

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 2nd March, 1945.

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT:

The President: His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M.C., K.C.

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

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

The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K.C. (Nominated).

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

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E. (Nominated).

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

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E. (Eastern Berbice).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River)

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

The Hon. A. A. Thorne (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES IN NEW FORM.

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members will observe that the minutes of the last meeting of Council have been circulated in cyclostyle form.

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 1st March, 1945, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

REVISED SALARIES OF ADMINISTRATIVE, PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL OFFICERS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER communicated the following Message:—

MESSAGE No. 29

Honourable Members of Legislative Council,

I have the honour to refer to the Report on the Salaries of the Administrative, Professional and Technical Officers in the Public Service (exclusive of the classified Clerical Service) which was laid as Council Paper No. 20 of 1944.

2. Honourable Members will recall that the Government's recommendations to Council on the proposals in that report were embodied in a Schedule appended to the report, and that the revised salary scales as set out in the Schedule were included in the related departmental estimates for the year 1945 and approved in that form by Council. Prior to consideration of the Estimates in Com-

was proposed that the revised salary scales should apply with effect from 1st January, 1944, but that payments would continue to be made on the basis of the salary scales previously in force until the Secretary of State had notified his approval of the revised scales.

3. I have now been informed by the Secretary of State that he approves of the introduction of the revised salary scales with effect from 1st January, 1944, but suggests with respect to some individual posts certain modifications, a list of which is appended to this Message. Government has given careful consideration to these suggested modifications and, with the advice of the Executive Council, recommends their adoption by Council. Certain of these modifications had in fact been discussed in principle with me in the Colonial Office in August and October last.

4. I accordingly invite the Council to approve of the modifications as set out, and of the necessary supplementary financial provision in departmental estimates for 1945 with respect thereto; and further to approve of supplementary provision being made in the current year under a single vote for the payment of arrears of salary due for the year 1944 to all officers whose salaries have been revised in terms of Council Paper No. 20 of 1944 as adopted and modified by Council.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
British Guiana.
28th February, 1945.

MODIFICATIONS TO SCHEDULE APPENDED
TO REPORT OF SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE,
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
SALARIES COMMITTEE.

(1) The maxima of the salary scales of the following posts to be increased as set out hereunder:—

(a) Department of Agriculture—Head I of Schedule.

(i) Veterinary Surgeon
— from \$3,600 to \$3,840 p.a.

(ii) Agricultural Economist
— from \$3,600 to \$3,840 p.a.

(iii) Agricultural Superintendants

(b) Public Works Department Head XIV of Schedule

District Engineers
— from \$3,360 to \$3,600 p.a.

(2) Medical Department — Head XI of Schedule

(a) The salary scale of the post of Senior Physician to be the same as the substantive scale of the post of Surgeon Specialist — \$4,800 x \$120 — \$5,760 per annum instead of \$4,320 x \$120 — \$4,800 per annum.

(b) All fees for consulting practice, inside as well as outside the Public Hospital, to be paid in to Government Revenue, with a remission of 25 per cent to the Consultants.

The existing Specialist staff to be allowed to exercise the option of accepting the new salary scales and conditions governing consulting practice or of continuing to serve on their present terms and salaries.

(3) Geological Department — Head VII of Schedule

The salaries attaching to the posts of Director of Geological Surveys, Senior Geologist and Geologist to be increased as follows:—

(a) Director, Geological Surveys—
from \$4,320 p.a. (fixed)
to \$4,800 p.a. (fixed)

(b) Senior Geologist—
from \$3,120 x 120—\$3,480
to \$3,120 x 120—\$4,320

(c) Geologist
from \$2,400 x 120—\$2,760
to \$2,400 x 120—\$3,360

2. In addition, the salaries attaching to the undermentioned posts which are not included in the Schedule were considered by Executive Council, who advised that the maximum of the scales should be increased as follows:—

(a) Superintendent of Prisons—
from \$3,120 to \$3,600 p.a.

(b) Second Assistant Mechanical Engineer, Transport and Harbours Department—
from \$2,880 to \$3,120 p.a.

The salaries of the Engineers of the Transport and Harbours Department would then be in line with those of the Engin-

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

REVISED SALARIES OF ADMINISTRATIVE,
PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL OFFICERS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motion:—

That with reference to His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 29 dated 28th February, 1945, this Council approves of the modifications of the revised salary scales with respect to the posts referred to therein, and of the necessary supplementary financial provision being made in departmental estimates for the year 1945.

Council further approves of supplementary provision being made under a single vote for payment of arrears of salary due for the year 1945 to all officers whose salaries have been revised in terms of Council Paper No. 20 of 1944, as adopted and modified by Council.

THE NEW ORDER-IN-COUNCIL.

The PRESIDENT: Before proceeding to the Order of the Day I would just like to comment on the business of the Council in one particular. Yesterday I announced that the Order-in-Council to be made by His Majesty the King had been seen by me and was now with the Secretary of State for the Colonies ready for execution. I also said that that paves the way for our own legislation, but that was not mentioned in the Press, so I would just like to record that the execution of the Order-in-Council paves the way for our own legislation. I shall inform Council when the Bill is ready. It is now complete in its first draft. It is very long, extending to nearly 200 pages. Certain arrangements are being made which would make for simplicity in the presentation of the Bill.

With regard to other legislation, the visit of Mr. Benham has simplified the presentation of the Bill for the taxation of land values. There will also be ready soon the Rice Tenants Security Bill. Members will appreciate that the Law Officers of the Crown are exceedingly

arising out of the fire, but I will mention what I had stated so that Members will be acquainted of the coming public business which will engage their attention

ORDER OF THE DAY.

MINING (CONSOLIDATION)
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 1945.

The PRESIDENT: I now come to the Order of the Day which would normally be the resumption of the debate on the report on the remuneration of the employees of the Transport and Harbours Department, but if Members would permit we might take the Mining Bill and get it approved. Will the hon. Member who was speaking when the debate was adjourned yesterday afternoon give us a few minutes to do that?

Mr. de AGUIAR assented.

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Mining (Consolidation) Ordinance by making provision for the prohibition or restriction of prospecting in unoccupied Crown lands."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think it is only necessary to say that this Bill is in the common interest of the mining community, the Government, and the rest of the community. It seeks to give the Governor in Council power to declare any area closed to prospecting and mining, or to mining claims. That power is possessed in practically every country in the world, but for some reason it has never been included in the local law. Prospecting and mining have to be taken together. If hon. Members look at the Ordinance they will find that the word "prospecting" is always followed by the word "mining". Actually that is a mistake, because it does not refer to anybody working under the Mining Law. This Bill is intended to

only refer to prospecting, but has to use the words "prospecting" and "mining." The position is this: that anybody who applies for, pays a fee and takes out a prospecting licence can prospect anywhere in the Colony for any mineral he thinks fit. If some large public work is being constructed (and what we have in mind at the moment is the proposed construction of aerodromes in the coming year) and you see a miner prospecting on the site of the aerodrome you cannot stop him; he is entitled to prospect. If you tell him you are taking levels for the purpose of constructing an aerodrome he will apply for a Crown lease. You have to watch him wasting his time and money, but you cannot tell him so.

