

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.***Friday, 27th May, 1938.*

The Council met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR WILFRID JACKSON, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

**PRESENT.**

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

The Hon. the Attorney-General, (Mr. J. H. B. Nihill, K.C., M.C.).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, O.B.E., (Georgetown North).

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

The Hon. M. B. Laing, Commissioner, of Labour and Local Government.

The Hon. G. O. Case, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

The Hon. H. P. Christiani, M.B.E., Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Hon. B. N. V. Wase-Bailey, Surgeon-General (Acting).

The Hon. B. R. Wood, Conservator of Forests.

The Hon. F. O. Richards, Comptroller of Customs (Acting).

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. F. A. Mackey (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequebo River).

**MINUTES.**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 26th May, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

**GOVERNMENT NOTICE.****RICE MARKETING BOARD AND GRADING.**

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture) gave notice that at the next or a subsequent meeting of the Council he would move:—

THAT, with reference to the report of the Committee appointed to enquire into matters affecting the Rice Industry, this Council is of the opinion that the Rice Marketing Board should cease to exercise the power of fixing the export price of rice, but that exportation of rice should continue to be subject to licence or permit. This Council also considers that the Rice Marketing Board should continue as an Advisory Body to Government in matters affecting the trade, and as a marketing Trade Intelligence and Publicity Centre. The Council further recommends that no change be made in the present provision for rice grading.

**ORDER OF THE DAY.****TEACHERS' PENSION (AMENDMENT) BILL.**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Major Bain Gray): I beg to move that "A Bill intituled An Ordinance to amend the Teachers' Pensions Ordinance, Chapter 197, with respect to the calculation of pensions and to provide for payment of a reduced pension together with a lump sum gratuity" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

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

Bill read the third time and passed.

**CONSTABULARY (AMENDMENT) BILL.**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that "A Bill intituled An Ordinance to amend the Constabulary Ordinance, Chapter 30, with respect to the pensions payable to certain non-commissioned officers and police constables" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

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

Bill read the third time and passed.

**ASSISTANT TO THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (AMENDMENT) BILL.**

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Nihill): I move that "A Bill intituled An Ordinance to amend the Assistant to the Attorney-General Ordinance, Chapter 253" be read a third time and passed."

Professor DASH seconded.

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

Bill read the third time and passed.

**APPROPRIATION BILL.**

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I beg to move that "A Bill intituled An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the Current Session of the Legislative Council" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. AUSTIN seconded.

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

Bill read the third time and passed.

**NEW AMSTERDAM TOWN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL.**

Mr. McDAVID: I beg to move that "A Bill intituled An Ordinance to amend the New Amsterdam Town Council Ordinance, Chapter 87, with respect to the exemption from taxation of certain premises" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. AUSTIN seconded.

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

Bill read the third time and passed.

**TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL.**

Mr. McDAVID: I beg to move that "A Bill intituled An Ordinance to amend the Tax Ordinance, Chapter 37, so as to exempt certain receipts from stamp duty" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. AUSTIN seconded.

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

Bill read the third time and passed.

**REGULATION OF DANGEROUS TRADES BILL.**

Mr. LAING (Commissioner of Labour and Local Government): I beg to move that "A Bill intituled An Ordinance to provide for the regulation of Dangerous and Unhealthy Industries" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. CHRISTIANI (Commissioner of Lands and Mines) seconded.

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

Bill read the third time and passed.

**CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.**

Mr. RICHARDS (Comptroller of Customs, acting): I beg to move that "A Bill intituled An Ordinance further to amend the Customs Duties Ordinance, 1935" be read a third time and passed.

Dr. WASE-BAILEY (Surgeon-General, acting) seconded.

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

Bill read the third time and passed.

#### CROWN LANDS REGULATIONS.

Mr. CHRISTIANI: I beg to move:—

That the "Crown Lands Regulations, 1938," as printed and circulated be hereby made.

The attention of Government had been called to the fact that the royalty on boards, planks and scantlings is very much less than that paid on solid timber. The present regulations are intended to meet that.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests) seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

#### RIVER NAVIGATION REGULATIONS.

Mr. CHRISTIANI: I beg to move:—

That the "River Navigation Regulations, 1938," as made by the Commissioner of Lands and Mines under section 7 of the River Navigation Ordinance on 18th November, 1937, printed and circulated, be hereby approved.

Mr. WOOD seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

#### COLONIAL AGRICULTURAL SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME.

Professor DASH: I beg to move the following motion:—

THAT, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 20 dated 19th May, 1938, this Council approves of this Colony contributing to the Colonial Agricultural Scholarship Scheme in five equal annual instalments the sum £1,950, one-third of which will be borne by the Colonial Development Fund, and of an amount of \$483 being inserted under Head XXV.—Miscellaneous (b) Subventions, etc., other than Municipal Sub-head 24—Recruitment and Training of Officers for Colonial Agricultural Departments, in the next schedule of additional provision for 1938, for this purpose.

There is nothing new in the principle underlying the object of the motion. The subject, like some others, comes before

the Council periodically, and the proposals during the next five years with respect to the Colonial Agricultural Scholarship Scheme are clearly set out in the Governor's Message which is before hon. members. As will be seen an increase in our contribution to that scheme is called for. The Colonial Development Fund provides one-third of the cost as heretofore, but at the end of the next five years, however, it is contemplated that the Colonies concerned should pay the whole cost of the scheme. I need not go into the whole detail of this matter, as I have said before, it is quite clearly set out in the Message. The advantages which the Colonies generally have derived from the improved standard of the Departments of Agriculture especially since 1925 as the result of the operation of the scheme, I think, are generally known. I think it is common knowledge that the Imperial Government has always taken a very generous view in these matters. Not only has the Imperial Government often paid the whole cost in starting these schemes, but has always contributed substantially to their maintenance later on. It is felt, however, that in the future as the result of the working of the scheme—that is to say at the end of the next five years—the Colonies should be in a position to meet the whole of the cost. It is therefore asked that during these coming five years our contribution should be increased in order to provide for additional scholarships.

I think that in these matters it is always best to take a long view, because the Agricultural Departments, as we all know, are essential to the well-being and economic welfare of all these Colonies. We have only to look at the records, which have been established in recent years, to see and realise how important they have been. It is true we have passed through and are still passing through a very severe crisis. The prices of agricultural commodities are low, but I suggest that this is not the time to go back on expenditure which is bound to be fruitful over a long period of years. I need hardly say anything more, and I beg to move the motion.

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I regret to observe that there are a few Elected members' seats vacant, and I would not like to anticipate the temper of some Electives in a

matter of this kind. They think that whenever the Governor in Council happens to decide upon anything and brings it here that it is as good as a creed. But, sir, I cannot help protesting once again, as I have done in the past, to this Colony being asked to contribute large sums of money out of the abundance of its poverty to maintain services that are of no benefit to the Colony at all. This agricultural school and others of its kind all over the Empire to which this Colony has been asked to contribute have done nothing for British Guiana. I say "nothing" because everything we have had we have paid more than sufficient for. The planters in the sugar industry make a few tons of sugar more; is that due to anything that comes from the Agricultural Department? Some may say "Yes," but I know differently. Ask the Attorneys of several estates privately and they will tell you something different. What if we are told to grow pure line seed padi, is that what we are paying this large sum of money for? What do we expect when we make this contribution?

This country is maintaining an Agricultural Department of its own, of which I am confident very few Colonies can boast. We have an "ologist" for this and an "ologist" for that and for heaven knows what, and we are still being told that nothing can be grown in British Guiana except the things that have been growing here ever since—rice and sugar cane. We do not believe it, but that is what we are told. Government will say: "My adviser told me so," and so we have Government advisers coming forward and asking Government to contribute this large sum of money out of the abundance of the poverty of this community as subventions to Agricultural Scholarships. We have not had the benefit of one of these scholarships since we have been contributing. As a matter of fact, when our men go there and qualify they cannot find employment here. They are studiously avoided and have to go elsewhere to find employment, while we are still importing men. And what are we importing? You have agricultural inspectors coming out here and asking an ordinary East Indian: "Why don't you reap that grass?", only to be told: "This is not grass, it is rice." These are the men who have come here to teach the people how to plant rice. It sounds rather ridiculous, but it is a fact. That is

the class of men we get as against those men that we send away to be trained and cannot find employment after they have qualified, and still we are asked to contribute to bring more. I protest vehemently. I cannot understand Government policy. Government policy is shaped by people, who for some reason or other will continue to advise Government to do these things and to tell us that we get benefit from them, when we know it is nothing of the kind. When we get these officers to come here they do so to learn, and as soon as they learn they are drafted to Timbuctoo or somewhere else. We get people totally ignorant of their job and give them free house to live in and large salaries more than they will ever earn anywhere else, and when they have learnt the job at our expense they clear out to some other place. Still they come like the locust and the corn. I do not know when it is going to end.

This is not the time for British Guiana to play with money like this. We have been contributing small sums all these years, and if the Imperial Government want these institutions, then I think they should take over the whole cost. They begin by putting in the thin edge of the wedge and by so doing encourage you to come into their scheme, and then leave you with the burden of the scheme later. One does not mind if this was a flourishing colony. A man with money in his pocket can assist a beggar or a 32nd cousin, but when he is on the verge of starvation himself he cannot be expected to be so generous and to contribute to somebody who is better off than himself. If it is the wish of the Imperial Government that these institutions be maintained, then my contention is that the Imperial Government should foot the whole maintenance. Who pays for the qualifying of a doctor, or a lawyer, or a proper minister of religion? He goes to a school or university or theological institution, learns his job and then goes out into the world; wherever his services are required, they will be retained and those who engage him make it worth his while. When it comes to these institutions, the Colonies are called upon to pay for the qualifying of these people, and when they are qualified they are of no use to us. I would like Government to point to any officer for whom we paid to qualify and we have

derived benefit therefrom. This Colony has ever since been growing sugar, and the estates engage their own chemists and all their scientific apparatus is being operated by their own men. As regards rice, the East Indian is tired looking forward to scientific assistance. As a matter of fact he does not worry now; he does not worry with the men who come to instruct him because he knows they know nothing about their job, and have come to teach their teacher. We pay them to learn their job, and when they think they know something about it they go somewhere else.

