

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 6th April, 1945.

The Council met at 2 p.m., the Hon. E. G. Woolford, O.B.E., K.C., Deputy President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

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

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. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 5th April, 1945, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

THE PRESIDENT'S ABSENCE.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: His Excellency the President is unable to be here this afternoon and has asked me to take the chair.

RECONSTRUCTION OF BISHOPS' HIGH SCHOOL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY communicated the following Message:—

MESSAGE No. 32.

Honourable Members of Legislative Council.

The Council will recall that the Governor's Message No. 2, dated the 13th of November, 1942, set out the terms and conditions on which the Bishops' High School for Girls was taken over by the Government. At that time the capital outlay involved was tentatively estimated at—

Purchase of land and building	\$17,436.00
Rebuilding and equipping	\$77,385.00
	<u>\$94,821.00</u>

towards which there was an anticipated free grant of \$50,000 under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, leaving a net sum of \$44,821 to be provided from local funds. The financial arrangements were approved by this Council by Resolution No. IX of the 30th of December, 1942, and the sanction of the Secretary of State for the Colonies was subsequently received, together with an intimation that the anticipated grant under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act had also been authorised.

2. As actual reconstruction work on the School was not considered possible in 1943 owing to shortage of building material, no funds were provided on the Estimates for that year. The sum of \$20,000 was provided in the 1944 Estimates to cover the cost of materials ordered from the United States of America, but no expenditure was incurred in that year and the vote has lapsed. Meanwhile, however, sketch plans were prepared and forwarded to the Town Planning and Architectural Adviser attached to the staff of the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies who used them as the basis for new designs which have been the subject of several discussions with the Director of Public Works, the School's Board of Governors and the technical staff of the Architectural Adviser in the light of local requirements, and agreement has now been reached.

3. The agreed designs contemplate a seating capacity of fourteen standard classrooms for 400 pupils and eight specialist rooms. The cost of rebuilding and equipping (apart from the cost of purchase of land and buildings) is now estimated by the Director of Public Works at \$110,000 including access roadway, playing fields and other ancillary works, and the revised capital outlay is therefore:

Capital Expenditure.	
(a) Purchase of buildings and land	\$ 17,436
(b) Rebuilding and equipping	\$110,000
	\$127,436
(c) Free grant under the Colonial Development and Welfare act	\$ 50,000
(d) Local Funds	\$ 77,436
	\$127,436

The new designs accordingly involve the provision from local funds of a sum of \$77,436, instead of \$44,821—an increase of \$32,615.

4. Arrangements have now been made to commence work on the resiting of certain existing structures, purchase of materials and the initiation of other preliminaries, and the Council is accordingly invited to approve of the revised proposals and to undertake to vote the necessary funds as required from time to time.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

29th March, 1945.

REPORT ON SUBORDINATE MEDICAL EMPLOYEES.

Mr. LEE: I would like to know exactly what is the procedure in respect of questioning, why a certain report has not been laid on the table. I know a departmental report of the Subordinate Medical Employees has been sent to Government and that due notice will be taken of it, but I would like to know why it has not been presented to this Council.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The report is addressed to the Governor and is now under consideration by His Excellency.

Mr. LEE: You see, Sir,—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I cannot allow you to debate it. Did you send in the report yourself?

Mr. LEE: No.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is it addressed to the Governor?

Mr. LEE: It is.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Then it does not come before this Council's notice unless it is referred to it by him.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

RECONSTRUCTION OF BISHOPS' HIGH SCHOOL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY ga
notice of the following motion:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 32 dated the 29th of March, 1945, this Council approves of the revised proposals regarding the acquisition, rebuilding and equipping of the Bishops' High School for Girls at a total cost of \$127,436 as set out in that Message, and undertakes to vote the necessary funds as required from time to time.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT BANKS
ORDINANCE.

Mr. LEE: I beg to give notice of a motion to amend the Co-operative Credit Banks Ordinance, No. 16 of 1944.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

UNIFIED WEST INDIAN CURRENCY.

MOTION—That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 22 of the 27th of January, 1944, this Council approves in principle of the early establishment of a unified currency note issued for the British West Indies and British Guiana to replace the existing separate currency note issues of each Colony. Such unified currency notes to be issued in denominations expressed both in dollars and in the equivalent in sterling at the existing fixed value of four shillings and two pence to the dollar.

This Council further approves of the unified currency note issue being controlled by a joint local board constituted by representatives of the Colonies concerned.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The motion standing in my name is of some importance and I regret the attendance is so small because Government wishes to have a full representative view on this subject. The motion refers to Message No. 22, dated 27th January, 1944, from the Governor to this Council, which was issued to Members of Council over a year ago, and I can only hope Members have got copies of that Message. If, as I think it is likely, they have not got copies it may be desirable to refer in some detail to the contents of the Message. I am sorry there are no copies available because all the spares have been destroyed in the fire at the Argosy premises. The Message was given very wide publicity. Copies were sent to the Chambers of Commerce of Georgetown and New Amsterdam and published in the Press with the idea of enlisting the views of authoritative bodies and also of the general public.

The Message to which I refer contained a memorandum sent to this Colony and the West Indian Colonies by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject of the establishment of a unified West Indian Currency. The Message pointed out that in 1923 an authoritative Committee which was known as the West Indian Currency Committee made an exhaustive review of the currency situation in the West Indies and British Guiana and came to the conclusion that it was desirable to unify the various currency systems in those Colonies. Of course this subject of unification of the currency has been on the tapis for many years before 1933, but that Committee was the first which made a definite and authoritative pronouncement on the subject.

Mr. JACOB: May I rise to a point of order, as the hon. mover of this motion is saying this is a most important matter! The Message was circulated in January, 1944, and this is the first intimation since then that I have that the matter is to be debated now. The Order Paper was not even sent out, and I am at a loss to follow what is being stated. I do not think it would be wise to pursue this matter. I think Members should be supplied with copies of the Message.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The hon. Member was in his seat yesterday afternoon when the hon. the Colonial Treasurer remarked that it was a matter of importance and he would prefer to introduce the motion today. If the hon. Member had said so yesterday, steps would have been taken to give the information required. In other words, I suggest to the hon. Member that the matter might be opened by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer so as to save time, and no final decision need be taken today. Those Members who are absent will have the benefit of reading tomorrow what the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has said, and so supply the deficiency

owing to the inability to supply hon. Members with another Message.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Quite apart from that, this motion has been on the Order Paper since the 13th March and has remained continually there since I gave notice on that date. Yesterday it was to be taken and, as the Deputy President has said, I asked the President to allow the Council to take it today. Nevertheless we are in the hands of the Council. If the Council wish it to be deferred, someone can move a motion to that effect.