But that is not the real danger. The real danger is that if by any chance a person learns that an aerodrome is to be constructed and finds out where, there is nothing to prevent him locating a claim including the whole area. The snag in that is this: that when you locate a claim you have to report to the Commissioner of Lands and Mines within a period of not less than three months. You can wait until one day short of three months before you report your location. At that time the aerodrome is well under way, and you have the right, under a prospecting licence, to have a lease issued to you. As far as the Crown is concerned that makes very little difference, because under Section 23 of the Mining Ordinance, wherever land is required for public purposes the Governor in Council can by Order resume occupation of that area. So that the only person who loses is the one who has located the claim. Before the days of aerodromes the only public works for which land had to be reclaimed were houses, or perhaps a road. Neither a house nor a road means taking very much from a mining lease: the area is so small. In fact he would rather like you to make a road because it improves the value of

aerodrome it means that you take away a large part of his mining lease. It is a very sad loss to the holder of the lease.

Under section 23 of the Ordinance Government can resume occupation of the land and no compensation is payable. So again the only person who loses is the unfortunate holder of the lease who loses the greater part of the land and gets no compensation. The obvious remedy here, as elsewhere, is that the moment you know where your aerodrome is going to be constructed, or any other public work, you should close that area to prospecting. That automatically stops anybody locating a claim, and having closed it you say it is closed because you are going to build an aerodrome. There is no reason why anybody should not know. The Bill is almost entirely in favour of the miner and a matter of convenience to Government because, instead of having to make an Order-in-Council, it can be done straight away as soon as it is decided where the public work is to be undertaken. I formally move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: In seconding the motion I wish to say that this amendment should have been on the Statute Books years ago. I think it is none too early in view of the works that are contemplated in the future. I would like also to bring to the notice of Government that the time is ripe for our Mining Regulations to be revised and amended. I think there has been some delay in this matter. I am not blaming the hon. the Attorney-General because I know he has been pressed with work, but I think the Regulations made under the Mining Ordinance should be brought up to date.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by

The Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

REVISED SALARIES OF T. & H.D.
EMPLOYEES.

The Council resumed the debate on the following motion:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 26 dated 10th February, 1945, this Council undertakes to provide the necessary additional funds on the Net Deficiency Vote of the Transport and Harbours Department, Head XXXIX, in the 1945 Estimates, to enable effect to be given to the recommendations contained in the Report of the Committee of Enquiry.

Mr. de AGUIAR (resuming): When the Council adjourned yesterday afternoon I was dealing with the statement made by several hon. Members who preceded me, that the motion should be accepted in principle. I went on to say that it seemed to me that the report was merely a rearrangement of the salaries that were paid to the workers in the Department. At that stage the Colonial Secretary interposed to make an explanation. I understood him to say that nothing in the report would prevent the Board of Commissioners adjusting any anomalies that may arise as a result of these recommendations.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I did not quite say that. What I said was that the General Manager had already brought to light certain defects, and I quoted one which had been considered by the Commissioner of Labour, and it was hoped to reach a solution agreeable both to the men and the Commissioner in due course. I did not say that the Board of Commissioners would adjust anomalies

ies. What I have said publicly—and it has been published in the Press—is that anomalies which result in hardship would be considered through the ordinary machinery in which the Board of Commissioners take part, and the men have accepted the report on that understanding. Further than that I will not go.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Nothing that I said just now, either by expression or implication, would indicate that the Board would alter or amend the report. What I said, and I repeat, was that the Commissioners would adjust any anomalies arising out of the report. To continue in that strain I would like to ask: how will that be done? I speak very feelingly on the subject, because I happen to be one of those unfortunate Commissioners who were very severely criticised by certain Members yesterday afternoon, and I would like to know just how it would be possible for me to carry out that duty. Am I to understand that in adjusting those anomalies the Commissioners would be able to scale backwards the recommendations made in the Duke report, especially if it were found that those recommendations were based on information that is not strictly in accordance with fact? That is a question I would like to be answered. Again, in trying to adjust those anomalies one would have to be extremely careful that it would not interfere with the salary scales of any other group of workers in the same Department. It is a matter that must be considered with extreme caution.

I have endeavoured to look through the report again to discover what was the yardstick used by the Commissioners in arriving at their recommendations. I see a very plain and simple attempt made, and I think some of it would be found in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report. Those paragraphs endeavour to produce certain figures, which I presume were presented in evidence, of the various scales of wages and salaries paid by the Department and elsewhere in the Colony, and I must naturally assume that the conclusions

arrived at on those figures, as shown in paragraph 10 of the report, were based on the consideration of those rates. There are similar illustrations given elsewhere in the report as to how those Commissioners—one or two of them; I am not sure how many they were—

Mr. JACOB: It is a bit confusing to hear the hon. Member referring to Commissioners. I think he means the Committee.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I thank the hon. Member for his correction. I mean the Committee, and I am very glad he interrupted at that stage because it might certainly have led to some confusion. I was referring to the Committee, and I was about to say that I am not sure how many of them framed the report. I see that two signed it, but three were originally appointed. How many of them finally arrived at these conclusions I do not know. I must assume that two of them, at any rate, considered the whole matter and signed the report. There is nothing at all in any part of this report which tells me on what experience those members of the Committee based their conclusions. They seem to have been presented with certain figures, and I would like to refer to them as facts. If the Committee were a fact-finding Committee then it seems to me that their duty was to obtain the facts, present them to the Government and let Government arrive at decisions. They did not do that. They collected evidence here and there, I presume, stated certain facts, some of which can be contradicted, and on what appeared to them to be facts they arrived at these conclusions, and this Council is asked to accept these conclusions. As far as I am concerned I would like to say here and now that I am not prepared to swallow this report hook, line and sinker, both as a Member of this Council and as a Member of the Board of Commissioners. Of course, unfortunately, as a member of the Board, if Government tells me that I must accept it then the only thing I can do is to withdraw from the Board.

I do not wish to deal too much with the report, but in paragraph 14 there is a recommendation that minimum salaries should be paid to people in acting employment. I do not know on what premise that recommendation is based. I think I am right in saying that it is not based on any Regulation in the Civil Service. I fail to see how the minimum salary in any post can be paid to a person who is in an acting appointment. If it is hoped that that person would ultimately be confirmed in that post there might be some justification for the minimum salary, but what would happen if that acting appointment is only temporary and the person concerned has to return to his substantive post which might carry a much lower rate of pay than what he received in the acting post? Those are things which should be gone into. There are several others, but I do not propose to deal with them in detail because it would take up too much time.

I prefer to turn to the question of the cost. In the report it is stated that the amount of increased expenditure involved in respect of 1944 would be \$108,000, and that the maximum would reach \$154,000. I have not seen any actual calculations made, but from information I have obtained it seems to me that the actual amount in the first instance will more likely be between \$150,000 and \$200,000, and Heaven only knows what the maximum figure will be.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to ask the hon. Member who gave him that information?