It is said that we are supporting the Empire, but I am protesting against it as I have done many times before. I am protesting before a Council partly depleted of Elected members. This is important as I cannot conceive of any Elected member, who really has the interest of the community at heart, being not disgusted over the operation of the Agricultural Department we have here. It cannot train agriculturists. When we had Professor Harrison as head of that Department, agricultural instructors were trained there to go all over the country and assist the farmers, and the people saw that they were benefited. All that has been done away with. We have reorganised the Department, but in what way—to bring from abroad men who do not know rice from grass. We are now told to pay more money and qualify others. I protest, and shall go on protesting as long as I have the opportunity, against this expenditure of the money of the taxpayers who are admittedly poor themselves. We want help to save us from sinking in the quagmire of acute economic depression. We want help to bring the various parts of the country into easy communication with each other. I know a district within 25 miles of New Amsterdam which has been without telephonic communication for the past four months and the people have been unable to travel over the public road for some period. Persons have died there whose relatives were unable to get a message to the doctor in an effort to save them, and when representation is made for relief in their plight we are told that there is no money. We have no money to save ourselves, to feed our children, to have proper housing and to save the little bit of morality that

remains, but we have money to give away to persons who will be of no service to this country. I am dead against it.

Mr. JACOB: I, too, join in the protest against this expenditure. I would like to see practical things done. If you look at the results of the Agricultural Department for the last ten years you will find that expenditure on the Department has increased tremendously while the exports of all agricultural products, except sugar, have decreased very considerably. I do not want to say anything about rice at the present moment though that is a sore problem, and I am glad to see something on the Order Paper about it this morning. This is the beginning of larger expenditure in the future. We are told that this expenditure is going to improve agriculture and animal life, and that

“this is the last grant which shall be made from the Colonial Development Fund for the purpose as the Committee consider that the scheme is now passed the experimental stage, and after the next five years the Colonies should contribute their full share of the cost.”

We have not progressed here during the last ten years, but I hope we will begin to progress during the next five years, and until that time arrives I do not think there should be any further expenditure on the salaries side or on the improvement of technical and other education for the development of agriculture and animal life in this Colony. If you take a walk through the country districts you will see that all the cattle are dying out. You do not want technical men to tell you that, neither do you want technical men to tell you that all the lands are being flooded out through reasons which it is not necessary to state now. We have got our own people here admirably qualified to look into these matters and we have the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad where some of our people go and receive the necessary training to fit them for employment here. Unfortunately these local men after qualifying can hardly find employment in their homeland. If conditions were different and agriculture here was progressing rapidly then I can understand going in for this technical training business, but at the present time and during the next five years it is highly undesirable to increase expenditure particularly on salaries and the education of officers who will be practically of no use to us.

It looks very academical and very high-faluting, but what benefit are we going to get out of this expenditure? I plead and do urge on Government, though it may not be very expedient at the moment to stop this expenditure, not to contribute very much more. The whole thing should be brought to a stand-still especially in regard to British Guiana. Conditions here are quite different to those of other Colonies. We are not concerned with other Colonies. We should not contribute anything of this nature for agricultural scholarships, and I do join in the protest by the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) against this money being spent, and if it must be spent this year then I urge that it be discontinued in the future.

Mr. LEE: I would like also to join in the protest against this expenditure. Your Excellency, we are already contributing to the Imperial College in Trinidad which is fully equipped and capable of producing students (sent from this and other Colonies) fully trained to meet the needs of their respective Colonies, and I do not see the necessity for this expenditure. What strikes me forcibly in this matter is the question: Who is going to benefit by this expenditure? Is it one of the students from British Guiana or the West Indian Islands, or is it someone from abroad who will be benefited by this expenditure? Why should this Colony contribute towards scholarships from which we would derive no benefit whatever? The students who will be awarded those scholarships, I am positive, will not on qualifying come to a colony like British Guiana. I am sure that if Government considers the matter carefully it will see that it is far better to utilise the money in experimenting on some other product of this Colony wherefrom some benefit can be derived. I feel that it is the duty of Government to consider the matter in this aspect.

Mr. KING: I am exceedingly sorry that I have to oppose the suggestion made by the last three speakers that the money will be wasted. I am very interested in the agricultural possibilities of this Colony, but on the other hand I am also interested in seeing that the money of this Colony is spent to advantage and not thrown or frittered away. Therefore needless expenditure will certainly evoke my protest

against it. In a matter of this kind I feel sure that in the light of the future agricultural possibilities of British Guiana the expenditure of a few thousand dollars will not be money thrown away but will be money judiciously and well spent. There is no doubt that due to the lack of knowledge generally by the peasant farmer of this country in years past, the Colony is not so well advanced in our agricultural products as other Colonies. Not so very long ago, to give an instance of the ignorance displayed by some farmers on agricultural matters, I was at Toevlugt on the West Bank, Demerara, and there saw a farmer planting a plantain sucker. His procedure was to dig a hole about six inches in circumference, just sufficient to enable the sucker to go into it. I told him that though I was not an expert in agriculture and but a lawyer that method seemed the wrong way of planting; he should give the young sucker a chance of getting through its roots to a certain extent into the earth and therefore he should dig a hole in the vicinity of two or three feet. This was his answer: "Mr. King, you have been listening to those agricultural instructors. My grandfather and my father have been planting plantain suckers like this." What is the result? Instead of obtaining a product worthy of the Colony for the same amount of energy and labour expended he gets an inferior article.

In these days of great stress and keen competition in the world's market, I feel sure that our agricultural products do not stand up to the competition which the world offers because of the lack of knowledge of the people who are engaged in agriculture. Any effort that this Government can make to help to improve the knowledge of the local farmer, and I feel that this is a move in the right direction, will certainly have my support. I congratulate Government for putting this item on the Estimate, because I feel that the Colony will, not to day, nor to morrow, but in the future, directly or indirectly obtain benefit from the money spent in this way.

Mr. SEAFORD: I would like to add just a few words to what the hon. member for Demerara River (Mr. King) has said. At the present moment this Colony is only asked to increase its expenses

in this direction by £34. If the object of this is to get as good a man as possible, if it is to improve the education of those we are going to get, I do not think it is a very large amount to ask of this Colony. The gravamen of the talk, so far as I can see, is that the Colony has not been getting value out of the officers supplied. If this would tend to improve the knowledge of these officers, surely it is a step in the right direction, and I am sure the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) will be the first to admit that given the right men they would do well here. I think we are inclined to take too narrow a view of this matter. We in this Colony are very poor and, as one may say, are on the brink of starvation, but I do not think the expenditure of £84 more will make very much difference. We must not forget that a grant of £14,000 has been given to this Colony and also another free grant for the assistance of our cattle. In return for these grants, I think it will be a very short-sighted policy on our part to refuse to join with others in granting this educational facility, which may be to the good of the Empire as a whole. I am supporting the motion.

Mr. LEE: To a point of correction. I do not think it is only £84. It is that amount plus £1,950 of which one-third would be contributed by the Colonial Development Fund. It is therefore £1,350 we have to contribute.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member means we are now making an annual contribution in the neighbourhood of £176. We are now asked to increase that contribution by £84.

Mr. SEAFORD: That is correct.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: \$483 is the actual contribution.

THE PRESIDENT: In addition?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

Professor DASH: I think I have very much covered the ground in my opening remarks, and I have nothing more to add. I do seriously commend the motion to the Council.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I hope I am in order. I wish to rise to—

THE PRESIDENT: You are in order if you are going to make a correction, but not in order if you are going to make a speech.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am going to make a correction to a remark made by the hon. member for Demerara (Mr. King). I desire to tell him that experience teaches that the ignorant farmer was right and that he and the Agricultural Instructors were wrong. The first wind, I can tell you, will throw down that plantain tree.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I put the motion I desire to say that four years ago the Colony undertook to go into this general scheme for the training of agricultural officers for the various Agricultural Departments in the hope that in course of time the Colonies will benefit by these better trained agricultural officers. The scheme is still in existence. We are asked to continue our association with this scheme. I admit that it comes at a very inconvenient time for any increase in expenditure of this kind, but we cannot control the course of general schemes of this sort, and if the various partners in the schemes were to drop out at any time it is inconvenient for them, the schemes would all fall to the ground. It is inconvenient to contribute another £100 a year, but we have undertaken to support the scheme and I hope hon. members would feel justified in continuing their support of it. They are long range affairs and we are all looking to the future. You cannot hope to turn round after a year or a couple of years and say we have got this or that benefit. It is admittedly and definitely a scheme for the training of agricultural officers for the future. It is an insurance to help us to get the best qualified staff we can in the future, and as we have undertaken partnership in the scheme it will be an unwise step on our part to suddenly withdraw if it is inconvenient for the moment in so far as the Colony is concerned.

Motion put, and agreed to.

#### FREE GRANT FOR RECLAMATION WORK.

Mr. CASE (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences): I beg to move the following motion standing in my name:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 18 dated 16th May, 1938, this Council

approves the acceptance of a free grant from the Colonial Development Fund of £14,540 for reclaiming the mud flat in front of the Public Works Department yard and utilising it as a timber seasoning ground.

Sir, I can give many reasons in favour of this scheme, and I have no doubt that the Conservator of Forests (Mr. Wood) can also add to the number. I will however, confine myself to mentioning three reasons. The first is that it is urgently necessary to have a timber seasoning ground in Georgetown and the area in question is the only one available. The second reason is that the work will result in considerable increased expenditure in wages both in Georgetown and in the forest area. The third reason is that the site in its present state is a menace to public health and unsightly. I commend the motion to the Council.

Dr. WASE-BAILEY (Surgeon-General) seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: We are getting it for nothing and it seems that we cannot refuse it; but I can afford to smile at the idea that we cannot find a place to stack lumber in this place unless we reclaim land from the sea. I am supporting the motion.

Mr. JACOB: I think we ought to be grateful for the grant, but the time will come very soon when we shall not accept grants of this nature in future. While we are grateful at the present time, I think this Colony has possibilities of being self-supporting. I foresee the day when we will be told by the Imperial Government: "Oh no, you are so dependent on us that we have got to control you at all times." I have only made this remark so that it can go on record. We have the possibilities and the men to make this Colony self-supporting, so that in future we will not require grants from the Colonial Development Fund particularly for work of this nature.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think we ought to be very grateful indeed for any assistance we get at the present moment especially in a case of this kind. There is no doubt that it is bound to assist the development of the Colony.

Mr. WALCOTT: I feel we ought to be particularly grateful for the grant at the

present moment, especially after listening to the speeches of some of my hon. friends among the Electives as regards the poor condition of the Colony at the present time. This grant gives us an opportunity of relieving to some extent the unemployment which they stated exists.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I hope that the hon. member for North West District (Mr. Jacob) may see fit before this motion is put to withdraw the remarks he made. It really comes with very bad grace for any member to even suggest that at some future date we shall not accept gifts from the Mother Country. Whatever our financial position is, if we are given anything we should be always pleased to accept it. I hope he will see fit to withdraw the remarks.

Mr. JACOB: If I am quite in order, I would like to explain that I said I am very grateful for the gift. I cannot understand the hon. members taking up the attitude they have. It seems that they had not been listening to me. I only expressed the hope that the day is not very far when we can refuse with thanks any gifts in the future.

Motion put, and agreed to.