Mr. JACOB: Because of the noise going on over the way I can hardly hear. I did not hear yesterday that this motion was going to be debated today.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Until the hon. Member is called upon to speak, I suggest he should come and sit with me here. I think it would be to the convenience of Members for the hon. the Colonial Treasurer to continue to speak on this motion.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: As I was saying when I was interrupted, this subject was considered by a Committee in 1923 which came to the conclusion that, although it was desirable to take steps to unify West Indian currency, there were several obstacles in the way. Those obstacles were—firstly, there were large surpluses of British silver in the West Indian Colonies which could not be got rid of at the time; secondly, the circulation of bank notes played a very predominant part in the circulation of paper currency in all these Colonies; and thirdly, the Colonies had somewhat different monetary units of account; for example, most Members know that up to quite recently in Trinidad the Government Accounts were kept in pounds sterling, whereas in British Guiana we keep our accounts in what is known as British West Indies dollars.

The Secretary of State pointed out in the memorandum that at the present time most of those obstacles have dis-

appeared. Most of the surplus British silver has been got rid of for the simple reason that the currency notes issued in all the West Indian Colonies have been put on a sterling basis. That is to say, they are not backed by large quantities of silver but by sterling securities held in London. Since that time all surplus silver has been repatriated to the United Kingdom. Next, as we were told when the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member's recent motion was being debated, the circulation of bank notes has fallen considerably. One rarely sees Bank Notes in this Colony these days. A predominant part is played by the Government Currency notes in all the Colonies. Since the war, arrangements have been made whereby the currency notes of the three major Colonies are accepted as legal tender in all those Colonies. For instance, the British Guiana Government note is accepted as legal tender in Trinidad and Barbados, and vice-versa; and the Trinidad note is accepted as legal tender in the Leeward and Windward Islands. The result is, that while this is convenient there is some confusion. That does not appear in this Colony but very much in Barbados where if you are a traveller you may be paid in notes—red British Guiana, dollar notes, blue Trinidad dollar notes green \$2.00 British Guiana notes, red Trinidad \$2 notes and multi-coloured Barbados notes. We in this Colony have now allowed that confusion to take place here because the Currency Commissioners have arbitrarily and with the co-operation of the Banks prevented the unrestricted circulation of notes of the other Colonies, but nevertheless it is a fact that the notes of each Colony are legal tender in the other Colonies. (I am referring of course to the Colonies of the Eastern group and not to Jamaica).

The position has now been reached where these obstacles which existed in 1923 no longer occur, and the Secretary of State has accordingly suggested that the time may now be ripe

for an attempt to be made to unify our West Indian currency. Such unification envisages control by a single Board and also a new West Indian coinage, but obviously the time is not ripe for introducing a new West Indian coinage as we cannot get it minted at the present time. Therefore what the Secretary of State proposes is that there should be, at least for the present, a unification of the currency notes issued by all the Colonies concerned, and then at a later date we should consider the introduction of a new West Indian coinage. Several points arise as the result of that suggestion. First of all, shall we accept it at all? Do we in British Guiana feel it is desirable for us to join in a unified currency with the West Indies? We have for many years talked about "the continental destiny of British Guiana" and that we like to paddle our own canoe. In Barbados when members of this Colony attended the West Indian Conference held there last year, we spoke of British Guiana's "continental destiny" and thereafter we were jokingly referred to as the representatives of the South American continent. It was, however, a recognition of our peculiar position. Notwithstanding all the facts I think it is true to say that we are now and quite likely to remain for some time allied economically to the West Indies and, therefore, it does seem the proper thing to do to join in any unification of the currency. As stated in the Memorandum this would strengthen and facilitate trade and intercourse between ourselves and the Islands.

The next thing is, if there is such a unified currency what form shall it take? Shall we adopt at once a new unit of account? It has been suggested that many people arriving in this Colony from abroad find it difficult to dissociate in their minds the West Indian dollar as we know it from the American dollar. They think the West Indian dollar is connected in some way with the American or Canadian dollar. People coming from England find it difficult to think in terms of dollars. I have noticed that the

hon. the Colonial Secretary and at times His Excellency the Governor find it very difficult to appreciate the true value of an amount when described in our dollars. In their minds they convert it back to sterling. And so people coming from abroad would like to find a unit of account in British Guiana and the West Indies which is arithmetically tied to the pound sterling—say a dollar (or call it what you like) which when multiplied by a precise figure equals one pound sterling. It was suggested in Trinidad, for instance, that the monetary unit should be a "Royal" of the value of two shillings (2/-) so that 10 "Royals" would exactly equal one pound (£1).

The next point is, who should control this unified currency? Should it be controlled by a Board existing in the West Indies or London? There are examples of London Boards controlling currency of the Colonies. The East African Currency Board sit in London and control all the currency, both notes and coins, of those Colonies, and the same thing can happen here.

Government tried to find out what public opinion really wants in this Colony. We approached the Chambers of Commerce in Georgetown and New Amsterdam. We had this memorandum published in the Press. We observed the leaders in the Press. We observed the various letters that appeared from time to time, and we think we have come to the proper conclusion as to what the public here would like. That conclusion is embodied in the motion before the Council today. The main point is that we think that in British Guiana there would be a definite objection to any change whatsoever in the present monetary unit of account, that is, the dollar of the value of four shillings and two pence. We feel that the people of the Colony for a long number of years have got accustomed to value wealth in terms of dollars and it would be a disservice to the Colony

to change it at the present time merely for the advantage of tying it to the pound sterling by some simple process of multiplication. It is a curious thing that as long as people have got accustomed to a particular unit of account they would very rarely wish to make a change. It is a point that on the sugar estates, even today, wages are still paid in four-penny "bitts," being the former equivalent of the "quarter guilder." They are not actually so paid but are accounted for and called in "bitts." I am amazed at the facility of the Overseers in converting the "bitts" into dollars and shillings, and the labourers too. Imagine what confusion would result if we change our dollar system and introduce some new unit! One very great difficulty which would also result is that all comparative statistics from year to year would have to be changed. If after the change a comparison with say 1933 has to be made we would have to change all the statistics into the new unit of account. We would find it extremely disagreeable to do so. So the motion before the Council assumes that if there is a unified currency we shall stick to our West Indian dollar; but we make this concession, that the new unified note while stating the dollar should also have the sterling equivalent denoted on it. That is, the \$1 note will have four shillings and two pence (4/2) denoted in some corner, the \$5 note will have £1.0s. 10d. and so on.