Mr. de AGUIAR: The only reply I can give to that question is that my information came from a source which I have no reason to doubt. But if we assume that those figures are correct the payment in 1945 will be at least \$200,000, which will be added to the deficit of the Department. If we add that \$200,000, the deficit of the Department for 1945 would be the small sum of two million dollars. I have the 1945

Estimates before me, and selecting four Departments at random I find that those four Departments, including this million dollars which now appears on the estimate of the Transport and Harbours Department, will alone be responsible for about 45 per cent. of the total expenditure of the Colony in 1945. One must ask the question: is this rise in expenditure justified? I cannot see how it can be justified, because I happen to know that no matter what adjustments are made in the existing passenger rates and freight rates it will not be possible to cover this huge deficit of the Department. If we were to increase our freight rates and passenger rates twice over we cannot hope to recover a sufficient sum of money in revenue to cover even half of that deficit. Your Excellency stated here yesterday afternoon, and more than once before, the reason why freight rates should not be increased, and I do not propose to deal with that point at all. It is suggested that the lower rates of the Transport Department should be looked upon as a subsidy. My own observation on that statement is whether a continuation of that policy would be justified.

I am not here to say that workers should not be paid for doing honest work. I am not saying that at all. I want to make that position perfectly clear. But I am not satisfied that some of the workers, a good number of them, are giving an honest day's work in return, and so it seems to me that those people who are advocating the cause of Labour in the way they do in this Council and elsewhere should, at the same time they educate them to make claims for increases, educate them to produce an honest day's work for the wages they receive. I go further. I personally would like to make an appeal to Labour in that direction because it is only in that way they can ever hope to obtain support and encouragement from one of their own colonists like myself. I am in sympathy with them, but when I see, as I see every

the work that is performed I cannot help making that remark and in no uncertain terms and with full cognizance of the responsibility that falls on me in making the statement.

What is the answer to what I have been saying? The answer seems to me to be very clear. If we are to improve the working conditions of the workers in the Department, instead of tinkering with the subject as we are doing at the present time and have been doing for years,—as only three years ago this Department received the most exhaustive enquiry by a very Select Committee of this Council and a full and complete report was submitted here and we are now back again on it—there should be a general re-organization of the whole establishment. It is true that since that time the war came on and conditions became very grave and, perhaps, there was some increased cost of living. We have not only done that but went further than that. As I said the answer seems to be if we are to provide better wages, better working conditions for the workers, for which I agree, the time has come and is in fact overdue when there should be a general reorganization of the whole establishment in order to put the Department on a proper working basis. I know what is going to be the answer from the Government side. It is going to be "We are expecting the expert here very shortly and he will go into this and that and make recommendations." My reply to that will be "Well, we seem to be beginning always at the wrong end." I think myself that if we want to do justice to these men, which I think they are entitled to, we should try to co-ordinate the whole subject so as no longer to continue to have these struggles with workers. Both matters should be dealt with simultaneously, if not there is bound to be trouble.

To satisfy Labour with this Report

on the other hand we have the taxpayers of the country extremely dissatisfied. That is the position we find ourselves in. The minute we try to satisfy the taxpayers we find ourselves dissatisfying Labour. Unless we are prepared to tackle both subjects simultaneously, it seems our troubles will never end. Whilst I am in that strain I may put this question, though I do not think Government will be able to answer it at all. Am I to understand that the acceptance of this Report is a guarantee that no further demands will be made on this Government from the workers? We were told here yesterday afternoon that the Report was forwarded to the Unions concerned and, I think, I understood the hon. the Colonial Secretary to say they all accepted it. It may not be the hon. the Colonial Secretary but maybe the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member. I do not think that is enough. I do not think the mere acceptance of the Report today should be enough for this Government. It was not enough even years ago and, I say, it would not be enough today if the workers are going to accept the Report in principle and if this Government finally agrees to adopt it. As a commercial man I do believe in bargains. I cannot find a better word. It seems that a bargain should be struck that there will be no further demands on this Government for a reconsideration of the whole of this situation unless in the meantime something of a serious nature arises which necessitates a review of the whole situation. I ask the question: Is it too much to ask the Unions concerned such a question? My position in the matter is that I do not think it is too much to ask them. I think I have said enough.

There is one word more with which I would like to conclude these remarks of mine. I listened here yesterday afternoon and before to the criticisms that

were levelled at the Head of the unfortunate Board of Commissioners of this Department. I would like to go further. If the trains do not run, the Commissioners are at fault; if they run late, the Commissioners are at fault; if they come in too early, the Commissioners are at fault. Whenever there is something bad about the Transport and Harbours Department, the Commissioners are at fault. I would not like to say what I am thinking about that. All I want to ask is this: I think this Government should take note of the several criticisms that are being levelled against the Commissioners and this Department from time to time and make up its mind once and for all as to what is the policy of the Department *vis-a-vis* Government and the workers. I do not think I am betraying any secret when I say that I have asked the question, "What is my duty as a Commissioner?" That question has not yet been answered and, I think, it will take a long time before any proper answer is found. But I am conscious of my responsibility as a Commissioner, and I would like the position to be clarified. It has not yet received full consideration by my colleagues on the Board, but I do hope they will in due time give that question of mine careful consideration and pass it on to Government. If the Commissioners are going to be responsible for this and the other, if they are going to receive kicks here and there about this and the other, then it seems their position should be made clear. As far as I am concerned I say that we will not continue to travel in the dark as I have been doing for the last few months since I am a member of the Board.

Mr. FERREIRA: I do not rise to blame the Commissioners of the Transport Board for the train arriving early. I think I would be out of order in so doing. In fact I rise to support Message No. 26 and in so doing I would

like to congratulate the Government on having taken a step forward. When the Transport Vote was considered last December, the first remark I made was that I thought the time was due when this Message now before us should have appeared then. Certain criticisms have arisen, but it cannot be gainsaid that an earnest, honest effort has been made to satisfy the workmen. We have been told that it does not go far enough; nevertheless those with whom I have had several conversations have assured me that they are satisfied that Government has been good enough to take this matter into its consideration, and they are satisfied that something has been done to supply their need, because there had been undoubtedly cases of great hardship of which I have before now spoken. We have been told that there are anomalies, but I am satisfied from what has been said that those anomalies will be considered, and when the time comes if they are reasonable I would be only too willing to support those anomalies. We have had the criticism that the workers are not giving an honest day's work. I do not attempt to speak on behalf of the workers, but what I would suggest to Members is that they make those remarks in the correct places. I do think if it is within the knowledge of any Member, especially a member or Commissioner of a Board, that something is wrong, there is a time and place where consideration can be given to such grievances. (Voices: Hear! Hear! !).