#### ESTATE OF LUCIA D'ABREU.

Mr. McDAVID: Sir, I beg to move the following motion standing in my name:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 14 of the 8th February, 1938, this Council authorises the payment to Mr. Francis Feliciano Vieira, as residuary legatee under the will of Lucia D'Abreu, deceased, of the sum of \$64.39, representing the unclaimed balance of the estate of the said Lucia D'Abreu, which was paid into revenue.

This sum of \$64.39 forms part of an unclaimed balance which was paid into revenue from the estate of Lucia D'Abreu some years ago. This was in accordance with the provisions of the Public Trustee Ordinance, which also provides that if the Public Trustee has satisfied Government that a proper claim has been established, this Council may approve of the refund of the amount from public funds. The Public Trustee has satisfied Government that the claimant is properly entitled to the amount, and the Council is requested to approve of the amount being refunded to him.

Mr. AUSTIN seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.



COMPASSIONATE GRATUITY TO MRS.  
S. GLASGOW.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 13 of the 8th February, 1938, this Council approves of the grant to Mrs. S. Glasgow, Uncertified Assistant Teacher, of No. 8 Congregational School, of a compassionate gratuity \$157.50.

This is one of those grants to uncertificated teachers which have to be made by the Council. In order to qualify for pension an uncertificated teacher must serve 30 years. This uncertificated teacher has not served the necessary period and it is proposed to give her a compassionate gratuity of the sum mentioned.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

MARINE SUPERINTENDENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 15, dated 6th May, 1938, this Council approves of the post of Marine Superintendent, Training Officer and Pilot, Transport and Harbours Department, being added to the list of pensionable offices shown in the schedule to the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1932 (No. 25 of 1932).

The circumstances which have led to this motion are stated in the Message referred to in it. This was a new appointment made two years ago for the benefit of the personnel of the Steamer Service. It is essential that a Training Officer and General Supervisor of the personnel and complement of the Steamer Service be engaged. This officer's service proved satisfactory. He discharged his duties to the entire satisfaction of the Board, and it has been decided to place this post on the Fixed Establishment. Technically, as a Pilot he is entitled to be placed on the Fixed Establishment as all the Pilots are, but he is more than a Pilot, and the Board is of the opinion that this post should be included as a pensionable post of the Department.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Sir, I regret I have to get on my feet again to enter a very violent protest against this officer being

engaged and put on the Fixed Establishment of this Colony. I well remember that when this post was vacant there was a local individual who had all the qualifications necessary, but for some reason or other—I see a member of that Board shaking his head; it is wonderful when they get on these Boards how wise they become—the present officer was appointed. The matter gave rise to a tremendous debate in this Council and even names were discussed. It was urged that the man was a creole and should be appointed, and others claimed that he was a Barbadian. He did not get the job and this officer was appointed. The officer came, and, as I understand to-day, he has done his work well. What did we pay him for, but to do his work well. He came under contract, and it is now being sought to re-engage him and put him on the Fixed Establishment in a Department in which there are several local men who are highly placed, who have been long in the service and who have been hammering for recognition by way of pension rights all this time, but Government has not seen fit to grant their request. Is there a more vicious case of fish and fowl policy than is being adopted in this instance? Is there anything more conspicuous than that? Those men have done their work equally as well as the officer in question. It is a demonstration of what a certain Englishman said on leaving the Colony a month ago. He said that to get on in British Guiana you must have a fairy-godfather or godmother. That Englishman was here; he looked, he saw but did not comment until when he was leaving. How can this thing be justified? If this officer does not agree to continue his contract he is free to go somewhere else. Are there no more persons to be had to do the work for the same pay? Is this the only way Government has found to induce him to remain in the service? What about the other men in that Department, who are more qualified in their particular branch of work, do their work equally as well as this officer and have been denied pension rights? We cannot close our eyes to this form of government. As one who has been here for a length of time I cannot help getting up when these things are put on the table. I see it done so frequently. I see it as a wrong done against other people who have better claims.

What I want to emphasize is that in this particular Department this abuse has been going on from its inception. In this Department a man who did not serve the Colony for one day was given a pension, and another who had served for years was given a gratuity. Though the latter fought his case and took it to the Secretary of State for the Colonies he still had to take the gratuity. Is it that hon. members are so short sighted or that they try to be forgetful? It is a fact and if challenged I shall give chapter and verse. That is what this Department can do. I do not know what the Harbour Master's job is like, but the training of the officers of the service should be done by him. I am protesting against the motion because I do not like the fish and fowl policy which is being carried out with a vengeance in this Department.

Mr. JACOB: I remember quite well when representations were made to Government and to the Transport Board that certain officers of this Department, who had been serving for over fifteen years and had given satisfactory service, should be put on the Fixed Establishment. For some reason or other, when the hon. Colonial Secretary made his report on the salaries of Unclassified Officers he made it quite clear that it was not possible to place all these officers on the Fixed Establishment. I think he also made it clear that in the future, before officers are put on the Fixed Establishment their service will be very carefully considered. We have got it here to-day that this officer is fully qualified to be on the Fixed Establishment and that the matter had been given very careful consideration. The point I wish to make is that here is an officer who was brought here two years ago being put on the Fixed Establishment while others who have given over fifteen years satisfactory service have not had their case considered. In fact if their case has not been considered it is still being considered. It is somewhat unfair to bring in someone from outside, thereby blocking the promotion of other officers in the Department. This officer has been brought here and put over the heads of others, and it is now being sought to put him on the Fixed Establishment. That looks like discrimination to a great extent.

While I am not opposing the motion I

do plead that other officers in the Department, who had given satisfactory service for over a long number of years, be put on the Pensionable Establishment. Probably it is not the intention of Government to increase its liabilities further, but the Transport Department is like any other Government Department. Even though it is controlled by a Board the officers should be considered Government employees, and those who hold senior positions and have been giving satisfactory service should be put on the Pensionable Establishment as other Government officers. I do urge on Government to do that early. Representations have been made and promotions given during the last three years, but for some reason or other the matter seems to be at a standstill.

Mr. LEE: I understand that this officer has given satisfactory service, but if the members of the Board can deny that this officer caused the strike among the seamen of the Department then the matter would be quite simple, as an officer cannot be considered to have given satisfactory service if that charge can be sustained against him. I am very reliably informed that this officer caused discontent among the seamen and had given his "pets" preference over others who have served and given faithful service to the Department. This officer came to this Colony under a contract with a maximum salary of \$2,400 per annum. I do not know whether that contract stated that he would be placed on the Fixed Establishment or not, but it is a wrong policy to induce persons to come from abroad on pensionable salaries when Government knows that it has to obtain the approval of this Council. If my information is correct this officer has not given satisfactory service. Is this Council going to vote that he be put on the Pensionable List of this Colony?

This officer is a Pilot and if he was so appointed then he is already on the Pensionable List and there was no need for this motion to be brought. There seems to be something wrong. I would like to hear from members of the Board what result has been achieved from his training. I understand that the boys who are selected to be trained as Pilots are being trained on sailing vessels for a number of years, and recently the Canadian Government has consented to allow these Student Pilots to

go on their ships. I would like to know what training this officer gives these boys, as his official designation is Marine Superintendent and Training Officer. I do not see why this Colony should be burdened with the pension of an officer who accepted his post without pension rights. If he had served this Colony long and faithfully there might be some ground for making him pensionable but this officer has only given two and a half years service which is not sufficient to warrant such treatment when there are others known to the members of the Board more qualified than he for pension rights.

Mr. SEAFORD: I do not intend to take part in this debate, but at the same time I may say that I am not going to vote in favour of this motion, though I think the speech of the hon. member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) has convinced me that I ought to vote for it. I rather understood that this gentleman was appointed really as a temporary officer and was not to be here continuously. I really thought that the work he would have to do is the work of the Harbour Master. I am still not convinced that an officer is necessary to carry on this work. This officer is now to be put on the Fixed Establishment thus increasing our liabilities. That is one of the things, I am of the opinion, should not be done at the present moment.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I regret that I have to oppose the motion purely on principle. Government has told us on more than one occasion that its policy now a-days is to endeavour to get men here on contract for a number of years, three or five years as the case may be. Recently we had an instance of a three year contract being renewed for a further period of three years and at the end of that time this Council was asked to vote a pension or gratuity to that officer on his retirement. I would like to see such done to the local man. I think if people are to be employed with pension rights this Council should be told that, and if they are on contract no question of pension should arise at all.

I speak subject to correction. My information is that this officer on the completion of his contract was promised employment by a firm in this Colony and he could have obtained that employment,

but Government induced him to remain. He did not intend to renew his contract having obtained that job, and Government, in order to retain his services, thought fit to increase his rate of salary with a promise to put him on the Pension List. If these facts are correct it is hardly playing the game with the Council. The Council should be informed beforehand. I have no doubt that he is a very efficient officer and discharges his duties very satisfactorily, but there is also no doubt that his first employment was a temporary one. That is why he was engaged on contract, as after he had performed his duties of teaching the Pilots what they did not know his services would then be terminated. It seems that we are constantly swelling the Pension List. A short while ago we lost a valuable officer of the Agricultural Department who was below the line as the result of this Council refusing to place him on the Pensionable List. Two efforts were made to put the post on the Pensionable List before the officer came here, but without success. I am open to conviction in this matter, but I do feel that having started on a contract he should continue to so serve, and if Government feels that his services have been valuable and that on the termination of his employment he should be given a pension, then the Council could be consulted in the matter.

I feel that the Council should have an open vote on the matter to decide whether the services of the officer are so valuable that they should be retained and put on a pensionable basis. If Government feels that the services of the officer are indispensable I would be the last to say they should not be retained. The officer should not be put on a pensionable basis at once, but after he has served for two or three years Government can return to the Council and suggest that he be put on the Pensionable List and the whole of his service he in respect of pension. In the absence of further proof that his services are absolutely necessary he should not be put on the Pensionable List at present.

Mr. AUSTIN: I would like to say as a Director of the Company desiring to employ this gentleman, that he was duly offered and had accepted an appointment, and he would have been there now if Government did not realise they were los-

ing a good officer and sought to retain his services. To do that Government had to offer the officer the sum mentioned in the motion, for my firm was quite willing to employ him much along the same conditions as he would obtain with Government. Passage for himself and wife to and from the United Kingdom was to be borne by the Company.

But, sir, I would like to sound a note of warning that there is undoubtedly friction between the headmen of this Department, and unless that friction is in some way settled we are going to have further trouble. I am just expressing my personal opinion. I do not think it would be advisable to make further use of this very able officer if that friction is not extinct. There is a feeling that the Harbour Master is not fulfilling the duties for which he came out here. Whether he is given a chance of doing so or not by the Managing Director I do not know, but it is the general feeling that this particular officer of whom we are speaking this morning has been specially retained in order that a second officer should be available in the event of the Harbour Master having to go elsewhere. If that is so, it is not right, and I do feel that until these differences between the senior officers themselves are settled we should be very careful in deciding whether a pension at this moment is a proper and right thing to attach to the post.