I come now to the question of the Board. As I said, there are examples of London Boards controlling Colonial currency. The people of Barbados passed a definite resolution accepting this Unified Currency Scheme but demanding that the Board shall be in the West Indies. The Chamber of Commerce of Georgetown emphatically declared that the controlling Board should be resident in the West Indies. That may be all very well, but on the other hand we know there is a lot of jealousy among the Colonies. If the Board is to be

established in the West Indies we will have to decide whether it is to be resident in Trinidad, or Barbados, or British Guiana. Every Colony will see to it that the other does not get any dominance over it. That, therefore, is in favour of a London Board. Nevertheless the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce definitely came out in favour of a local Board and, therefore, this motion before the Council adopts the idea of a local Board.

I have been asked by the hon. Member on my right (Mr. Seaford) to say what the Board will have to do. The Board will at first have no more to do than the present Currency Board in each Colony. So long as the unified currency is only a note issue the Board will only look after the issue of currency notes. They will arrange for the printing and supply of the new notes of the various designs, look after the supply of each Colony in accordance with requirements, invest the proceeds with proper securities and distribute the income from those investments in the proper proportion to each of the Colonies concerned. That will be the main function of the Board. Of course the meetings will not necessarily be frequent; they may have to meet once or twice a year. When, however, the time comes for a new coinage to be introduced, there will be a different story. The Board will have a good deal more work to do. They will have to look after the minting of the coins and assemble all the surplus British silver still in the Colonies, and they will have to establish a fairly large staff. That of course is a long range problem.

To return to the motion, I think at this stage I had better read the motion. It states:

"That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 22 of the 27th January, 1944, this Council approves in principle of the early establishment of a unified currency

note issue for the British West Indies and British Guiana to replace the existing separate currency note issues of each Colony. Such unified currency notes to be issued in denominations expressed both in dollars and in the equivalent in sterling at the existing fixed value of four shillings and two pence to the dollar.

"This Council further approves of the unified currency note issue being controlled by a joint local board constituted by representatives of the Colonies concerned."

So Members will have this in mind. Do they want a unified currency or not? If hon. Members do not, then reject the whole motion. Do hon. Members want a new monetary unit of account or prefer to carry on with the dollar? If hon. Members prefer that the unit of account should be a new one then, perhaps, some Member who has that view may move an amendment to the motion to express his view. Lastly, do hon. Members think the Board should be in London? If they do, an amendment should be moved in that sense. Government will be glad to have the views of Members. It is very important and I am very sorry that the commercial Members of the Council are not as well represented in Council today as I had hoped. I now ask that the motion be thrown open for the purpose of discussion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. LEE: I would like to find out what is the income derived at the present time by this Colony from the circulation of currency notes and seigniorage in these Colonies, and what will be the percentage if a unified currency in the West Indies is introduced, of the profits or income this Colony will receive. I would like to know that before I speak on the motion.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Of course the hon. Member is asking for precise facts which I cannot give at the

moment. Due entirely to war services we are deriving around \$90,000 from currency notes. That will not continue. As the notes circulation grows less, as it must, the income from that fund will of course drop.

So far as seigniorage of coins is concerned, what we are using is British silver, therefore we get no seigniorage from it. There is one coin which is peculiar to British Guiana—the four-penny bitt—and we do get a little profit from the mining of that bitt. I should add, though, that for the time being any profit we are getting from that we are holding in reserve because we have to replace the United States silver from which it is made. We are borrowing that silver as it were, and any profit we make is being held in reserve. Obviously I cannot say what our profits will be from the unified currency note issue, but it would be calculated and based on the proportion which our note circulation in this Colony bears to the total circulation of all the Colonies concerned. So that we may say that it would not affect the position at all. Whether we have our own notes or use the unified notes the position would be the same.

Mr. EDUN: I am somewhat perturbed over this measure of superimposition on us. I think I should read from the memorandum submitted on this matter by the Colonial Treasurer. Reading between the lines I see that this is an attempt to land us into the periphery of West Indian federation which we will oppose with all our strength and minds. Let us see what the Treasurer has to say on this matter:—

"The idea of unification with the West Indies in any sphere, political, economic or financial, has not been very popular in the past in this Colony and, in fact, there has been a large body of opinion definitely opposed to it. However, less strongly isolationist views probably

prevail to-day, and there is a growing disbelief in the 'continental destiny' of British Guiana."

By "today" I think the Treasurer means last year—in January, 1944. Reading further the Treasurer says:—

"Unification of the currency can and might be one of the first steps towards fiscal and political unity of the West Indies; and full economic co-operation between the Colonies is now a feature of the declared policy of the Comptroller for Development and Welfare."

I have been privileged to listen to a very able speech by His Excellency the Governor on the ideal of continental destiny and the potentialities of this big country. I have in my own sphere—perhaps my sphere of influence is larger than that of the Colonial Treasurer in this country, for he may be in contact with a few people, perhaps a few members of the Chamber of Commerce, officials of the Government and perhaps members of the Georgetown Club—but I happen to be in contact with thousands of people, and I will follow the lead given by the Governor that this country is a continental one and its destiny should be the same.

I feel some suspicion about the superimposition of a West Indian currency—that it will make British Guiana a unit of the other Colonies. I am definitely opposed to this measure because I see in it the danger of reducing the status of this country to that of a West Indian Colony. Let me say where this idea has come from. The Colonial Treasurer's memorandum states:—

".....and full co-operation between the Colonies is now a feature of the declared policy of the Comptroller for Development and Welfare."