We have been asked to vote \$108,000. I am quite willing to vote that amount, although the last speaker has mentioned that he thinks it might be \$200,000 and has raised a certain amount of apprehension in my mind, because that Member is not one to go around making haphazard statements. I would like Government to be sure that the figure given us has been arrived at by careful calculation and not by some

the money as it is honestly due, but I repeat today what I said in December that those who benefit by the railway service should pay for it. When I spoke in December I mentioned that freight rates with the approval of Government had been increased 100 per cent on the Corentyne Coast. Why should it not be done with the Transport Department? The immediate reaction was that the freight on rice was increased 100 per cent. I do not grumble about that. I advocate it. But why was that step just taken and stopped short? Why were not the recommendations of the Board adopted? Those recommendations had been made not a month nor three months ago but possibly, as far as I am aware, over a year ago. I have been told that Message No. 26 clearly states that consideration of those recommendations must remain over until Mr. Rooke arrives. I submit that if Mr. Rooke arrives in the Colony today, before he can investigate thoroughly and submit his findings to this Council and before they can be accepted, it would take at least three months. I further state that when the Board of Commissioners were appointed they were selected from a very wide field. I have paid tribute to them before as being men of intelligence drawn from all walks of life. I submit they are better qualified with their knowledge of local conditions to arrive at the freight rates being more conversant with them than a gentleman who, although he may have administrative ability, cannot have that local knowledge necessary to assess those rates.

I feel, sir, that Government should not delay with this Department. If it cannot be made to pay its way, then at least it should be put on an economic footing. I do not see why we should be called upon to pay thousands of dollars or \$1,000,000 a year to meet its deficiency. Let us accept the recommendations of those men we have

Let us give it a trial. If those recommendations do not come up to the standard that we expect, it is quite a simple matter to adjust things when Mr. Rooke arrives; but I do not think this is time for any delay. I do not hesitate to support the Message before us. I support it wholeheartedly. Let us give justice to whom justice is due, but on the other hand do not call on the Colony to pay for the benefits of a few.

Mr. J.A. LUCKHOO: When I read Your Excellency's Message in connection with the motion before this Council, I never anticipated it would have had such a difficult passage. I felt that the recommendations of the Committee would have been approved in principle, leaving it to the Department to bring to the notice of Government any unjust matters arising from their application. The limit of the Report was by no means an easy one to set, looking at it from all angles, and one should expect a few discords. Those discords, however, can be easily remedied. Much has been said as to the amount required at the end of each year to meet the deficiency in the running of this Department but, I think, the Transport and Harbours Department if not wholly a public utility service is at least a public utility service like the Education Department, Hospitals and services like those from which really Government cannot recoup the whole of its expenditure, unless we are going to raise to a great extent the freight tariff for the carriage of goods and the conveyance of passengers which, I think, would be most unwise to do at the present time as it would hit unduly the people whom we should help in the present state of things. I feel that the Transport and Harbours Department cannot be compared with the Railway Companies in England which declare a dividend, however small, in order to satisfy their share-

With a small population in this Colony, with a permanent way of only 80 miles—60 miles on the one side and 20 miles on the other side of the river—and with long distances for the steamers to traverse, the expenditure is bound to be high. I think we ought to meet the justice of the cost which is before us to pay those servants, who are providing the particular service to us, adequate remuneration to which they are entitled. I think Government ought to be congratulated rather than criticized for bringing this motion before this Council at this time.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I also rise to support this motion in principle. I may at this stage ask, as promised by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, that due consideration be given to the recommendations of the Transports and Harbours Board pointing out further anomalies that have been created. Among those anomalies I may refer to one which has had special consideration of the Governor in Council, and that is in respect of the Stationmasters. Instead of giving them the increase, as recommended by the Committee a slight increase as an allowance is to be given. I have never seen in any Department wholesale duty allowance being given to all officers. If there is any justification in the Stationmasters' case then there is no justification to single out half of them, but the entire lot should be given it. But that only goes to show and bears out the argument that the salaries of the Stationmasters are inadequate. If that is so, I do not see we are justified in giving them a duty allowance. It should be a permanent increase to their salaries. What I am appealing to Government for is to give just consideration to that recommendation for an increase which, I think, is embodied in the recommendations sent by the Board to Government.

Criticism has been made about freight rates moreso than about the

Government that at this period there is no justification in increasing the freight rates especially in respect of the minor industries, such as rice and ground provisions, though several Members of this Council have criticized it. But what do we find, those very Members in this Council have voted further relief to those same industries. I say they were justified in so doing. If, however, we are justified in those industries obtaining further subsidies from this Government so as to enable them to exist during this period, there is more justification not to stifle them with high freight rates. We have voted thousands of dollars as grants to the rice industry. We are presently subsidizing the ground provisions industry. We are doing all that on the one hand and the other hand we are stifling them with high freight rates. Where is the justification? I ask hon. Members who are advocating the increasing of the freight rates to consider by their own action whether the subsidies to those industries are justified. I do not know if those Members who are advocating increased freight rates think that the freight rate of the Transport and Harbours Department is a flat one for all products. I may just here remind them, if it is not within their knowledge, that the freight rate on sugar is far higher than that on rice and on ground provisions. In some cases sugar pays from 100 to 300 per cent. more as freight rate than is being paid by ground provisions or by rice. Therefore, if they think there is a flat rate on all products for transport by the Department, they are not correct.

The hon. Member for Berbice River has said that the freight rate on the Corentyne Coast for rice has increased by 100 per cent. I admit that is so, but it has not been increased by the Department. It has been increased with the consent of the producer there. There was congestion at New Amsterdam and throughout the entire Corentyne Coast and there was not sufficient transport available. No private owner

take to transport the rice at the rate of the Transport and Harbours Department. As the producers themselves agreed to pay the increased freight rate, private buses were chartered to transport the rice to New Amsterdam and to relieve the congestion on the Coast, and the increased rate was paid to those private bus-owners. It is not the rates of the Department that have been increased.

I must admit it is alarming no doubt that the deficiency of this Department is increasing year by year, and just here I would suggest that it is time Government enquire or seek expert advice as to whether it is in the best interest of this Colony to maintain a two-way traffic, whether it is necessary and we can afford it. We get one competing against the other and, if the road traffic would be cheaper than railway traffic, I say Government should make a bold step in reaching a decision as to which traffic would be in the best interest of the Colony and would afford the inhabitants the convenience of a transport to meet all their requirements. I think, if a one-way traffic is properly organised it would be able to meet the demands of the country. I think that is the only way out of it, and I make bold this statement. I have not much more to add. This motion will receive my support on the undertaking from Government that the anomalies will be gone into.

Mr. GONSALVES: I did not purpose to say anything on this matter, but I would like to say a few words. I have been a member of the Transport Board for a long time, and every time that Department's vote has come before this Council there has been always severe criticism in regard not only to the management but the expenditure in connection with that Department. I see today we are asking for a further increase of at least \$108,900 to meet the recommendations made in this report. I do not grudge voting the amount because it is with the idea of

who are working in that Department. But what I am pleased to see is that the supporters of this motion today and yesterday have been nearly all of them the very Members who have always been attacking Government for carrying up the expenditure of this Department, and I hope the debate will have this result: that when the estimates of this Department come up towards the end of the year there will be nobody asking why the deficit is so much greater next year than the year before.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to a point of correction. I never stated, either directly or by implication, that I was satisfied that the deficit would be increased.

Mr. GONSALVES: I do not know why the hon. Member should be anxious to pull the string of a cap which was never made to fit him, but if he thinks the cap fits him he is quite at liberty to pull the string. He has been one of the Members who have said year after year that the Department has not been properly controlled. I hope now that he is supporting the motion he will not put forward that criticism when the expenditure is increased later on.