The Colony is in deep water. Can we afford to go on giving officers who come from abroad, however efficient they may be, these concessions which we cannot give to our own countrymen? I hold, sir, that the gentlemen who come here from abroad on agreement know exactly under what conditions they have come and must be prepared to take the rough with the smooth; if at the end of their term we find that the work they have done is satisfactory then we may consider giving them a pension. They should not be given any concession which we cannot afford to give to our local men.

Mr. KING: What strikes me as peculiar in this appointment is that the present salary this officer is drawing is \$2,160, and for no reason alleged in the Message or stated by the hon. Colonial Secretary it is being sought to increase

that salary to \$2,400 as from the 16th April of this year instead of giving him the minimum salary of \$2,160 of the new scale. Ordinarily in commercial life when a man enters into a contract for the fulfilling of a particular job, or for the employment of his services, he does so fully conscious of what he is going to get out of it. When this officer came here two years ago he was fully conscious of the conditions of his employment and fully satisfied with them, otherwise he would not have accepted the contract offer made to him. After the termination of his contract Government has thought it fit to increase this officer's salary by giving him two increments from the outset, and in addition to hold out to him a plum in the nature of a pension. What I feel, sir, is that this officer was offered employment under agreement, undertaken in this Colony or elsewhere. The plum of a pension was not dangled before his eyes. He sold his services for the best price he could obtain. His services terminated either through the effluxion of time or some other way provided for under the contract. Why Government should undertake to put this officer above the line and give him a pension at the present is not quite clear. While it is certainly something of great value to the officer it is burdening this Colony with a pension which I feel is not necessary. Just as Government obtained the services of this officer two and a half years ago without pension rights at a salary of \$160 per month, I feel this Government can obtain the services of some other officer on the same terms that this officer came out to this Colony. In addition to the double increment this officer will get this year, the Council is asked to make his emoluments \$240 a year more than his contract called for, and further he is to be given pension rights.

As the hon. member for East Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) has stated, we have lost in this Colony the services of a very valuable officer of the Agricultural Department on the ground that the Council could not see its way to give him a pension. I think the Council should be consistent and adopt the same attitude in this case. I feel that less grounds have been advanced in this case to put the officer above the line at an increased salary than on the former occasion in the case of the officer

of the Agricultural Department. If I felt sure or was convinced that the services of this officer were essential to this Government or to the Transport Department, and that no other officer could be obtained with the peculiar knowledge necessary, then I would be satisfied to vote to the officer pensionable rights. But I feel that this officer has nothing to complain about; he came out here at a salary of \$160 per month and it is now proposed to make his maximum salary \$220 per month, an increase of \$60 per month or over one-third of the salary at which he came out here less than three years ago. That is a very tempting inducement to anyone who is selling his services. I think that increasing this officer's salary to \$2,400 per annum, by giving him two increments this year, and making his maximum salary \$2,640 per annum, is quite good enough for this officer for the present. I ask Government not to press for pension rights which this Message now asks the Council to give this officer.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I am ready and willing to admit that without close and intimate knowledge of the working of the Department, the suggestion of the appointment and the proposed emoluments is not very apparent, but I hope hon. members will accept the assurance that before this proposal was put forward it had received very careful consideration by the Board of Commissioners. It has been suggested by an hon. member that this officer was responsible for the unhappy strike. My reply to that is that his subsequent recommendations proved that had they been previously received and given effect to there would have been no strike. As the result of his recommendations many of the employees of the service have received increased wages justified by the work which they had been previously doing and which, it appears to me, would have been unrecognised. So far as the statement about the officer not being competent is concerned, it appears to the Board that he is an officer of particular merit and of such peculiar merit as to have attracted the attention of the Company of which the hon. Mr. Austin is a Director.

Some hon. members seem to think that the performance of his duties can well be undertaken by the Harbour Master with-

out additional expense to the Colony. I wish I could say so. In the first place the duties of the Harbour Master were well defined in the contract or in the letter of appointment given to him prior to his assumption of office, and I do not think you can ask a public officer who has been appointed to the position which he holds to take on additional duties without his consent and approval. It is felt that in the case of the Harbour Master, since he came here the ordinary duties of the Harbour Master prior to his appointment have been considerably increased. For instance, he had to take on the management of the dredge, and I know of no other Harbour Master of this Colony who has had the oversight of the hydrographic survey of the various rivers, which is important work requiring his constant presence and supervision on the ship in the area of operation. It can easily be seen that if the Harbour Master is to be called away from Georgetown to the various parts of the Colony to superintend such work, he cannot give attention to the duties that are ordinarily attached to what is called Marine Superintendent and Training Officer. Those duties would require his presence on the steamers—training the men, and also making suggestions to the captains, which hon. members may feel to be unnecessary, but it is not.

It is not known to hon. members that several of the veteran steamer captains have either resigned or died, and there is not a complement of sufficiently trained men in the service at the moment. It becomes a duty therefore to train these new men, and it is an advantage to be able to attract to the steamer service of the Department an officer of Mr. Crosse's position, who did not come from abroad but had been visiting this port on a steamer plying between here and North America for some considerable time. I hope the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) accepts the assurance of the Board that at the time of the appointment there was not in the service any officer who could have performed the duties for which Mr. Crosse was employed. I would not have sanctioned the appointment of anyone from abroad to the exclusion of a local person, if I did not feel that the appointment of the local officer to whom my hon. friend referred would have been a mistake. That officer is not competent to

perform the duties which this officer is required to do. It requires long training in seamanship and all that goes on aboard a steamer in order to have the personnel of the service from the deck-boy improved and to regulate the duties of the captains and men. I would remind hon. members that the principle of the appointment was agreed to two years ago. It was then suggested that we should have what is called a Training Officer and a Pilot. I would ask hon. members to remember that what has to be considered in the case of appointing a man on the Pensionable Establishment of the Colony are the duties attached to the post and the difficulty of replacement of a man of similar capabilities. Forget the officer's name and look at the appointment itself. Are we to leave the service without the advantages of having a man who has risen from the bottom, a man who knows his job, a man who is able to tell anyone he comes into contact with "This is the way you should work?" No one can expect the Harbour Master to do that, when his time is fully occupied otherwise.

The appointment is a necessary one and should be pensionable. Even if Mr. Crosse was engaged as a Pilot he would have been entitled to pension. While hon. members may say that the officer may have gone on without his services being put on a pensionable basis, put yourselves in the place of the Board of Commissioners in considering this matter. Here was a man whose engagement terminated some time in March this year; perhaps he would have been ready and willing to continue in that employment, but suddenly you are notified that he is not ready and willing to do so unless he is given a pay comparable with the one now offered. It was a suggestion which required care and attention, and those members of the Board more experienced in shipping matters—men who had long and varied experience in that direction—strongly urged on the Board the necessity of retaining Mr. Crosse's services. That recommendation was given effect to and representation made to Government that the officer's services be retained. The officer fully understands that his pensionable status is dependent on the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies and that of this Council. No definite promise has been made and could not be made to any-

one that he would be given a pensionable status whether this Council approves of the appointment or not. It is all subject to approval here, and if you realise how onerous and difficult it is in dealing with ships' personnel you would appreciate the Board's action in this matter.

Reference was made that some members of the crew have been unjustly dealt with. I feel quite satisfied that if those representations which were made to hon. members about partiality and discrimination were repeated to the Board, the Board would be justified in either resigning or dismissing any employee in the service involved. I know of no instance where an appeal had been made by an employee or an ex-employee to the Board and it was not given the fullest consideration, more fully perhaps than the consideration of the case may deserve. I do feel it is necessary for me to reject the insinuation of discrimination of employees of the Transport Service, because I happen to know that several times a day volumes of matters are circulated among the members of the Board for their consideration. Every statement made by a dismissed employee is recorded, and circulated and not dealt with by the management. I as a member of the Board have always pleaded that many of the matters which come before the Board can be left to the discretion of the management. In so far as the general scheme of the Department is concerned, the matter is under consideration. It forms part and parcel of the Unclassified Service proposals, and all these adjustments can be made when that report is under consideration.

Mr. MACKEY: As a member of the Board I would like to endorse in its entirety all that the hon. member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) has said. I am one of those members of the Board who can be described as a representative of the shipping companies, and in that respect I must say we have had extraordinarily good service from Mr. Crosse. Some time ago—either last year or the year previous—a lot of very heavy machinery arrived in this Colony for the Gold Company operating in the Potaro District and Mr. Crosse gave valuable service in arranging the transportation of that machinery from Georgetown to Bartica. I do not think there

is more I can say except to refer to the remarks made by the hon. member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee). He raised the point as to why it is necessary, if Mr. Crosse is fully qualified to train Pilots, for apprentices to be sent on the C.N.S. ships. I speak subject to correction that it is part of the qualification of a Pilot that he should have two years' practical experience at sea, and I think we should be very grateful indeed to the C.N.S. authorities and the Canadian Government for affording this two years' experience to our apprentice-pilots.

Mr. LEE: To a point of correction. It was Mr. Da Silva who had the onerous task of transporting the heavy machinery from Georgetown to Bartica.

Mr. MACKEY: Mr. Crosse looked after the transportation from Georgetown to Bartica.

Mr. BACCHUS: If I follow the views of the Electives who have spoken, there is no objection to the retention of the services of the officer. What they are opposed to is the proposal to place him above the line. That, I think, is the position.

Mr. WIGHT: As a member of the Board I feel that I cannot add anything to what the hon. member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) has said. The matter has been put as fully as possible, and I hope hon. members will hesitate before turning the motion down. What I really got up to let members know is this. I always hold that I stand second to none in advocating the claims of the creoles of this Colony, but when it came to the case of this officer I had to yield in his favour, as he had done his work exceedingly well. I have heard criticism levelled against this officer in respect of dissatisfaction in the service, and I have been also informed from newspaper reports, but I will ask hon. members not to listen to "tittle tattle" about the officer. Go to the Board and get your information. This officer is an exceptionally sound, sane and efficient individual, and his place could not be easily filled even though we had several meetings of the Board to consider the subject. I feel that in opposing motions such as this one before the Council we sometimes "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

I certainly am not going to allow it to be said that I stand up for anything else but the creoles of this Colony.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think there is anything to add after the explanation given by the hon. member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) who is Vice-Chairman of the Board. There was no qualified local candidate for this particular post at the time Mr. Crosse was appointed. The real question is: Is this the kind of post that should be on the Pensionable Establishment? There can be no question that on account of the responsible nature of the duties which the officer has to perform it is essentially a post for the Pensionable Establishment. The hon. member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) stated that as a Pilot the officer should have been automatically placed on the Pensionable Establishment. That view could have been taken, and it would have been a narrow one. The important point is that his main duties are as Marine Superintendent and Training Officer.