Are we children to follow the Comptroller for Development and Welfare? Are we just to be led by him because he has recommended a grant

here and there for this country? Because he says so must we tumble head over heels and follow countries like Trinidad? I think this is an attempt to strangle the vastness of this country. I want to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether he has been able to secure public opinion on this matter by gallop poll? He says that the proposal was published in the newspapers, and that the Chambers of Commerce in Georgetown and New Amsterdam have expressed their views on it, and that was enough for him to bring this motion, expecting that the people of the Colony would support it. I absolutely do not agree with him, and I think the measure should be withdrawn. Frankly, if British Guiana currency notes have become legal tender in the other Colonies what else do we want? Why not let us have our own identity? Would it be believed that this Legislature is being asked to waive \$90,000 for the mere pittance of getting something out of a Board?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member. I tried to explain that it would make no financial difference whatever in our revenue because the revenue that would be derived would be exactly equal to what we would get from our own circulation.

Mr EDUN: That is a matter of opinion. That is a theory expressed by the Treasurer, but here I am seeing the practical thing before me. The profit from the circulation of British Guiana currency notes is \$90,000. Must I, as a Member of this Council, throw away that substance hoping to get a shadow? I am sure our income would be reduced to nothing. A Board created for the control of West Indian currency would require a huge staff, and all the income derived from the note circulation would go towards paying that staff.

I think this measure ought not to be supported at all. We should throw it out because I feel it is a superimposition on us by the Comptroller for Development and Welfare. I have spoken strongly on this question because I am asking myself: how will this West Indian currency fit in with that war stunt—the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission? Is the Anglo-American Commission only a war stunt to fool the people of the Caribbean Colonies? Is this another war stunt? I read something (I cannot find the paper) in which it was definitely mooted by the Colonial Office that this measure would hurt the American Government, and would be inimical to the spirit in which the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission was created. Are we at this juncture trying to defeat the spirit of unity among the Allied Governments? What has Governor Tussag to say about this?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Tussag is not yet a Governor. He is the co-Chairman of the Commission.

Mr. EDUN: I think this measure would not be in harmony with the spirit of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, but perhaps the Colonial Treasurer knows more about that than I do. He was a member of that Commission.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I was never a member of the Commission. I was a delegate at the Conference at Barbados, a different matter altogether.

Mr. EDUN: In any case I have spoken very strongly on the motion because I feel that the time is not ripe yet. Let us get out of the war and see what the new features will be in peace time. Why rush this matter? We are getting \$90,000 income from our currency note circulation now. Why put that in conjecture? I am unable to see any social, economic or financial benefit from this measure. Is it an

Imperial policy? What is it? I would be glad to know whether this matter will be determined by plebiscite. I am sure that the majority of the people would throw it out because, having been imbued with the continental destiny of this country, they wish it to have its own currency and the status of our Civil Service raised to that of a first-class Colony. I feel very strongly about it and I am going to vote against the motion.

Dr. SINGH: A good deal hinges on the information I desire to obtain. What are we in British Guiana? Are we the West Indies or separate from them? If we are with the West Indies I feel inclined to support the motion, but if not I shall have to reject it. It all depends on the definition we are going to obtain from the Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. THORNE: I think I should come in at this stage. I believe that when the West Indian Royal Commission came here they definitely indicated to the people of this country that one of the things which had kept them back all these years was their policy of isolation, and if I am not mistaken that Commission day after day endeavoured to impress upon those who appeared before them to drop the word "Guianese" and to use the words "West Indians" in relation to the peoples living in the area visited by the Commission. I think I can say so without contradiction. Were those members of the Commission statesmen, or were they merely neophytes? I do not think we could attempt to say that we have here in this Chamber anybody who can see as they saw, and who could probe as they probed. Therefore I think we can do very well indeed to consider the angle from which they looked at these things.

About 20 years ago in this very Chamber a fearful mistake was made to carry out the idea of separating British Guiana from the West Indies. We refused to allow potatoes from

Barbados to come into this country. The consequence was that West Indians felt that they had no interest whatever in British Guiana rice. It seems to me today that the memories of some people are so short that they do not realize that. When they refused to allow West Indian products to come here and wanted the West Indies to take our rice, even at a loss, they could not see that they themselves, by their speeches, conduct and action, prevented that unity and harmony that was essential. I shudder to think what would happen if New Zealand would have nothing to do with Australia. If New Zealand and Australia can go along together geographically, politically and otherwise, I cannot see why the West Indies and British Guiana cannot do likewise. Is it fear that Guianese are so small and so resemble pigmies that if they were allied with the West Indies they would lose manhood? I think not. I have lived in this country for half a century but I am still sometimes dubbed a West Indian although I have given my life for the good of this country of my adoption. I simply laugh when such suggestions are made, because I realize that I have been more Guianese than a large number of people who were born in this country. I have given more to this country than to the country in which I was born, and which educated me.

Here is a country which has not been able to progress for 50 years because of lack of population. I have been at various periods associated with capitalists who very nearly came here to develop this country. The question of population arose—if they invested capital where would they get the necessary population? Perhaps some Members feel that the destiny of British Guiana would be higher if it were made a Colony of India. Let us move along with our neighbours in the West Indies who have contributed very

largely to our population. Shall British Guiana stretch over thousands of miles towards India, or march side by side with the West Indian Colonies? The Mother Country is showing her interest in endeavouring to give us the necessary opportunities to cultivate the minds of the people of the country, more indeed than the accumulation of money which some people may hoard and not use. We are told now that we are to have a West Indian University. I am flabbergasted at the thought that a West Indian University would be a failure—that we must have a separate University for British Guiana, one in which we would teach the language of India, and not a University which would provide general culture, teach all the languages and all the cultures possible, and select those which are best for the country.

I would have no fear in going to the people of the country and putting these issues fairly and squarely before them, because they realize that the British Government has seen what it has to do in this part of the world. It is looking in the right direction to see that we benefit by the opportunities given us. I do not believe that a couple of million pounds distributed through the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission is a war stunt. I refuse to believe that what is being done here is being done because of Hitler. Those who say it is a war stunt believe that it is because of what the Germans have done. My own regret is that I have not had the privilege of reading the report of the Royal Commission in its entirety. I believe that speeches made here on this subject will be weighed and carefully considered in the West Indies and the Mother Country, and I hope Members will take a long view.

Unfortunately, in this Colony men are usually regarded and measured by the money they leave behind—a sorry picture so far as I am concerned. I

am not forsaking what I have been taught, and I unhesitatingly say that the people of the Colony are anxious to go forward, and what we shall preach is that the sooner we can get into close contact with our neighbours, Venezuela, Brazil, and the West Indies, and have people from those countries coming here more freely and feeling that they are at home, the better it would be for this country. The people in the West Indies are under the British flag, and I prefer the British flag. I have been to the United States of America where I could have remained and made a fortune. I have refused good positions there which would have brought me a handsome income, but that did not appeal to me. I preferred and still prefer the culture that was given me at birth, the culture of my youth and the culture which I have endeavoured all my life to live up to and to disseminate as part of my duty.