With regard to passenger and freight rates I am also glad to see that those Members are today in agreement with the recommendation which the Board of my day had from time to time put forward as a means of raising revenue for the Department. As Your Excellency mentioned yesterday, Government was in disagreement, and you have given the reason. It is quite easy to increase freight charges but one has to look around and see the effect of such action. I have said before, and I say again today, that those Members who represent constituencies through which the railway passes, or to which the steamers travel, are the Members who are going to be stung when Government increases fares or freight rates, and I hope they will be prepared to give the answer that they were giving to these increases. I observe

that Members are in the habit of saying that they make remarks for the purpose of having them put on record. I think that perhaps I should do the same thing. I hope it will be on record that they were parties to advocating those increases, and that they will not accuse Government of having done so and so. It is all very well for Members to criticize in Council the working of the Department without knowing the difficulties in connection with its management.

I must say that I appreciate today that there are Members whom Your Excellency has thought fit to put on the Board. They recognize now that it is not so simple to administer that Department, as they thought it was before they were members of the Board. We have heard them suggest here what the Department ought to do and ought not to do. They are there now to make that true.

Mr. THORNE: Before Your Excellency sums up will you permit me to reply to the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar)? He asked whether the Unions would give an undertaking or make a bargain that if this report is adopted they would never again come back and ask for further increases of pay. I would like to tell him that the answer to that question is that those Unions are composed of human beings, and there is no more reason to expect such an undertaking from them than to ask him as a merchant to cease his importations.

The PRESIDENT: The motion has been very thoroughly debated and as the Treasurer has nothing to say in reply, I therefore put the question.

Motion put, and agreed to.

ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS FOR RICE EXPANSION SCHEMES

The PRESIDENT: We now come to the motion in the name of the Treasurer with respect to scheme (b)

referred to in my Message, No. 23 of the 16th December, and the full despatch I sent forward about six weeks ago covering not only the external works to the extent of \$96,000, as shown in the table, but also the internal works. Sir Frank Stockdale telegraphed about a fortnight ago his complete support of the proposals put up by us. The sum of \$96,000 is practically free, but the internal works will be covered by loan, half of the cost to be recovered from the occupiers of the land. I now call upon the Treasurer to move his motion.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 23 of 1944 dated 16th December, 1944, this Council approves of the acceptance of funds provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act to a total of \$882,240 comprising free grants of \$324,720 and loans of \$557,520, on the terms and conditions set out in the Message in respect of the following schemes:—

Mechanical Equipment.....	\$162,000
New Central Rice Mill	418,800
Mahaicony—Abary Rice Cultivation	301,440
	\$882,240

In Your Excellency's Message is set out a schedule of a number of schemes (eleven of them) which are now known as the Rice Expansion Schemes, and if Members have their copies of the Message they will notice that the total shown in that schedule is just short of \$1,800,000. By reason of certain additional work and certain excesses on some of the schemes I think that total will eventually reach no less a figure than \$2,000,000, a very substantial sum indeed, and an indication of the measure of development which is forecast and in progress in regard to the rice industry.

On the 17th October last the Council approved and accepted funds for the first seven of the schemes on the schedule to a total of \$632,000, and the

Council's approval and acceptance of funds in relation to three of the schemes lettered (i), (j) and (k) in the Message—Mechanical Equipment, the New Central Rice Mill, and the Mahaicony-Abary Rice Cultivation Scheme. I think hon. Members will recall that the debate on the 17th October covered a very wide field, and touched on the general aspects of the development and expansion of the rice industry, and particularly on aspects in connection with these three schemes. Speeches were made, notably by the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun), somewhat in criticism of the development by means of mechanical equipment of the Mahaicony-Abary area, and by the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. King) in strong support of what was being done.

The first item is Mechanical Equipment. Members have heard quite a lot about that already. The total amount to be expended is \$324,000, but half of that sum—\$162,000—is being given as a free grant under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. With regard to the other half the Rice Marketing Board has arranged to provide funds from its surplus. I have previously explained that this mechanical equipment would be primarily devoted to the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme, but that half of the equipment would be used on a hire service basis for the benefit of the rice producers throughout the coastlands of the Colony. As I have said on a previous occasion, some of this equipment has already been hired on those terms, and the farmers find it very satisfactory indeed and are urging and pressing the Rice Marketing Board as much as possible to permit the use of that equipment.

The next item is the new Central Rice Mill which is the first large central mill (Government hopes there will be two) to be obtained, and it is now definitely decided that it should be erected in the centre of the Mahaicony area. It is a very large mill and will be properly equipped. The greatest care

of the equipment, both by experts in America, from which country the mill will come, and by the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) who is looking after the details. The total cost is estimated at \$406,800. That is being given as a loan on terms to be prescribed later on, but free of interest and repayment charges for the first five years. That period of five years should certainly give us time to get into our stride and bring this mill down to a scope of operation that should enable it to pay interest and a return on its capital cost. It is a very useful preliminary period of five years in order to enable us to get going on this mill before any charges are made on capital.

The third scheme is the Mahaicony-Abary rice cultivation scheme for which a sum of \$301,440 is required. Half of that sum—\$150,720—is a free grant, and the other half is to be a loan free of repayment terms for three years, and thereafter repayable in the fourth and ~~twelfth~~ ^{sixth} years at interest at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The first three years are supposed to be the experimental period, and we hope that after that the scheme will get going and be able to meet those charges out of its current revenue.

These schemes originated primarily as measures for the expansion of rice production throughout the country, and the amount of money being allocated to them is substantial. I hope that in view of the course which the debate took when the Colonial Secretary was in the Chair—it covered the whole field—it will not be necessary to go into them now in very great detail. However, if any questions are raised I shall try my best to answer them. I formally move the motion.

Mr. JACKSON seconded.

The PRESIDENT: Wouldn't you like to include item (h) in this motion, Treasurer? It is now with the Secretary of State. If you do not put it in you will have to come back with a later

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We can include it now, sir.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest that we put in item (h) as well.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: If the Council approves I will amend the motion to include the item—Bloomfield-Whim, Corentyne, \$114,000—which has now been approved by the Secretary of State.

The PRESIDENT: Not approved; it has gone forward.

Mr. JACOB: I think I am correct in saying that when Message No. 6 of August 2, 1944 was debated in this Council, I voted against the acceptance of the funds on the ground that I was not satisfied that they were being properly spent. I maintain the same position today. I am not satisfied that these funds are being properly spent, and further I think it is a distinct breach of faith for Government to say at this stage that as regards the \$162,000 required for mechanical equipment a similar sum will be supplied from surplus funds of the Rice Marketing Board. In other words Government now proposes to utilize \$162,000 of the rice producers' accumulated money in experiments which, up to the present, have been not too satisfactory. No one objects to experiments being carried out. In fact everyone would welcome them, and particularly experiments with rice production in this Colony, but when this Government has opportunity in various ways to get funds from Imperial sources to carry out these experiments but does not take advantage of or does not utilize that opportunity fully I say there is something definitely wrong. Government declines to accept to the fullest funds for experiments, for mechanical appliances, and even for machinery to experiment so as to increase production of foodstuffs.