THE PRESIDENT: I personally cannot claim to have any intimate knowledge of the working of the Department as yet, but the case presents itself to me in its general aspect. This Department has a very valuable fleet of steamers which have to be operated. I cannot conceive of any organisation which would attempt to operate a fleet of that size without a Marine Superintendent to take care of the ships and the general operation of those ships. That is the way it presents itself to me, and I am not at all surprised that the Board has strongly recommended the retention permanently of the services of the Marine Superintendent. It is an essential function in all shipping companies and shipping organisations where they have more than one or two ships to operate. Frankly it seems to me a very wise proposal. The geographical condition of the Colony makes it necessary for us to maintain a very expensive transport organisation, and it is of the highest importance to have the best expert supervision in the maintenance of that fleet. That is how the Board's recommendation presents itself to me, and further it is a very usual method of procedure. If you are fully satisfied that you want a man of that importance to the Department per-

manently, then it is usual to put him on the pensionable staff. It is a very usual procedure, speaking generally, to engage an officer of this kind on agreement until you are satisfied that he is a fully qualified man. I understand this officer has been especially successful, and I believe it is a genuine measure of precaution and a wise precaution for the Transport Department to have on their permanent staff the services of a thoroughly competent Marine Superintendent while they have to maintain the fleet of steamers that they have.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Just for information. Is it necessary that we must put the officer on the pensionable staff? Will he not work for the salary without pension?

THE PRESIDENT: The motion is that he be put on the pensionable staff.

Motion put, and the Council divided and voted:—

*For*—Messrs. Mackey, Jackson, Jacob, Walcott, Wight, Richards, Wood, Dr. Wase-Bailey, Christiani, Case, Laing, Austin, McDavid, Woolford, Professor Dash, Dias, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—18.

*Against*—Messrs. Lee, King, Humphrys, Peer Bacchus, Eleazar and Seaford—6.

Motion carried.

#### FINAL SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1937.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move—

THAT, this Council approves the final statement of supplementary expenditure for the year 1937, additional to that included in the schedules of additional provision for the year 1937, already passed by the Legislative Council, which has been laid on the table.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Schedule.

#### POST OFFICE.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Under this head I take the opportunity of mentioning what I consider is bordering on a scandal. On the East Bank, Berbice River, the only telephone service between New Amsterdam and Mara has been entirely out of operation for the last four months, and no amount of representation to the Postmaster General has succeeded in remedying the situation. I know as a matter of fact instances where people have got sick in that district and were unable to obtain medical aid on account of there being no means of communication with New Amsterdam. The posts have all fallen down and the wires in some places are on the ground. I understand the Department wants to abandon the service. It seems to me that the Postmaster General thinks that the service does not pay. I protest against Government commercialising everything. It is a public utility service. It cannot pay when a person is required to pay \$1.36 to speak to a person at Mara. During last week I wanted to speak from my home in New Amsterdam to the Victoria Hotel in Georgetown and had to pay \$1.28 for telephoning. There is no communication between New Amsterdam and that part of the River Districts either by telephone or by road as the latter has lapsed into a disgraceful state of disrepair. The doctor cannot go there, and makes no attempt to do so. Some time ago when an official attempted to go there he would not use his own car because of the bad state of the road, and returning to New Amsterdam he broke a spring which cost \$10 to replace on the car he used. The bus service has gone out of commission entirely. One can only go there once a week by steamer or by launch. The road is impassable and there is no communication with the outside either by road or by means of the telephone, and that for a period of four months. No amount of request to the Postmaster General could make him budge. Things of that kind should not happen especially in a district like that. Take the case of the Police. The station at Schepmoed is cut off entirely from New Amsterdam, and the worst thing can happen there and no one can know immediately, not until hours or days afterwards. I know of a case where a man died and was buried before his relatives in New Amsterdam



heard of his death. I am asking Your Excellency to give this matter your careful attention. If it had been the Postmaster General's own property he would have got the money to do it, though he says it does not pay. I am asking that this matter be looked into.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** I will make enquires into the conditions which the hon. member speaks of. Government realises that the road conditions are very bad.

#### LOANS, ADVANCES, UNALLOCATED STORES.

Loans, Advances, Unallocated Stores—  
\$375,929.03

**Mr. McDAVID:** Before these items are put to the vote, I would like to invite the attention of hon. members to Governor's Message No. 16 which was laid on the table on Tuesday last. I want to emphasise that the items are only an accounting transaction really. In the past all loans and advances and items of unallocated stores were not charged as expenditure but met from surplus funds. A new procedure is now being introduced at the request of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in which all such items will be treated as voted expenditure. The object of the new procedure is to ensure that the surplus of the Colony should always represent actual cash which is available for appropriation. In this Colony since 1931 we have been in the unfortunate position of having no surplus, and in the circumstances His Majesty's Treasury advanced us a lump sum of £100,000 from which these loans and advances have been met. Therefore in the new procedure by which we are now transferring as voted expenditure this large sum of money amounting to \$375,929, we are also bringing into account as revenue the advance of £100,000 for these special purposes. The Colony is therefore better off by \$104,071. This is only an accounting transaction and does not mean in any way that these loans are written off or cannot be collected. In future their repayment will be brought to account as revenue. Similar items appear on the Schedule of Additional Provision for 1938, and the same explanation will meet the case.

**Mr. LEE:** May I ask if we pay interest on the loan from the Imperial grant?

**Mr. McDAVID:** All the loan grants are made free of interest, and no conditions are fixed as yet for repayment.

The Council resumed.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** I move that the Schedule as passed by the Council in Committee be adopted.

**Mr. DIAS** seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council adjourned until 2 p.m. for the luncheon recess.

2 p.m.—

#### FIRST SCHEDULE OF ADDITIONAL PROVISION, 1938.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** I beg to move:—

**THAT,** this Council approves the First Schedule of additional Provision required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the Estimates for the year 1938, which has been laid on the table.

I would remind hon. members that several of the items have been the subject of announcement by Government. Mr. Waddington's speech at the opening of the session referred to the proposed appointment of a Principal for the Teachers' Training Centre. A Message from Your Excellency referred to the question of pensions for Police officers, and items in respect of roads and buildings are either provided in the Schedule or will be moved in the course of the discussion on the Schedule.

**Mr. DIAS** seconded.

**Mr. JACOB:** I should like to take this opportunity to make a few remarks with respect to two items particularly, roads and the coffee industry. In the first place I happen to be fortunate in not having many miles of roads in my constituency—only about five miles—and I do not think they are in a very bad state. As regards the roads of the Colony generally, it is some satisfaction to know that something will be done. Your Excellency has indicated that in your speech. I think the position is very unsatisfactory from several

points of view. The roads are in a dangerous condition at the present time, and I do not see any provision made to put them in a respectable condition. I have had cause to travel on the East Coast, East Bank, West Bank, Berbice, and Corentyne Coast, and I might have been killed on two occasions. The springs of the car I was in—a fairly new one—were broken twice, and on one occasion the car went into a trench, all due to the condition of the roads. The situation is very alarming to us taxpayers. If we had seen road material alongside the roads we would have concluded that something would be done promptly, but we saw no such sign. While there may be some justification for not having much road material, I can see no justification for not having any at all. As taxpayers we are entitled to adequate return for the licences we pay on motor vehicles particularly, and as citizens we are entitled to have the roads made reasonably safe. There is something radically wrong with those responsible for the maintenance of the roads. I cannot imagine why there is not burnt earth alongside the roads, because this is only the beginning of the year. It would appear that nothing is being done. Apart from the accidents I have been in, several persons have complained about the condition of the roads, and I make these remarks in the hope that those responsible will take a serious view of the situation and try to do something. There is great laxity in many directions, and those responsible should endeavour to do their very best. I hope the situation will be remedied very shortly.

As regards the coffee industry, ever since I became a member of this Council I have urged that something ought to be done, and promises were made from time to time. Quite recently a Select Committee was appointed, of which I happen to be a member. We have been meeting from time to time, and at some personal inconvenience I accompanied the Director of Agriculture to Surinam where we saw what was going on there. I cannot understand it, and I accept no responsibility for Government not getting the report of the Committee. The matter is quite simple. I do not know what is the object in prolonging it. The industry is practically ruined. I was very pleased to hear in Your Excellency's speech that you share the view that unless the exports of the

Colony are increased there can be no economic progress in the Colony. That is the correct view, but I am sorry to say and to see that certain interests and certain members are not inclined to help the coffee industry which has been of great export value to this Colony. To-day it is practically negligible on account of a variety of circumstances. No one should think it will not be of value in the future. It requires help for two or three years, but that help is not being given. In the Canals Polder there is practically no coffee, and the position is the same in the Pomeroon. It is only in my constituency that there is some amount of coffee. I do not know if it is the intention of Government's advisers to let coffee go, and that there should only be enough to supply local requirements. I am sorry to say that that view has been expressed to me. It is a very short-sighted view and a very short-sighted policy to adopt. What are we going to do? I urge that something be done and done immediately. If Government is not prepared to help the industry the people should be told so. The report of the Committee should have been sent in; I am not responsible for it, and if I had my own way Government would have had that report six months ago.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without mentioning the question of roads, because I understand that Government intends to embark on road construction on a large scale. I think the Council should know, and if Government is aware of some of the things that are existing it should take its responsible officers into its confidence so that they will know what to do and how to do it. It is true we have had very extraordinary weather, but that is not the only reason for this state of affairs. For years we have been starving the roads. Every year we cut off something until we have brought the Road Vote down to a mere skeleton. But there is more in it. Everyone knows that in the past the Commissaries Department was charged with the maintenance of the roads, and that it became a technical Department. In those days a Commissary prided himself on being able to maintain the roads in his district. One Commissary who stood out above the others was Mr. Essex who kept the roads in perfect order and always had some road material left over for the next

year. Government took the maintenance of the roads away from the Commissaries Department, scrapped the Department, and got Tom, Dick and Harry to do the work. In the old days burnt earth was put on the road, broken and covered with shell. To-day it is put on the road in dry weather and then pulverised, and if it is too hard water is thrown on it so that it is easily pulverised. In dry weather vehicles travel over it and it is blown away in dust, and in wet weather it becomes mud. Now the idea has been conceived that burnt earth is no good. Certainly it has gone out of use in view of the heavy traffic on the roads. There were experiments with concrete ten years ago which cost \$35,000, but Government has not spent \$50 on repairs to that concrete work.