I sincerely hope that the people of this country will realize that now that we are talking about progress we must have the West Indies closely allied to us. We want to trade with Venezuela and Brazil, but that does not mean that we must place our destiny with theirs. We must ask Venezuela and Brazil to give us assistance until we can get our independence. Some of us may say: "Let us go to Brazil and take the same line of action." I do not support that. I have been hoping for and looking forward to the West Indies and British Guiana getting a measure of self-government and Dominion status, and rising to the position which they can occupy. I believe that the young people in this Colony and the West Indies are now seeing the rising sun a little bit more than the dawn, and they would look upon us as lacking in foresight and gratitude if we did not accept this proposal.

Show me another Government in history which has done more for its people than the British Government

has done. (Applause). We would be lacking in gratitude if we cut loose from the West Indies with their British outlook and declare ourselves a separate unit where we have the two major races at each other's throat, and where one race would say: "We look to India," and the other "We look to Great Britain." That is what is bound to happen, and those of us who have the courage of our convictions would strike it in the head now. We are not prepared to have any such thing here; we are not prepared to have any racial strife here. When we say that we do not want development under the British flag where are we going to? We own no home; where can we go to? We are a new race of different strains, and we have to develop ourselves. We cannot say we are going back to any country.

We are on the eve of getting a West Indian University, and something is being done to give our people scholarships. Are we to turn back and say we do not want those things? After all we talk about the vastness of British Guiana. What is the bulk of its size? Forests and desolation. To talk about its size is to talk nonsense. What we have to talk about is the number of people, and teach them character and a proper outlook on life. We do not want some people to stand up and keep other people in ignorance and worshipping Sahib. We are below the level of the sea in every sense of the word—not physically only but morally and mentally. Let us realize that and try to rise.

I am going to support this motion because I have been thinking along these lines and pleading for unification between the West Indies and British Guiana. I had the temerity here about 30 years ago to suggest that we should attract the surplus population from Barbados and Jamaica to this Colony, and I believe that if that were done now we would get development. Some

people can make good on the coastlands, but others cannot. I would like to see the West Indies and British Guiana brought into one, and this Colony developed and opened up. We should be first West Indians and after that Guianese. There is no harm in a person being described in Great Britain as a Yorkshireman, but he is an Englishman first. We should be West Indians first, and as we develop sufficiently we can say we are Jamaicans, Trinidadians, Barbadians or Guianese, but we cannot say yet that we are Guianese. I have been in this Colony nearly 55 years, and I feel that we can say so less now than before. Some of us, when it suits us, say we are Guianese. The only way to kill that is to have West Indians first, taking it from Honduras right round to here. After all, it is true we all start at the same point. We are the oldest people outside the Aborigines, the others have just come in. Let us go on together. I do not see there is anything to prevent us becoming a separate independent South American Colony. I do not see anything against that. Newfoundland and Canada were all in the first instance known as British North America, and when they developed and wanted to carry on on their own they were allowed to do so. Let us work together as one. I sincerely hope and I am looking forward to the Imperial Government going ahead with the job of putting money in this Colony and bringing the surplus West Indian population in. I cannot see how you are going to have that done if you say you are going to have small compartments each kicking against the other. As soon as they are put in one large group and they see value in each other the better it is. I heartily support this motion as being in keeping with all that has been done since the West India Royal Commission.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Before another hon. Member speaks I would like to say that I had allowed the last

hon. Member great latitude, as I felt he was encouraged to make the remarks he did by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer's reference to the Colony's destiny. But I must remind the Council that the subject under discussion is not a common nationality or a common flag but to have a common currency note, a practical unity of currency, something of value to be circulated within the Colonies. No one is against feeling West Indian, whether that person is coming from Barbados, or St. Vincent, or Trinidad. All that person and one in this Colony want to know is whether he is going to get full value for the currency note per dollar. I have not heard myself any reference made to the question of the design on the note. As you are all aware, our design pictures the Kaieteur Falls, and I think that is so largely a matter of destiny. I would be glad when the hon. the Colonial Treasurer does speak again that some reference be made of the importance in all the Colonies of keeping their design on the notes.

Mr. JACOB: You have ruled the last speaker to have been out of order but your ruling came a little late.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I never ruled.

Mr. JACOB: I find myself wholly in favour with this motion in principle. I am of the firm opinion that if anything is to be done for this Colony, for the native peoples, it takes the longest possible time and sometimes when it does come along the results or benefits are so few and little. I advocated years ago that there should have been more Government notes circulation of every denomination. After a long time, I believe, we have more Government notes now but not of every denomination, and the result of that has been that the two local Banks have had to complain that a great deal of their revenue has been lost and

to seek to get their licence fee reduced. It was a very profitable business to them and, I believe, this Government delayed too long to take over that very profitable business. I can foresee this is going to be a very profitable business for this Colony and the entire West Indies. When the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member said there can be no economic benefit to the Colony by this system, I must say, he had not probably grasped the essentials of this motion. I said I am in favour of the motion in principle. I do not understand it to mean there will be one design of note for the entire West Indies. If that is so, I would suggest it would not be the best thing for British Guiana. If there is going to be a general mix-up in the issue of West Indian currency notes, it would be most difficult to apportion the profits and British Guiana being a growing Colony, a Colony we have been told over and over again and I believe with vast potentialities, it would not be to its advantage.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not like to interrupt, but there should not be any difficulty whatever because the Control Board would have a complete record of the notes issued and in circulation in each Colony and the profits would be distributed in proportion to the currency in circulation in the contributing Colonies. Furthermore no difficulty is experienced in the African Colonies which follow that system. The East African Currency Board has functioned for many years with notes in more than one Colony and there has been no difficulty in apportioning properly the profits payable to each Colony.