This Government gave an undertaking to the rice producers when the

think I am 100 per cent correct when I say this) that the surplus funds, after paying them a fair amount for their rice, would be utilized as a reserve fund for two years.

The PRESIDENT left the Chamber at this stage and the COLONIAL SECRETARY took the Chair.

Mr. JACOB (resuming): The rice producers were told that the Board would pay what it considered a fair rate at the start, but when profits were made the prices of rice and padi would be gradually increased so as to absorb those profits, or to keep them as a reserve in case the price of padi and rice fell below the cost of production. The whole idea was a co-operative scheme for the benefit of the producers of rice. Now that there is a decent surplus Government says that \$162,000 of that money must be utilized in an experiment which I consider of doubtful character. I say it is distinctly wrong and immoral, and I cannot understand how the members of the Rice Marketing Board could agree to such a thing. Certain Members will say that the Board has the complete confidence of the rice-producing community. For the sake of argument let us agree that it has. Is the rice-producing community going to be satisfied to let \$162,000 be spent on experiments, as I say, of a doubtful character? I do not think it is fair.

What is more alarming to me is that Government has ample opportunity but has not utilized the funds provided by the Imperial Government in various ways. When we come to another subject on today's Order Paper I will explain what I am referring to. Instead it wants to utilize the rice producers' money because it has accumulated. What greater immorality than that could be perpetrated on the rice producers? Those people have complained, but what is the use of complaining? They must just do as they are told. That is the attitude of Government.

do it all the time. Government can continue with the cast-iron majority it has, and with all the influence it has at its disposal at the present time, but it must bear in mind that it is dealing with human beings and there will be a day of reckoning.

I charge Government with distinct breach of faith in taking funds of the Rice Marketing Board for use on experiments of this kind. I am not going to suggest, as has been suggested by one hon. Nominated Member, that those funds should be distributed. I have never been in favour of a distribution of the funds. They should be kept for the day when there is a drop in production. The day is coming when the price of rice will fall below the cost of production, but because the money is there Government's idea is to fritter it away in all kinds of experiments. I wish Government would go cautiously as regards that aspect of the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: On a previous occasion you urged Government to use mechanical equipment.

Mr. JACOB: Yes, I am coming to that. I promise you that there is another matter on the Order Paper in which I will refer to that. I have notes about it. I will turn now to another matter. I have criticised the Rice Marketing Board and the Government for lack of initiative, and I think I have charged both parties with deliberately hindering the increased production of rice. If I have not done so I do so now. What is the position? It is true that last year—and I think certain members of the Board and the Government will feel very proud about it—Government was able to increase exports of rice up to 25,000 tons, but will Government say what quantity of rice it proposes to export from year to year for the next five years? Can Government put forward a plan and work towards achievement of that plan? I have asked Government that question over and over but I could get no answer.

that in August last, or whenever the motion on Message No. 6 was debated. I pointed out that the sugar industry was planning to produce 200,000 tons of sugar next year, and I asked what the rice industry was planning to do? I do not think the sugar industry has all the means at its disposal as the rice industry and this Government have. If Government has not the means I think it should get those means. Before the Board took over the rice industry, and before Government began to interfere, hinder and obstruct the production of rice, the people on their own initiative produced rice, and up to 30,000 tons were exported in a particular year. That was not by chance; amounts of 26,000 and 28,000 tons were also exported. Since Government has taken over the industry the wonderful export figure of 25,000 tons was reached last year.

What are the plans for the future? I would like to see not only \$1,800,000, but ten million dollars spent. I would like to see the production of rice increased up to 200,000 tons like sugar. Government is determined to keep the rice industry down to a certain safety level for certain obvious reasons. Why? To make it easier Government is telling the people that it wants to experiment with some of the surplus funds of the Rice Marketing Board. Are those things going to encourage the people to produce rice to any large extent? I certainly do not think so. Of course Government thinks otherwise and believes that it has done a wonderful thing in increasing the production of rice. If Government would do things in a different way it would get the confidence of the producers who want ten times the amount of equipment they have got. I know hundreds of people who cannot get ordinary ploughs. Government said it was impossible to get those ploughs. If Government had got 1,000 ploughs another 10,000 tons of rice might have been produced last year. Instead of getting ploughs and other equipment to be used by the rice pro-

some of the surplus funds which the increased price of rice during the war made it possible to accumulate.

Regarding the Mahaicony-Abary Rice Cultivation Scheme I hope it will be successful. I think the 7,000 additional acres will be put under cultivation this year and, I trust, the little abnormal weather we got during the last few weeks will not be an excuse for not putting that area under cultivation.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We never intended to put that 7,000 acres under cultivation this year.

Mr. JACOB: Perhaps the hon. Member would tell us more definitely what he intends to do. That is the kind of vague thing we get, nothing definite except payment of salaries. When it comes to the payment of salaries, from the highest officer to some of the lowest we get it a year retrospective, but when we have to plan for production—that which is to pay those salaries—we get nothing, only vague bald statements which lead us nowhere. You have people to exploit, exploit them to the fullest. Keep them under that subjection, but you cannot keep them altogether there. The Mahaicony-Abary Scheme is to increase its cultivation to 10,000 acres. I think, I am correct in saying that the Scheme is supposed to embrace an area of 10,000 acres. It would be interesting to know what area was actually planted last year, what will be planted this year, and when the entire area will be under cultivation. Any ordinary businessman having his money invested in that will know what he is doing. He will decide what to do so as to gain experience in a year or two. You have to plan with a definite object in view. I would like to hear when the entire Mahaicony-Abary area will be under cultivation, and what is the probable production of rice from that area.

Then as regards the rice mill, I wonder if we are going to get what we

that we had at Anna Regina. The wonderful excuse now is "The war is on and we cannot get the right thing and we have to take what we can get." It is within the memory of Government that the rice mill ordered for Anna Regina was a complete failure. The late Mr. Seymour, a Member of this Council, had to come in and give advice and run the mill under contract not for himself but for the firm of which he was one of the principal shareholders. I want to suggest to this Government, that in respect of the mill that is to be put up Government must be sure that it will be a mill, as other up-to-date mills which are being operated, with room for further improvement in the near future. I do not hope to hear later on: "We had to take what we got and we are very sorry it turned out in this manner, but we are going to try to improve it." It will be well for us to try and find out what will be the capacity of this mill which is going to cost \$418,000. It will be interesting to us to know what quantity of rice can be handled by it yearly, and then plan whether other mills of this kind should not be erected in other parts of the Colony. I think the time is opportune to get that information. I would like to get it. I am not against improvement of the right kind. I was a member of the Esse-quiibo Rice Mill Committee, and that Committee submitted a unanimous report in so far as the erection of a central mill is concerned.

At this stage the PRESIDENT returned to the Chamber and apologized for any inconvenience caused Members.