I do not know whether it is true that Government intends to continue with the concrete strips. I would like to know how the spaces between the strips can be prevented from sinking in heavy weather? Government should see what the experiment is costing, try to improve it and do something substantial even if it is expensive. I am no alarmist, but I have been resident in New Amsterdam over 28 years and I have never seen the Corentyne road in the condition it is to-day. I have never seen the entire road from New Amsterdam to Springlands as bad as it is. If Government is going to embark on road repairs on the same old conditions the results will be the same. It behoves Government to get into touch with people who know the conditions. No one else but a Government official would put a heap of burnt earth at No. 19, and instead of putting another heap two or three miles away, would wait for the season and transport burnt earth from No. 19 to Springlands or No. 64, 30 or 40 miles away, in a heavy lorry. The result is that the lorry damages more of the road than the material it contains can cover. If Government is going to embark on any large scheme of road construction it is necessary for the officer concerned to make sure that his subordinate officers know what they are doing. I have seen what was done in the past and the result of that work, and what has been done in recent years, therefore I am competent to judge. Money that was spent in the past was spent to the best advantage, but that is not so now.

With regard to the coffee industry, I am anxious to see Government assist any industry which would be of benefit to the community. I know that coffee is pre-eminently the crop of the North West District, but I cannot close my eyes to the fact that Government cannot and will not be advised to pretend to assist an industry which is sure to die. Coffee was one of the major exports of the Colony at one time, but it began to go out when sugar became king, and when Brazil began to use coffee as fuel a few years ago this country's coffee industry went out of existence. I do not know that the market has improved since then. Regrettable as it may be, Government would be well advised not to attempt to assist the industry until it is satisfied that that assistance would be beneficial to the extent of keeping the industry alive for some time to come. If the industry is sure to go, the quicker the better. If I were Governor I would go to Essequibo and make my name with rice. I would improve the drainage—it is easily irrigated with the lakes there—and put up the first concrete rice factory. You can make your name there sir, and we will all thank you. (laughter). I am not Governor; you may think differently. Essequibo is the ideal place in the Colony for the growing of rice but, of course, drainage is giving all the trouble. As my friend touched on the coffee industry with so much earnestness I have made those few remarks.

Mr JACKSON : There are two circumstances responsible for the condition of the roads at the present time. One can be corrected by Government, the other is beyond Government's control. The first is the inadequacy of the vote for roads. I am quite sure that under ordinary conditions the amount voted annually for the maintenance of the roads of the Colony is painfully insufficient. I suggest that Government might consider whether it would not be a better policy to increase the vote for roads rather than allow the roads to deteriorate. The other circumstance is outside of Governments control, and that is the inordinate rainfall this year. I was a little bit surprised when the hon. member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) expressed his amazement that there was no burnt earth on the sides of the roads. The answer to that is that the earth burnt for last year's supplies had been exhausted,

and the rain coming down in such heavy torrents prevented those responsible from burning earth to tackle the roads. In the district where I live Government has had to buy old bricks and have them broken so as to fill up temporarily some of the ruts in the roads. Government should take the matter of improving the condition of the roads seriously. I know that an attempt will be made, as mentioned in your address, sir, to do some permanent road-making to the extent of two miles on the Corentyne and one mile on the West Bank, but efforts should be made to do some good work on the rest of the roads now. I believe that nearly everybody has travelled on the country roads, and if I tell you that it is a pain to travel on them you will understand what I mean. I am urging that efforts should be made to improve the present condition of the roads, even if Government has to provide double the amount it intends that this Council should vote to-day.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: At the risk of appearing superfluous, I must join in the appeal to Government with regard to the roads. I think that perhaps the Hon. Mr. Dias and I know more about the roads from Georgetown to New Amsterdam than any of the other hon. members here, because during the last few months we were unfortunate enough to have to travel from Georgetown to New Amsterdam and back once every week for about five weeks running, and I can assure you that it is quite impossible to speak of the condition of the roads unless it is actually seen. There is a stretch of about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  or 5 miles which I am sure can never be repaired. I refer to the stretch of road between Carlton Hall and the point where the railway line crosses Mahaica. It is appalling, and I am asking you, sir, not to be misled by any expert opinion that it can be repaired. It has to be reconstructed. There are ruts and holes in which a car almost disappears. If a surveyor was sent there he must report that the road cannot be repaired. I feel sure Your Excellency has not before you the true condition of the road between Mahaica and Berbice, and if a report were made it would astonish you. Unless something is done immediately, by July it would be quite impossible to drive a car there. I suggest that something should be done to give the road some foundation. A few loads of burnt earth

will not be sufficient. This state of affairs is very unfair to taxpayers who pay an enormous price for gasolene on account of the tax imposed, and Government is losing revenue because cars cannot be used. While the non-use of cars might mean a little more money to the Transport Department that would not compensate Government for the decrease in the revenue on gasolene. Unless something is done to the roads Government will find itself faced with expenditure which it cannot bear. I therefore urge Government to have the matter put in hand forthwith.

Mr. LEE: I would like to take this opportunity to make two enquiries. I have had repeated requests with respect to the bridge at Bartica, which I am reliably informed was erected by Government some years ago and is now in disrepair. Some time ago Sir Geoffrey Northcote told us that a free grant had been obtained with respect to the extension of the branch road to Konawaruk. If the money has been received I would ask that the work be put in hand as early as possible.

On a recent visit to my constituency I found that the Department of Agriculture was distributing the meagre quantity of 10 lbs. of padi per acre to rice planters. Can any experiment be done with 10 lbs. of padi in any district? If the Department wishes to have the right kind of padi planted in a certain area the padi should be properly soaked and distributed for planting.

Mr. KING: Lest it be thought that I am not conscious of the terrible condition of the roads, I wish to add my support in impressing upon Your Excellency the need for putting in hand a definite programme with respect to the roads of the Colony. During the consideration of the Estimates in 1935 I suggested to Government that the matter was a grave one. Your predecessor then said that he would give it his consideration, and I had hoped before he left the Colony some scheme might have been forthcoming for putting the roads in proper condition. I am fully aware that the Colony is not as affluent as it has been, but there are things in this Colony which require immediate and urgent attention, and one of them undoubtedly is the condition of the roads. It is true that we have a railway to

Berbice, but that is only one part of the Colony, and to a certain extent it is out of touch with the various villages. Beyond Berbice, along the Corentyne Coast there is no railroad, and the only means of transport is either by the very difficult and very unpleasant method of travelling by motor car, which I understand is almost impossible now, or by the somewhat old-fashioned method by schooner or punt. Surely in 1938 we should be in a position, even in this Colony, to travel in a greater degree of comfort than the people on the Corentyne do at present. In the district which I have the honour to represent, the roads on the East Bank are in a very bad condition. The West Bank roads are in a very good condition compared with other roads, but I am aware that traffic is not as heavy as on other roads.

It was a short-sighted policy on the part of Government not to have restricted the weight of vehicles allowed on the roads. I think that has been the cause, to a great extent, of the deplorable condition of the roads. The roads are unable to bear the enormous loads which are carried by heavy lorries. I have seen huge lorries loaded from 6 to 8 tons on the roads which, after all, were originally made for waggon or horse traffic and were never intended to bear the huge weight of vehicles which now travel over them. It is a matter which I know must be given very grave consideration, because it would interfere with vested interests in the Colony if Government restricted the size and weight of vehicles. That would be a very short-sighted policy. Government must be more broad minded. I feel sure that the proper way to deal with the matter is to obtain the necessary expert opinion with a view to constructing the best possible type of road within limits of cost, suitable to the natural conditions of the Colony. Unfortunately we have no rock foundation here as in the Islands. In spite of that difficulty I hope Government will find it possible to discover a type of road capable of bearing the heavy loads which the roads have to bear at present. I feel sure that Sir Geoffrey Northcote had given the matter his consideration, but how far that consideration has gone I am unable to say. He did speak to me about the matter about a year after and said it was still under consideration, but it is becoming so serious now that we who

live in Georgetown and have the benefit and comfort of the oiled roads in the City, due to the far-sighted and sound policy of the Town Council, do not appreciate the difficulty and anxiety of those who live in the country districts. I am not going to ask Your Excellency to suffer the indignity and discomfort of travelling along the roads, because I know perfectly well that you will accept the statements of members of the Council that the roads are in a very serious condition. I do hope Government will give earnest consideration to the matter and endeavour to develop a road programme which will prevent a recurrence of the conditions we are now experiencing.

Mr. CASE (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences): The hon. member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) asked why it was that he did not see a large quantity of burnt earth at the side of the roads. The answer is that as a rule a considerable amount of burning is done in the early part of the year. This year, owing to the abnormal wet weather, it has been impossible to burn earth except in small quantities.

The hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) referred to the fact that some years ago when the maintenance of the roads of the Colony was under the control of the Commissaries Department, the burnt earth roads on the Corentyne were quite good. I agree with him, but I do not think he realises the difference in the weight of the traffic now on the roads. Burnt earth was quite suitable for the traffic in those days, but with the heavier traffic now it is not suitable.

The hon. member for Berbice River referred to the concrete strip roads and said that the middle and sides would wear out quickly. The intention is not to leave the centre and sides to look after themselves, but to repair them as soon as they show signs of wear.

Professor DASH: I wish to say a word or two in reply to the remarks which have been made in connection with coffee and padi. I do certainly, and I think every member shares the distress of the hon. member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) in respect of the plight of the coffee industry, but I do not think that in his remarks he gave quite a fair picture of

the present position in respect of the Committee's report. In the first place the hon. member said that the report on the mission to Surinam had not been submitted to Government. The Council, I think, is aware that the report has been submitted to Government. In respect of the report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council which was appointed to deal with the coffee situation and make such recommendations as the Committee saw fit, I may say that the Committee has had some difficulty because, when we first began to meet, one of the members who had been appointed had resigned from the Council, and then another member went on leave, and so the Committee was unable to get to work as rapidly as it would have liked. Then there has been some difficulty about getting members to attend the meetings. To my certain knowledge I think the hon. member missed two or three of those meetings, and the last sitting particularly was a rather important one, at which decisions were taken in respect of the drafting and preparation of the report. So that everything that is possible is being done to hasten that report being placed in the hands of Government. It is not a question of merely considering one solution, but a question of considering possible alternatives and of discussing every possible angle of the coffee trade situation. The coffee industry throughout the world is undergoing a very severe crisis, and as Liberian coffee is perhaps the lowest of all grades of coffee it is in the worst plight of all. There is so much cheap coffee of good quality in the market to-day that the lower grades, such as Liberian coffee, have great difficulty in being disposed of at all. We all know that the Liberian coffee industry has been established on the river areas of the Colony, and it has been extremely difficult to find a substitute in pegasse, a crop which would do as well and be as easily handled, so that we should be alarmed if the Liberian coffee industry passes out of existence, and it will certainly be our effort to try, if possible, to keep it alive.