Mr. JACOB: I want time to consider that aspect of the matter. It is most unfortunate what goes on in this Colony. If you are going to base the future on the past or the present, British Guiana is going to be in the background. It may be that, when you

take the notes in circulation here, there may be some kind of valuation put on the notes in circulation, but there is going to be a lot of losses in transit between British Guiana and the other Colonies. I maintain that each Colony should maintain its own identity. At the present time the Trinidad \$1 and \$2 notes cause confusion with the British Guiana notes, and in that respect if you have a unified system in colour British Guiana should have its own notes printed separately so that if we made a profit it should be for us separately. I am not in favour and, I think, I would have to be very thoroughly convinced that it would be the best thing to have British Guiana mixed up with the smaller and lesser West Indian Colonies in regard to the sharing of the profits.

As regards the question of the people, I must refer to what has been stated by the last hon. Member in regard to the different peoples inhabiting these Colonies. It is unfortunate, I say, that racial references are made in this Legislature from time to time. I think everyone of us should be proud of our nationality and our Motherland or Fatherland. There should be no reference made to India and to the peoples of India, who are here. If some of us do feel that we should look to India for inspiration, why should we not? It was most unfortunate—

Mr. THORNE: I rise to a point of correction! I never said that.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: As far as possible the hon. Member should refrain from answering the hon. Member along those lines. We all know what he means.

Mr. JACOB: I only want to make slight reference to it. I say the peoples of India who are here have a perfect right to refer to and get inspiration from India, but it must be borne in mind that we are all under the British

Flag. If my hon. friend has no Motherland to look to and has to look to the United Kingdom as his Motherland, we do not object to that. The hon. Member stated that Indians may look to India but the Africans will have to look to Great Britain.

Mr. THORNE: I did not say that.

Mr. JACOB: My hon. friend has forgotten.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Don't you know and feel that reference is not to every Indian but only to those who think there should be some form of control over this Government by India? Surely that is not inspiration. Let us get on with the motion.

Mr. JACOB: I only want permission to make slight reference to it. I have unfortunately, maybe for British Guiana, come to the conclusion that I should leave British Guiana, and anything I can do to encourage the people of my race to leave British Guiana I am inclined to do that, because I find we have these racial references being made and unfortunately this Government is supporting the practice. That is all I am going to say now, but I hope that references of that kind will not be made in future in this Council. You, sir, as Deputy President, may recall that since my entry here I have consistently refrained from making racial references, though no one is more loyal to the race to which he belongs than I am to mine, and I think it is regrettable that racial references are made by Government Officials not only in this Colony but other places, in Barbados recently, from time to time and they are supported by Government. I think the best thing we all can do is to look to our own Motherland, and those who have nothing to look up to are unfortunate, but those of us who have some tradition, some heritage, have an inherent, constitutional right to look up to those things. That is all I say about these racial references.

My hon. friend referred to Dominion Status. Unless we have this unified currency, unless we have co-operation with the West Indies in note issues circulation and coinage, in Customs Tariffs and things like those, this unfortunate Crown Colony will hardly go forward. I am of the considered opinion that should be the case. I do not share the view that British Guiana has no continental destiny. But that is so much bunkum and nonsense with a population of 350,000. Put 3 to 5 million people here and carry on as a continent and you may have a continental destiny but not as long as you have the Colonial Office bossing you and tying red tapes around you. What kind of continental destiny can we have when the Colonial Office controls every word uttered from that Chair? Every single word is controlled by the Colonial Office. You may smile, but I am not referring to the present occupant of the Chair. Every Governor is tied up by some Letters Patent or Royal Instructions, which must be carried out and are given to him by His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies. It is so much nonsense to talk of the continental destiny of British Guiana with a population of 350,000. Our destiny is with the West Indies. We view these things too lightly. If we want to have progress, if we want Indians to remain in the West Indies, it is time that we do something or let them all go back to their Mother Country and leave here to the people who make them what they are. I think the time has come when the peoples of these Colonies must work together and not work against each other, and the time has come when those of us who talk race here, there and everywhere must approach that first.

I take it, when we have an opportunity of this kind we should not talk race and do something else. I have never talked race. While we have a certain number of Indians in British

Guiana, we have a larger number in Trinidad. I am very familiar with the West Indies more so than most Members of this Council. I have made it a close study. Returning to my point, British Guiana with 350,000 people has practically half of that number as Indians. Trinidad with about 600,000 people has nearly 200,000 Indians. Jamaica with more than 1,250,000 people has about 25,000 Indians. Apart from these three Colonies I do not think the Indians total very much in the other West Indian Islands. If the Indians in these three Colonies—Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guiana—decide to leave, what would be the position of these Colonies? Will they be better? I do not think so, and I do urge all of us who talk race to consider well what we say. Think of a West Indian destiny we have to build up. I think it is clearly understood, as I have made it perfectly clear, that I am for a West Indian Federation, unity in everything connected with the West Indies. If that is so, it is certainly foolish to think and suggest that the Indians in these Colonies should not co-operate. If it is going to be said that those people should not look upon their Motherland for inspiration so that they could drink some of that inspiration of a people whose tradition is far greater than that of all the peoples of the world, then the sooner we get fed up and disgusted as I am the better it will be for all races.

Returning to the point of British Guiana's identity, while I was talking I was giving the matter further consideration and I felt it would be in the interest of British Guiana to retain its identity, to retain its own design and to have it clearly made out to the other West Indian Colonies that we with our 350,000 people might have the occasion to increase that number two or three times what it is and there would be greater note circulation as a result and, therefore, it would be to our

advantage to have our own note issues specifically marked so that when the proper time comes for the checking up of the issues of notes our own issue could be known and we would be able to know what is our appropriate profit from this new undertaking. I do not pretend to know anything about this matter, but I was wondering whether the sum of \$90,000 as annual profit, as stated by the hon. mover of the motion, takes into account the possible loss of notes, or whether the profit is based purely on interest accrued from investments. There must be a huge deterioration of notes and loss by various ways, and the profits shown would certainly not be the real profits that would accrue to this Colony. If for no other reason than for future profits, there should be a time when some check is made of it and British Guiana's identity would help very largely in securing additional profits from this new venture. I am sorry one or two Members have spoken against this motion. If they would consider this matter they would not do so. I have read various documents circulated since 1944 and made notes on them, but it was not possible for me to find them. I would just refresh my memory from the documents the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member showed me. I want to congratulate Government at this late stage in attempting to do this thing, and I trust very much time is not lost before this thing goes into operation.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I can only regard this motion as a very timely one, and I use those words advisedly. It is timely in more than one sense. Those of us, who can, will remember when the idea was first mooted certain people felt that the introduction of a Message of this kind would probably result in a depleted currency in British Guiana. Government at the time took immediate steps to allay the fears in the minds of those people, and I am very glad to see this motion in its present form. I was somewhat

surprised when I came into this Chamber to find that certain hon. Members had spoken against the motion. It may well be, as they have not had the opportunity of studying the benefits to be derived from a matter of this kind but, perhaps, they are unable to find useful textbooks on the subject and so have not given the matter the consideration it deserves. Those of us who have given it consideration have come to the conclusion that certainly it is a progressive step to take, and so far as I am concerned the motion will receive my wholehearted support.