Mr. JACOB: We should know at this stage the capacity of this new mill. We should know where this mill will be erected and what production we can expect from that area to supply that mill. It is to be hoped that this new mill will be run to full capacity. I am in favour of this central rice mill. In fact, I am in favour of central rice mills wherever there is a large cultivation of rice and wherever there are no

up-to-date milling facilities to get the most we can from the padi that is being produced. I do not think I can be accused by this Government, as I am often accused, of endeavouring to obstruct this Rice Expansion Scheme which we all want so very quickly and so very much. The facts are that I would certainly like to see the exports of rice doubled next year, that we get a chance of producing another 10,000 tons and so be exporting 30,000 tons of rice next year and 50,000 tons the following year. I do not see why another 10,000 to 15,000 tons cannot be added this year and another 10,000 to 15,000 tons next year, and so on until we reach the mark of 200,000 tons. The exports to the West Indies do not come up to much. We want to supply Canada, Cuba, New York and, probably, our friends on the other side. I was able to ship rice to the United Kingdom, and, I am sure, if there was rice in this Colony I could have exported at least 10,000 tons annually to the United Kingdom. The market was there. I sent samples and later shipped rice and made ample profits. The English market can consume our rice the same as our sugar. The New York market is a very profitable market. The Canadian market is a profitable market. The Cuban market is a profitable market.

The PRESIDENT: What I was told was that Canada takes the other kind of rice, the polished rice, and will not take ours. However, you being a commercial man may know better.

Mr. de AGUIAR: They take our rice and do the polishing themselves.

Mr. JACOB: I was in the rice business ten years ago, and it was a very profitable means of my livelihood. I have exported rice to the United Kingdom and, I repeat, the United Kingdom could have taken 10,000 tons of rice, but it got its rice from Australia and from New Zealand. Canada bought a fair quantity of British Guiana rice; New York bought a fair quantity and it was liked; Cuba bought a fair quantity,

at one time and it was liked. So I say British Guiana can produce and export a large quantity of rice, but you have to do it gradually. You are only exporting 25,000 tons now, and you can increase it by 10,000 to 15,000 tons annually which is a very conservative figure. With men of initiative that can easily be done. You have been able to double the exports of sugar within fifteen years, and that is about 8,000 tons on an average each year. I say that the production of rice can go up until it reaches the export figure of 200,000 tons within fifteen years, and we have got all the markets that can take that rice. If there is anything that has wonderful possibilities in British Guiana it is rice.

While Your Excellency was absent from the Chair, I was making the point that it is a distinct breach of faith to utilize \$182,000 accumulated from the rice producers, because the circumstances now are that we have no market for our rice through doubtful experiments. I say definitely that Government has not taken advantage of the ample opportunities it has had to get that money from the Imperial Government. For those reasons while I agree on the whole that you should have increased production of rice with several central mills, you should have larger areas under rice cultivation, irrigated and drained. I am going to vote against this motion because I am not satisfied that Government is doing the right thing at the right time.

Mr. LEE: I am very much interested in the production of rice and the experiment that is being carried on with the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme. In a matter like this it is only fair to those who are interested in the rice industry that they should be supplied with certain particulars in respect of the place where the central rice mill will be erected in order that they or the rice growers can judge whether the judgment of the Advisers of Government is correct or

not. To present a bald Message like this, saying we want so much money for the purpose of erecting a central rice mill and not saying where it is going to be erected and what is its capacity, is not fair to those who feel that, perhaps, the advisers of Government are not giving a square deal. They may advise that the central rice mill be erected, say at Crabwood Creek, which is a rice growing area, but the padi reaped around Crabwood Creek is not sufficient to supply a central mill of the capacity that growers and those interested in rice envisage. At the moment they feel that a central rice mill will be able to do as much as those in Burma in order to reduce the cost of milling and the cost of transportation and other items and so bring the cost down to a figure to compete with the rice from India and Burma. I feel, sir, it is right that Government should make a declaration in respect of where this mill will be.

There is another point in respect of this Message. I agree with everything except this:

“(1) Mechanical Equipment — A free grant not exceeding £33,750 or \$162,000 to cover one-half the cost of the equipment, the other half to be met by the Rice Marketing Board from surplus funds.”

When the Rice Marketing Board was created it was on condition that the funds made from the profits or otherwise of the single selling organization would be applied in such a manner that the producers of rice would be benefited. When you take this to apply it practically to the rice-growers in my constituency and on the West Coast Demerara, those who plant small areas of one, two or three acres—though there are some who plant 10 acres — they will not be gaining any benefit from this equipment as I envisage it. I do not know what is the policy of the Rice Marketing Board in respect of that. I envisage that the equipment that will be bought and be available to rice farmers will be for areas of not less than 25

acres. It cannot be applied to the areas where the rice farmers do the planting themselves. I feel that this money from the Rice Marketing Board should not be applied to this purpose but, if necessary, a loan or a grant should be obtained by Government in order to see first if it is going to be successful. A single selling organization is a good thing but at its formation certain undertaking was given to the rice producers, and this is not in keeping with that undertaking given where the majority of rice producers can cultivate their own rice lands only by oxen and by hand. This is for large areas. I do not know if Government intends to give such areas to the rice farmers who can settle there and develop the areas. I do not know if that is the policy of Government to throw open those areas. If the 2,000 acres recently planted is found to be capable of growing rice at a profit, is Government going to throw that out to the farmers who can take it up in small blocks of 50 and 100 acres? If that is so, then I say the policy of Government will benefit one area only and, therefore, the surplus funds of the Board should not be taken to be applied to that. Other than that I am in total agreement with this Message.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I rise to support this motion wholeheartedly. I do not intend to reply to the many points that have been made by the two hon. Members who have just taken their seats. I feel certain that the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board will fully reply to their queries and supply the information they seek. But there are just two points I would like to reply to in respect of the surplus funds being used for the purpose of meeting one-half the cost of the equipment. I doubt whether those two hon. Members have the feelings of the rice producers throughout the Colony in this matter. I am thinking whether they will be surprised to hear of the number of applications for mechanical equipment received from rice growers all over the Colony. I am thinking whether they

said publicly. If I am not mistaken, it appeared in the Press. Hundreds of letters have been sent to the Rice Marketing Board in praise of the two threshers that the Board was able to place at the growers' disposal during the last crop, and there were hundreds of applications that could not be met during this crop because of the fact that the Rice Expansion Scheme is going to extend its cultivation this year. I feel certain, sir, that if a vote is taken from the growers throughout the Colony—I make bold to say—100 per cent. of the growers would vote that the surplus funds of the Rice Marketing Board be used to procure equipment of this kind so as to assist them in increasing their production and also in their labour troubles during their crop time and planting. During the last crop labour demanded such exorbitant rates for reaping padi at one time that it was urged that a Board be set up so that the prices can be regulated and fixed in so far as the reaping of padi is concerned. This equipment is to alleviate such a situation, and the producers realize that and will vote 100 per cent for the surplus funds of the Board to be spent in this direction.