In respect of the padi distribution I am glad the hon. member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) raised the point he did, because it enables me to give him a little instruction in the procedure with respect to these matters. As a matter of fact the distribution of pure-line padi is not done

on such a large scale as the hon. member would like to see. In the first place it must be remembered that it is quite impossible for Government to make provision for the growing of enough padi in any one season to plant the whole padi crop of the Colony, which would take about 20,000 bags. Nor is it necessary. So that the method of pure line seed farming has been adopted. We have a certain amount of pure-line seed at our depôts, and the quantity allotted to a district is divided up between the number of farmers, and it usually works out at about 10 lbs. apiece. It sounds small, but for a crop like rice it is not so small. It will plant a nursery which will plant one-third of an acre, which will yield from 6 to 8 bags of padi, and one bag of padi will plant three acres of rice, so that within a year a farmer gets from the 10 lbs. something like 18 to 24 acres of padi, and that is very rapid multiplication.

In addition to that the farmer himself receives every possible help in the establishment of nurseries. It is the routine procedure of the district officers to inspect those nurseries and advise the farmers with respect to the roging of them, and in the end he has a substantial amount of pure-line seed which he not only uses himself but he is also in a position to get a substantial price for that padi. We also issue him a certificate stating that it is pure-line seed, and in that way he is very often able to get far better prices than when it is sold for milling. That is a procedure which has worked very well. The farmers like it and do everything that is possible in a general way to carry out the instructions and advice we give them.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to a point of correction. The Director has tried to twist things a little. I made it clear that the Coffee Committee's report had not yet been submitted. I was referring to the report on the visit to Surinam which really should go to the Committee to be embodied in its report to be submitted to Government. I think it is only a matter of courtesy that the report on the visit has been submitted to Government. That does not take us very far. My point is that we have been tinkering with the situation for two years, but the Director has not put the facts as clearly as I have. He has accused me of

not attending one or two meetings. I was absent from one only, and it was due to the fact that I am disgusted.

**THE PRESIDENT:** I would just like to say one word on the road question to explain what the position is generally. I think Government is well aware of the very serious situation which has arisen from the condition of the roads in the Colony. It is also clear that to make permanent improvement in that condition is going to involve, whatever method is used, a very large outlay. The whole situation has been laid before the Secretary of State in its general aspects. I think I am justified in telling the Council that he was concerned at the extent of the outlay required, and further argument will have to take place on the subject. Until the general financial policy has been settled, Government is not in a position to announce any definite and positive programme. The reconstruction programme suggested this year was restricted partly by the fact that the abnormal weather conditions seem likely to restrict any permanent work to narrow limits during this year, and partly also because I have been unable to persuade the Colonial Office to allow me to go quite as far as I should have liked. The question is still under consideration, and until it has reached a further stage I am afraid it would be impossible to make any pronouncement of any positive and definite programme. It is not due to any lack of appreciation on the part of Government as to what is really required. I am only too well aware of it, and I am perhaps aware of what probably most hon. members are not aware of, and that is the possible extent of the expenditure that would be required to put it right. On that subject I would prefer to say no more at present, because it is still a matter of correspondence with the Home Government.

Question put, and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

#### AGRICULTURE.

Item 4—Scientific apparatus and equipment, \$367.36.

**Mr. JACOB:** I should like to take this opportunity to say a word or two in reply to what the Director of Agriculture has

said about the distribution of pure-line seed. I am still unconvinced as to the necessity for the delivery of 10 lbs. of seed to farmers. It seems to me like playing with the situation. The rice industry has arrived at a stage when it should be unnecessary to distribute 10 lbs. of seed. One would have expected that to be done when the industry was in its infancy. I think every effort should be made by the Department and the District Superintendent to have a fairly large quantity of padi available for distribution, if the industry is to be helped at all. There is something seriously wrong. The industry had been expanding by leaps and bounds five years ago. It appears that we are going backwards.

**Mr. WALCOTT:** I cannot agree with the member who has just spoken as regards the distribution of seed. The Department of Agriculture has for years been distributing pure-line seed, and at one time it distributed in much larger quantities, but it was paid for. To-day the Department is distributing it free, and it is only a waste of money on the part of Government to distribute a large quantity to any one person. My personal experience is that when farmers get a free distribution they do not use it for the purpose intended. They mill the padi and eat it, and they look upon Government as fools for giving them something free.

**Mr. JACOB:** I never suggested that it should be given free.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** It is given free.

**Mr. JACOB:** It is a waste of time. There should be a quantity of padi to be sold to growers. It should be the policy of the Department to have seed somewhere so that it may be sold from time to time to persons who want pure-line seed. What my friend said just now really supports my contention. We are going backwards instead of forward.

**Mr. LEE:** I would like to draw the attention of the Council to the fact that the distribution of seed padi is made at the bond on the stelling at Wakenaam. The Agricultural Superintendent or Instructor does not know whether it is used for the purpose intended or not. It is a waste of Government money.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am inclined to agree with the last speaker that it is a waste of money to give people pure-line seed. I know of someone who bought 400 bags of padi from a farmer on the Corentyne. So long as farmers can get a better price for the pure-line seed given to them they will sell it. I am beginning to think that it is time that Government should stop this free distribution. Some things are going too far, and this is one of them. I think it is time that the Department should hold its hand.

Mr. JACOB: My friend is not aware of the situation at all, and I am afraid that he speaks on these matters every now and then without knowing what is the effect of his speech. The cultivation of rice has decreased tremendously; we have to expand it, and therefore it is necessary for Government to have seed available to sell to persons who wish to extend their cultivation of rice. Unless there is good seed available when it is wanted we would not be able to extend our cultivation of rice. I think it is the duty of Government to get that seed and keep it at certain points, so that it would be available to the cultivators.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If the hon. member would say what he means and mean what he says I would not have to make those remarks. I am telling him where he can get 400 bags of seed padi on the Corentyne, but if he wants it for nothing he should not get any at all.

Mr. JACOB: I may get 400 bags on the Corentyne, but it is not pure-line seed.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### EDUCATION.

Principal, Teachers' Training Centre, \$1,320.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The salary of this post is \$2,400 to \$2,880. This is provision for part of the year only.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 32—Depreciation of Investments—B. G. Stock Transfer Stamp Duty Fund, \$3,505.50.

Mr. WIGHT: I would like some further explanation of this item. The explanation given does not satisfy me.

Mr. McDAVID: The Fund in question is in connection with the transfer of stock, and any depreciation is written off from year to year, while any appreciation is added. At the end of last year there was a rather serious depreciation in the United Kingdom securities held, and this \$3,505 is required to restore that Fund to its actual book figure.

Mr. WIGHT: I would like to know what amount is at the credit of the Fund.

Mr. McDAVID: The Fund stands at something like \$100,000.

Item put, and agreed to.

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

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new sub-head 24—Recruitment and training of Officers \$483. This is in accordance with the motion which was carried this morning.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 16—Compassionate gratuity to Mrs. S. Glasgow, uncertificated assistant teacher, \$157.50, which is in accordance with the decision this morning.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### POST OFFICE.

Mr. MACKEY: I would like to draw Government's attention to the fact that no Telephone Directory has been issued since 1936. While it is perfectly true that the Postmaster General publishes every week a list of new numbers and changes, I do not think that arrangement is quite satisfactory. In fact I think it is most unsatisfactory to renters of telephones who are entitled to have a proper Directory. I admit that the telephone attendants are exceedingly courteous and do all they can to help renters, but I consider it would be far more satisfactory if the Department published an up-to-date Telephone Directory.



Mr. ELEAZAR: I think Government should enquire into the system which has been put into operation by the present Postmaster-General. I must have a telephone for the purpose of my business, and I pay \$36 a year cheerfully, but it costs me another \$36 to speak through my telephone for which I am paying \$36 a year. We are tired with the things which come from Abyssinia, West Africa and other out-of-the-way places. In New Amsterdam when you telephone somebody in Georgetown and you are told after half an hour that the person is not there, you are made to pay for the call. The Postmaster-General is doing what he likes with the service as if it belongs to him.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member suggest that if it takes him half an hour before he is connected he is charged for half an hour?

Mr. ELEAZAR: Yes, sir.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member's complaint was made before. If his call goes through he is charged with it. It does not concern the Post Office whether the person is there or not.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I mean more than that. I call and cannot get connected, and I am charged with a call.

Mr. WOOLFORD: There is no doubt that there is a considerable amount of public dissatisfaction arising out of this innovation, because it is an innovation. Trouble arose owing to the fact that a renter whose telephone had been used by a guest or customer, declined to honour and pay a call charge by the Post Office which amounted to a small sum. I know of two such incidents. In one case the renter could not trace the customer who used the telephone, and the other case was that of a private renter whose guest used the telephone, and he declined to honour the charge which remained unpaid for some time until a Regulation was passed which is designed to prevent a renter's telephone being used by another person. Formerly anyone could from this building telephone to New Amsterdam; it would be charged to the renter who had to make a deposit of \$5 as security, which the Post Office never allowed to be exhausted. I do ask that owing to the paucity of incidents in

which disputes have arisen, amounting to a very inconsiderable item, that the larger measure of dissatisfaction to the public might be considered. In the operation of the new Regulation this is what happens: If one puts through a trunk call to New Amsterdam he is charged from the moment of contact, and I know that sometimes it is rather difficult to get the person whom the renter desires to speak to owing to the state of the line. In that way the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has had to pay as much for his trunk calls as he pays for his telephone in a year. There is no personal call system in this Colony, therefore the present system should either be carried on or the old system be restored.

Mr. SEAFORD: Previously the telephone attendant enquired of a caller to whom the call should be charged, but I think some money which should have come to Government went astray. The result is that wherever you telephone from now, the renter of the telephone is charged with the call. I am not in favour of the present system. Very often I telephone on business which is not my own, and it is charged against me. I never get that money back.

Mr. WALCOTT: I happen to be on a system on the East Coast on which there are ten persons on the line. On more than one occasion I was put through for a long distance call to Berbice, but before I got through the operator at this end informed me that my three minutes had expired and cut me off. I would like to make it clear that the attention and courtesy of the operators are beyond question. (Hear, hear).

Mr. JACOB: This matter was discussed three years ago and when the change was made it was said that it would result in improvement and economy so far as users were concerned. In several cases hardships were created, and we have been promised that the matter would be remedied. In the past one could telephone to New Amsterdam for five minutes for one shilling. Now you are allowed three minutes only, and if a conversation lasts four minutes you pay two shillings. The whole question should be taken up again.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will have an

enquiry made into the question. I do not think anybody can complain that the charges here are high, because they are the lowest in my experience.

#### PUBLIC WORKS—ANNUALLY RECURRENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the insertion of a new item 15—Roads, Rivers, Creeks and Portages, \$40,000.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to refer to a small matter which goes a very long way. The Transport and Harbours Department has a gang of six porters in Georgetown who were formerly paid at the rate of 60 cents per day, and there was an arrangement by which they were given a Sunday off in turn. Recently their pay was increased to 64 cents per day, but for the additional 4 cents they now get no Sunday off. That seems to me to be cruel, and I am asking Your Excellency to see that the concession be restored to them.