I was surprised at the position because I remember distinctly at the time it was mooted in this Council it was first understood Government would introduce its own note issue and then after that increase it, because it was held, and quite rightly too, that there was profit in this undertaking which was being used up by the Banks operating it. The idea now is to enlarge the position by some sort of unification with the other West Indian Colonies. I am not one who feels that this step will result in any loss at all as the last hon. Member had said, but perhaps we may not receive the full benefit which we hope to get out of it. My own view of the matter is that if the Board which is going to be set up to control the issues functions properly and satisfactorily there is no reason why this Colony should not receive its full proportion of the profits derived from those issues. Reference has been made to loss, notes destroyed etc., which is very far fetched indeed. I do not know how soon that can be taken into account, perhaps the next 50 or 100 years would be the more likely period for any such eventuality whether they be Government or Bank issues. My smattering knowledge tells me that in any event ample provision will be made as to the future cashing of any notes outstanding, though they may be outstanding for a considerable time. Hon.

Members are aware of the fact that quite a number of people in the Colony are still producing the old British Guiana Bank notes. That Bank has gone out of existence so many years, more than I can remember, and yet we know more of its notes are being resurrected. The fact is they are still there as well as they are being presented. Government is bound legally and morally to redeem those notes. It is not an ordinary debt and cannot be prescribed although the note is on demand. It is one of those debts which cannot be prescribed.

As regards the point made by the hon. Member for North-Western District there can be and will be no prohibitive profit from the notes issued which can be taken into account within my generation or the next generation. There is a little point about it, and that is why I have elected to deal with it. In the apportioning of the profits to each Colony very great care must be taken that the application for note issues from a particular Colony is not materially in excess of the requirements of that Colony. If, as I understood the Colonial Treasurer—and I believe he is right—the apportionment of profits will be based on the amount of currency notes in circulation by each Colony, the danger, as I see it, is that a Colony may apply for a greater number of notes than it requires, and unless care is taken to see that such a thing does not happen it may well be that there might be some dislocation of the distribution of the profits in a particular period. In other words, I am not suggesting that it will happen, but there is that possibility. Dealing with Governments I cannot imagine such a thing happening, but I refer to it because there is that possibility, and I hope some notice will be taken of it.

I wish to make one further comment about the proposed Board. The words used in the motion are:—

"This Council further approves of the unified currency note issue being controlled by a joint local board constituted by representatives of the Colonies concerned."

I would like some further explanation of that. Am I to understand that the representatives on the Board will be nominated by each Colony? Am I to understand also that the Board will function in one of the territories of the West Indies, including British Guiana, in which this note issue will be distributed, or will the Board be nominated and function in London? I think the answer to that question should be made clear.

Mr. SEAFORD: If the hon. Member had been here at the opening he would have heard all that.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I am sorry I was not here.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The idea is to have a local Board.

Mr. de AGUIAR: A joint local Board functioning in London, or a joint local Board functioning in some part of the West Indies? There is great difference between the two. I can visualize the appointment by the various Colonies of gentlemen who belong to the West Indies and British Guiana but happen to be resident in London, and the Board carrying out its functions in London in the same way as I can visualize a Board nominated by the people of the West Indies and functioning in some part of the West Indies.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I also gave the illustration of the East African Board.

Mr. de AGUIAR: If that is the reference then those Boards are functioning in London. It seems to me then that the idea is that although it will be a Board composed of representatives from the various Colonies it will function in London.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is not what is intended.

Mr. de AGUIAR: In that case I do not proceed with the point. I am very glad to hear that the Board will be composed of representatives of the West Indies and British Guiana, and will function in some part of the West Indies or British Guiana. That being the case I have no desire to proceed further with the point, but I had very good reason for raising it because, when the idea was first mooted, there was a suggestion that the Board should be formed and function in London.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. Member is quite right to make the point because in my opening remarks I said that this motion envisaged a West Indian Board functioning in the West Indies and constituted by representatives of each Colony, probably nominated by each Colony, but I also said that an alternative suggestion was that it should be managed by a London Board, and I wished the views of Members on that particular point. I take it that the hon. Member's view is against a London Board.

Mr. de AGUIAR: In that event I am afraid I shall have to proceed with the point. I am very grateful for the explanation, and I say most unhesitatingly that the Board should be composed of representatives of the various Colonies concerned nominated by each Government, and that it should function in some part of the West Indies.

Mr. SEAFORD: Which Colony?

Mr. de AGUIAR: There can only be three—Trinidad, Barbados and British Guiana. I do not want to take pride of place, but if I were asked I would certainly say British Guiana. As a matter of fact I think that would be taken for granted. I would like to see the Board functioning in British Guiana, because it seems to me that we

might gain quite a lot in that way. It might probably be the means of our being put on the map somehow, and being referred to. Now that the position is made perfectly clear I do urge that the attitude this Government should take up is that the Board should be composed of representatives of the Colonies concerned, and should function in some part of the territories, preferably in British Guiana.

Another reason why I support the motion is that events have shown that there is no room in this world for isolation. If we want to get ahead we have to pool our efforts. I have heard even those Members who oppose this motion today speaking on other subjects and advocating and pleading very strongly for the pooling of the common effort so that we might make some headway. This is an effort in that direction. This world has no room for people who want to stand on their own. I have no desire to indulge in any controversy that was raised. I am conscious of the fact that when I speak here I speak for one of the minorities. I have previously warned this Government of the attitude of mind of certain people, even though in the same breath they refer to themselves as being British Guianese.

When those references were made I took the opportunity more than once, I think, to refer to the danger that appeared to be looming on the horizon with respect to the development of a minority question in this Colony. I congratulate the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Thorne, on his outspokenness on the subject. He spoke freely and frankly, and what is more, I venture to say that he spoke for the large majority of this community, irrespective of the percentage of those who claim to be in the majority. We do not want here to talk racial matters; we have not got any. I hear people talking about leaving this country. Where will they go? Is there a better country than British Guiana? Certainly none that I

know of, and I have travelled a great deal. Let us forget these things and get down to the job.