I do not know if there are any more useful directions in which the funds of the rice producers can be spent than in this way, where they will benefit to a large extent. I am certain that with the limited equipment the Board will be having to send out on this hire-system, the difficulty of the Board will be its inability to meet the requirements of all the applications that will be coming in for this mechanical equipment. It is no speculative view. One who knows the industry, one who is among the people all the time and one that has been faced with the same difficulty year by year, will appreciate the benefits of mechanical equipment especially at reaping time. I think the hon. Member for North-Western District has known very much the conditions in this Colony and yet he has been bold enough to ask that Government ask the Rice

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Marketing Board to give an undertaking as to what will be the plan for producing rice for the next five years. He admitted that perhaps an excuse may be found for abnormal weather condition. I believe he appreciates it and knows full well that when we have abnormal weather conditions the rice crop is affected especially because of the fact, as we all realise, the rice crop has no security in so far as drainage and irrigation is concerned.

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction! It is not correct to say the rice crop of the whole Colony is not secure because of drainage and irrigation.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I will admit that in certain parts of the Colony the crops have been secure to a certain extent, and in those parts of the Colony I make bold to say the lands are limited. The highest producing county is that of Berbice. That county is, within the knowledge of the hon. Member for North-Western District, lacking badly in irrigation and drainage. Ten per cent. of the crops there are not secure to any extent at all. Under those conditions one can hardly expect any guarantee even for one year much less five years. I will say right here and now that so far as I view the condition this year there is every likelihood of a drop in the cultivated area of rice in the county of Berbice because, as admitted by the hon. Member for North-Western District, of the abnormal weather condition. It will delay laying-out the soil for "broadcasting," as that has to be done in the dry weather and the commencement of that season is during February and March. I only hope that we have all put in a reasonable area for "broadcasting" this year, especially if the May and June rains are delayed later than usual. Up to now we have not got any indication of when the present rains are going to cease, and the lands are under water today and no work can be done on them. If it happens that the period of cessation of this rainy season and

the next does not afford sufficient time to put in "shied" rice it is only obvious that the acreage under cultivation in so far as rice is concerned cannot be but very small.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I shall be very brief. The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) made a criticism which would have been valuable if it were substantially accurate. I understood him to say that it was not fair that Government should come to the Council with a bald Message of this sort, dealing with schemes of so substantial a character, without setting out any details at all. The fact is that the Message itself refers to a Council Paper No. 21 of 1944 in which you, sir, set out all the despatches you have written to the Secretary of State in connection with these schemes. I admit there is a lot of reading matter in that Council Paper, but as usual Members would not read the details ~~and~~ come back later and criticize Government for not giving them any information on the subject.

There are three despatches dealing with these three schemes which set out in some detail the items which are referred to in this Message. I will admit that the despatch dealing with the Central Rice Mill does not set out the capacity of the mill, which is 5 tons of milled parboiled rice per hour. That is a very large mill indeed, and very much larger than anything we have ever had or contemplated for this Colony. I notice that the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) compared the tiny mill put up at Anna Regina some years ago with this new mill. The mill at Anna Regina was a gift from the old Colonial Development Fund, and cost about \$9,600. It was a white rice mill and purely an experimental mill. This is a huge mill in comparison with the other mills. I do not know myself how the Anna Regina mill came to be a white

rice mill, but it was sent out by the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund Committee and erected at Anna Regina as an experiment.

As regards the acreage at Mahaicony-Abary, there again the despatch states what is intended and contemplated. We did plan last year for about 2,400 acres, and we did say that we intended to put in another 4,500 acres this year, but we have realized that it is desirable to go slowly. We admit that there were many difficulties to contend with last year, and what has now been decided is to increase the cultivation this year to a maximum of 5,000 acres. Next year we hope to go further.

As regards the site of the mill, in my opening remarks I said it had now been definitely decided that it should be erected in the centre of the Mahaicony-Abary area. That is also stated in the despatch, although it did suggest that some other site might be selected. That is why I said that a final decision had now been reached.

The main criticism of this motion referred to the question of the use of part of the Board's surplus funds towards one-half of the cost of the mechanical equipment. I will admit at once that when this scheme was first sent forward we had hoped to get a grant for the total cost, but the Comptroller for Development and Welfare, who is completely familiar with the finances of the Rice Marketing Board and its transactions, quite properly suggested that since the mechanical equipment was going to be used not only on the experimental scheme at Mahaicony-Abary but also for the general communal use of the rice producers as a whole, he thought it fitting and suggested to Government and the Board that one-half of the cost should be met from the surplus funds of the Board, and we had no argument

to counter that. After all we have ourselves stated in our Regulations that the surplus funds of the Board may be used for measures calculated to advance the development and expansion of the rice industry, with particular reference to export trade, and here was a scheme which was calculated to do that. Some Members have said that it was a condition of the formation of the Board that these funds should be used to increase the price of rice. Over and over again in this Council, and in publications, the Board and myself have tried to explain that that could not go on forever. We could not contemplate a situation in which the price would be kept continually increasing.

We have planned for the production of pure-line seed, a scheme for which the Board has allocated \$200,000 over the last five years. It is designed to advance the fortunes of the industry as a whole and, therefore, it is properly chargeable against the surplus funds. Similarly, this mechanization scheme, as the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) has explained, has been welcomed throughout the countryside. You, sir, took the trouble to arrange a meeting with certain representatives of the industry and put the suggestion to them. They welcomed and endorsed the use of this amount of money which the Board is asking for. They felt, as we feel, that the money would be used for the general benefit of the industry and, quite contrary to the remarks of the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob), rather than thinking it immoral they thought it highly proper and moral. Further, the suggestion emanated from the Comptroller himself, and no reasonable argument could be put forward against it.

I would like to ask permission to move an amendment to the motion. You, sir, have announced that the figures for the Bloomfield-Whim scheme have now

been settled at \$114,000 instead of \$96,000. Application has gone forward and therefore it is fitting that that particular scheme should be added to the schedule at the end of the motion. I therefore move that the motion be amended so that the total should read \$996,240 instead of \$882,240; that free grants should be \$438,720 instead of \$324,720, and that the schedule itself be amended by the inclusion of the item—Bloomfield-Whim, Corentyne, \$114,000.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The PRESIDENT: With the consent of Members I will proceed to put the question "That the motion as amended be agreed to."

Motion carried.

THE NEW FRANCHISE.

The PRESIDENT: Before we adjourn I should like to intimate with reference to the announcement I made at the opening of this sitting touching the Franchise Bill, that I have consulted the

hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. J. A. Luckhoo) as to the progress made by his Committee which was dealing with the immediate steps to be taken regarding the holding of the General Elections, and the making of Regulations and other necessary arrangements, and he tells me that his report is now being prepared and will be submitted shortly.

As regards the resumption of our business, we can of course sit tonight, but if it is a question of adjourning until next week I must point out that I expect two groups of visitors on Monday, and there may be an Executive Council meeting on Tuesday. I will be out of town on Wednesday and Thursday, and on Friday I expect to have the Brazilian Governor coming. I shall be exceedingly occupied myself, but Council can, of course, sit without me. The Colonial Secretary has suggested adjourning until Wednesday, the 14th. Would Members prefer to sit tonight? I see numerous heads shaking. I therefore adjourn the Council until Wednesday, 14th March, at 2 p.m.