#### POST OFFICE—EXTRAORDINARY.

Item 1—New lines, material and labour for extending existing services \$1,764.58.

Mr. WALCOTT: I would like to call Government's attention to the necessity of having a second line on the Mahaica-Belfield circuit. At present the Police, the District Administration and branch offices are on one telephone line. It must appeal to Your Excellency that there are times when the Police want to get through a call very urgently, and I think the time has come when they should be put on a separate line. More often than not the line is being used by the District Commissioner.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is very unsatisfactory to have several persons on one line, but I suppose it is a matter of expense.

Mr. WALCOTT: Years ago the Police were on a separate line. I had to pay for a line of my own, and I think the Police should be on a separate line. I speak advisedly.

#### PUBLIC WORKS—EXTRAORDINARY.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are several items to be moved in under this head. It is proposed to move the insertion of an item of \$36,000 under sub-head 22, Roads and Bridges, for the permanent reconditioning of public roads, and \$14,000 for the permanent reconditioning of buildings. Then there is the reclamation of the Georgetown front lands, for which an item of \$11,456 will be moved. Any explanation required will be given by the Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I would like to draw the Director's attention to something that occurs. When one observes that a bridge has become dangerous and it is brought to the notice of one of the officers of his Department he says that he is waiting for Mr. "So and So" who is erecting a bridge at some other point. In the meantime men who are qualified to do the work are on the spot begging for employment.

Mr. CASE: If the hon. member would give me further details I would be very glad

Mr. ELEAZAR: I will give him, but I will ask him not to act upon it at this time.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of an item 20—Improvement of drainage and filling in of low lying areas of Governments lands in Georgetown, \$11,456.

Item put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 20A—Buildings, \$14,000.

Item put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 21 (m)—Construction of a shelter, Providence Magistrate's Court, \$500.

Item put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 22—Roads and Bridges, \$36,000.

Item put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that item 23—Emergency Drainage and Irrigation Works, \$4,000, be increased to \$14,050.

Mr. CASE: There were serious breaches at Tapacooma Lake, Essequebo, which will probably cost \$8,000 or \$9,000 to repair. There was also a breach of the dam at Kildonan on the Corentyne Coast which will cost about \$1,000. During the flood it was also found that the channel at Manchester-Ulverston was badly silted up, and a certain amount of money was spent in clearing it. The item also includes a sum for opening up the company path between Clonbrook and Bee Hive. During the flood the water reached about half an inch of the crown dam. If this work is not done there is a possibility of a serious breach affecting all the villages on the East Coast from Buxton.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This expenditure has not been approved by the Secretary of State.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

#### COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND SCHEMES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new sub-head 5—Colonial Agricultural Scholarship, \$624.

Item put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of another new sub-head 6—Reclamation of land at the Public Works Department yard and for timber seasoning ground, \$47,354. This is a grant from the Colonial Development Fund.

Mr. CASE: That is what we are expending this year.

Item put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed and approved of the Schedule as amended in Committee.

#### HAND-IN-HAND FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY BILL, 1938.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I move that the Council resolve itself into Committee on the Hand-in-Hand Fire Insurance Com-

pany Bill which passed its second reading yesterday.

Question put, and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

Mr. WOOLFORD: The name of the company is most inappropriate. It is proposed that the name of the company shall be The Hand-in-Hand Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Limited, yet under clause 6(ii) it is proposed to embark upon marine insurance, automobile insurance, employers' liability and workmen's compensation insurance. It is not being confined to fire insurance, and I suggest that the name of the company is unhappily chosen.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: It is quite true that the company has the right to engage in business other than fire insurance, but I am informed that it is the wish that it should retain its name, fire insurance being its primary business.

Mr. WOOLFORD: You may strike out the word "Fire."

Clause 1—Short Title.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I move that clause 1 be amended by substituting the figures "1938" for the figures "1937" at the end of the clause.

Clause as amended put, and agreed to.

Clause 14(1)—Issue of scrip certificates.

Mr. WIGHT: I see reference to preferent scrip. The company has not yet issued any preferent scrip, and I do not know what will be the effect of those words.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: The clause states that "after the commencement of this Ordinance" the company shall issue certificates. The certificates will state whether the scrip is preferent or ordinary.

Clause put, and agreed to.

Clause 20 (1)—Exemption from liability for registering a forged transfer.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I move that clause 20 be amended by adding the words "nor

shall be deemed to protect the company from liability if it has been negligent" after the word "forgery" at the end of the sub-clause, and also by the addition of the following sub-clause:—

"(3) Where the company compensates a person under this section for any loss arising from forgery the company shall without prejudice to any other right or remedies have the same rights and remedies against the person liable for the loss as the person compensated would have had."

The objects of those amendments are to provide that the company will only be exempt from liability if there has been no negligence. If there has been negligence the company will not be exempt, and in the event of the company compensating the person who has lost scrip as the result of a forgery the company would be able to recover against the person responsible for the forgery.

Mr. KING: As a lawyer I am amazed at the wording of this clause, but I am not surprised that a fellow lawyer in the protection of a company for whose benefit he is moving the Bill in this Council has taken to himself a law which applies to no other company in this Colony—a law that does not exist in this Colony at present. While there is provision in England for protection of this kind there is no provision in this Colony under the Companies law, Chapter 178, for such protection. This Company is incorporated by Statute, but that does not absolve it from the ordinary law which exists and applies to every other company existing in the Colony. I make bold to say that if this provision is passed Government will be inundated by requests from every other company—certainly by all the companies I represent as a lawyer—for protection in the case of forgery of transfers. The Banks are not protected in the case of forged cheques, involving perhaps huge sums of money. Here is a company endeavouring to obtain a benefit which no other company or individual in this Colony has a right to under the present law. I submit that if it is the intention of Government to allow a measure of this kind to go through, the proper procedure would be for this clause to be withdrawn and for Government to put into operation here the Forged Transfer Act of England, giving the benefit to every company and not solely to the

company which is now endeavouring to be incorporated. It is contrary to the law of the Colony and every established practice. A theft can never give title, but under this clause a man can steal another's scrip, go to the Hand-in-Hand and forge his signature, and the company is absolved, unless the scrip holder can prove that the company has been negligent—a most difficult thing in law.

I protest most strongly against this clause. If Government desires to give this protection it should be incorporated in the Companies Ordinance, Chapter 178, or enact a special law for that particular purpose, but it should not give this company a benefit of such a nature as to deprive an individual of his legal rights. I repeat that I protest against protection of this kind being given to this company unless it is the intention of Government to give similar protection to other companies. It is so far-reaching that it is almost possible to imagine a plethora of thefts of Hand-in-Hand scrip in this Colony. I sincerely hope that Government will not see its way to accept the provisions in this clause, and I move its deletion.

Mr. WIGHT: I wish to second that, but I desire to have the amendment put in my hand so as to be able to digest it. Speaking as a broker I do not know what will happen if this provision is included in the Bill. Scrip is transferred by one person to another and the form of transfer bears the signatures of the seller and the purchaser. The thing is monstrous. I am not going to use strong language, but with all the vehemence I can I urge that the clause be deleted.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Here is a case where one company seeks an advantage which no other company in this country possesses, and which on the face of it is likely to encourage fraud. When this clause was drafted the draftsman knew what he was doing. As a lawyer I think a company should not be absolved from its responsibility to the public. To allow this clause to pass would be giving deliberate assistance to the company to get away from its responsibility. A provision of this kind cannot be good law. I would like to hear the views of the hon. Attorney-General on the matter. I do not think he would advise that this clause be accepted.

Mr. SEAFORD: I would like to know from the hon. members who have spoken whether they agree that the good practice in England should be adopted in this Colony or not. The hon. member for Demerara River (Mr. King) suggested that before this is done we should adopt the English Act here. I am not sure whether it is recommended that it should be brought in or not. It seems to me that forgery is not nearly as rife in this Colony as in the United Kingdom, and if it is correct that the law exists there I do not see what objection there can be to its existing in this Colony. I say on behalf of the company that it is endeavouring to bring its Ordinance up-to-date, but there is no desire to put anything down anyone's throat, or to avoid its responsibilities. If it is the general feeling I do not think Government would desire anything else.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I might help the Committee by making a suggestion with regard to this clause. Several members have indicated that they did not wish to use strong language with regard to it, but the fact remains that one hon. member declared that it was monstrous, another member regarded it as extraordinary, while the hon. member for Demerara River (Mr. King) was amazed at the extraordinary character of the amendment. As the hon. member went on I came to the conclusion that he was not averse to the general principles of law which this clause seeks to embody, but the substance of his objection to the clause was that those general principles of modern law which have been reached by a series of cases in England have not been reached yet generally in this Colony, and therefore this company should not seek to as it were jump the law and get itself into a special position. With that contention, of course, every member of the Council must to some extent be in agreement. It would, of course, be improper for the company to attempt to work itself out in some way from the general legal principles at present applying in this Colony. As a matter of fact considerable work has been done elsewhere on this clause, and an attempt has been made to produce a formula which we believe the Supreme Court would apply to this matter if it came in issue before the Court. If that attempt has not been successful—I think it may be a point for argument whether

it has been entirely successful—I think it would be dangerous to press, certainly this afternoon, that this clause be passed in the form which has been suggested by the mover of the Bill. If I may make a suggestion, I would suggest that we might go on with the Bill and leave clause 20 out for the time being, and then allow the Bill to be re-committed at a later stage for clause 20 to be included. Between now and the next meeting of the Council further time will be available for consideration of a fresh effort to see whether clause 20 can be framed in a way which would not be objectionable to anyone. If that suggestion meets the view of the Council perhaps the hon. member who has moved the deletion of the clause would withdraw his motion and allow the work of the Committee to proceed with the other clauses of the Bill.

Mr. KING: In view of the fact that it is quite near the time for adjournment I agree that further consideration of the matter be left over at this stage. Only to-day it was brought to my notice that certain scrip-holders were not aware of some of the provisions in the Bill. It is a very long Bill and it is difficult for an ordinary individual to assimilate all its provisions in so short a time.

Mr. WALCOTT: I am rather surprised. The Bill has been in print for over two months and has been published in the *Official Gazette*. Any scrip-holder who thinks he has not had time to protect his interests by reading it does not deserve to be considered in my opinion.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the suggestion made by the hon. member would meet everybody's convenience if we adjourned now.

Mr. WIGHT: I do not understand what is meant by a "forged power of attorney." A power of attorney would be recorded at the Registrar's Office. It appears that this clause has been copied without any thought.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. member always has some wrong thought.

The Council resumed and adjourned until Tuesday, 31st May, at 11 a.m.