minds of Members at the supersession of the local officers by officers from Trinidad and elsewhere. That is not a fear we would lightly set aside. Except for the Manager, I think, there is some safeguard for the others though they can be set aside, and Members have expressed their fears. In the Manager we have a man of incomparable experience, Mr. Wendt. If I were B.W.I.A. and this motion succeeds I would appoint him as co-manager or something of that kind. He is too good a man to lose his services. This Council feels very strongly on this particular question. But most important of all we fear that we are handing over our baby to an octopus organisation. That brings me to what I said at the outset. When we agreed to buy B.G. Airways we did so for a purpose, and we want Government to keep to that purpose. That purpose is laid down in the first paragraph of the proposed "White Paper". That is—

"In all the circumstances the right Policy to be adopted appeared to be the

setting up of a local Company at the first favourable opportunity . "

I hope there will be no deviation from that purpose.

That leads me to clause 15 of the Agreement which states that it:

"shall continue in force for two years certain and unless notified by either party in writing to the other not less than three calendar months before the expiration thereof, shall continue thereafter in force until determined by either party by six calendar months' notice in writing."

I would like to see that clause amended so that there can be no extension unless a subsequent legislature is given an opportunity to say whether this Agreement should continue or not. If this Government can give us the assurance that it can bind future legislatures, which I do not think it can, this motion would have my support. But if not, I am willing to support the Agreement if the clause stops at "two years certain." It must come back to this Council to be reviewed or to decide whatever is to be done. So far as I am concerned, B.G. Airways is a symbol of Guianese nationalism; it is a local concern, a local plant as indigenous to the country as greenheart, and we should not let it go lightly from our hands.

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

Mr. Speaker: There may be other Members who would like to speak.

The Chief Secretary: Before the hon. mover replies I think there are other Members who would like to speak. There are some Members on

the Government side who would like to say something. The hon. the Financial Secretary may state whether or not the Company is operating at a profit. A number of Members have spoken and have criticised very severely the fact that the White Paper has given inadequate information, and the hon. Member who has just spoken has given conditional support to the

motion. In the circumstances it is only right that the debate should be adjourned for Government to consider the various points and be continued on another day. I move that Council adjourn to Thursday, 31st January.

Council adjourned to 2 p.m. on Thursday, 31st January, 1957.