On the question of identity there is a lot to be said for, and probably against it. All I would like to say is that if it is found practicable to produce a note issue which would give British Guiana some identity I think that is about all we should hope for. For example, I like to look at the pound note which seems to travel all over the world. It has such a beautiful appearance, and yet I do not see anything in it that makes it appear to be ever so much different from any other note. I do not think we should allow the question of identity to play too prominent a part in this matter. We might try to prepare a design that would be suitable to the various Colonies concerned, and if it is at all possible to retain any particular identity we might do so, but do not allow that to interfere with the project. Do not let us bother about putting a toucan in the corner of the note, or a rice field or cane field in order to establish British Guiana's identity. As a matter of fact, if we put a toucan some people might think that we are part of Australia. I am not going to say anything more. I am going to support the motion and I hope it will be carried in its entirety.

Mr. SEAFORD: In rising to support the motion I feel rather at a loss, because I do not remember the actual wording of the Governor's Message, but he has put it so clearly that I do not think anybody could be at a disadvantage. I am not entirely happy about the wording of the motion because it refers to "a unified currency note issue for the British West Indies and British Guiana." We know that British Honduras and Jamaica are not included, but I am wondering whether the motion as worded will be suitable. However, I will leave that to the legal brains. I have merely drawn attention to it. I think the mover thinks it may be in order because it says: "... this Council approves in principle."

I cannot help feeling that the idea of a unified currency is a step in the right direction. Contrary to the opinion of one hon. Member, I feel that we are economically, politically and socially all in the same boat with the other Colonies in the Caribbean, and we cannot get away from that. I feel that the sooner we get together and pull together the better for all of us. Many years ago I moved a motion in this Council for a unified Customs tariff. My idea was, if possible, to bring these Colonies closer together. I am still of that opinion. At that time our rice industry was in a very bad position, and I felt that by doing so we might get a protected market in the West Indian Colonies which we have not got today. For that reason I feel that it is essential that we make a start in unifying something.

A unified currency cannot work to the detriment of this Colony, but in fact to the reverse. One hon. Member referred to the \$90,000 income derived from our currency note circulation, and said we were going to lose that. I personally cannot see how we are going to lose anything at all. Our currency note circulation brings in a certain income, and the total income from the unified currency note issue will be distributed *pro rata* among the various Colonies according to their note circulation. We will all get our fair share, and in ordinary circumstances I cannot see how this Colony would suffer any loss.

With regard to the composition of the Board, whether there is a joint local Board or a joint Board in London I do not think it would bring in any more money. I believe the mover of the motion said that at present there is no seigniorage in silver. Is the Board going to have any control of minting? If it does then our revenue should be considerably increased. I would like the mover to tell us what the duties of the Board will be.

There is one further point I would like to make. Whatever we do in this Colony, for a considerable time to come we must maintain our dollar system here. We must not change our monetary value of 4s.2d. to the dollar. I know that other suggestions have been put up, but if we accept anything of that kind we are going to play havoc with the workers in this Colony, and they are the people we have to consider. It may be very inconvenient to officials who come to this Colony, but I hope that before long we may be able to educate them in our currency. It is very much simpler than dealing with £.s.d. Is this Board going to have authority at any time to change the monetary unit of this Colony? If it is I am not going to be too happy because, although we will have a representative on the Board, the decision of the majority will be carried. I would like to have that point made very clear as therein lies a certain amount of danger. I think we should stipulate that we accept this proposal on the condition that our monetary system of dollars and cents will remain the same as it is to-day. On that condition I am entirely in favour of a unified currency, and I agree that the sooner it is established the better for all concerned.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I did not intend to take any part in this debate, but having listened to the previous speakers I am still a little bit doubtful as to how much benefit is going to be derived by this Colony from a unified currency. If each Colony would be entitled to the profits from its note circulation it appears to my lay mind that there must be certain restrictions to the circulation of one Colony's notes in another Colony. If a Colony is allowed to issue more notes than is required for its own circulation, and those notes find their way into another Colony they would reduce the circulation of that Colony's notes to its detriment in the apportionment of profits. There must be some restriction

on the influx of West Indian notes in this Colony, because if the circulation of notes in this Colony is to be restricted by the influx of notes from the other Colonies I am doubtful of the benefit to this Colony to be achieved by a unified currency note issue. That is a danger which I hope will be strictly guarded against.

I am going to support the motion because I believe that the proposal would help to bring the Colonies closer together. If that is achieved it would offset what we might lose on the circulation of the unified currency notes.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think we have had a very interesting debate, a much better one than I had hoped. The views expressed by Members have covered an extremely wide field. Some of them, however, have not been quite germane to the motion, nevertheless I wish to add my congratulations to those of the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) on the speech made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Thorne.

In my opening remarks I asked Members to address their minds to two important points. One was the retention of the existing monetary unit of account, the West Indian dollar, and the second was the Board of control, but it was only in the last two speeches—those of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford), who dealt with the monetary unit, and the hon. Member for Central Demerara — that those two points received any attention at all. I was very glad to hear their remarks because that is just what Government wants to know. If we accept a unified currency then the most important thing is: are we going to change our unit of account?

Since Members, except the hon. Member on my right (Mr. Seaford), have not touched on the point at all,

I take it that the form in which the motion is expressed is accepted by all. In the motion it is stated deliberately:

“This Council approves of the unified currency notes to be issued in denominations expressed both in dollars and in the equivalent in sterling at the existing fixed value of four shillings and two pence to the dollar.”

So I assume that that is entirely accepted by this Council. I agree with the hon. Member on my right that any change in that respect is bound to give a considerable amount of trouble in this Colony and in the West Indies.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) touched on the point of a local Board. The motion says:—

“This Council further approves of the unified currency note issue, being controlled by a joint Local Board constituted by representatives of the Colonies concerned”.

What is intended by that is a Board constituted in the West Indies and functioning in the West Indies, comprised of representatives appointed by each of the constituent Governments. I realize that the location of the Board will give some trouble. There will be inter-island jealousy. I for one hope that I should be a member of the Board, and would prefer that it should function in Barbados, because I would like to have at least two trips a year attending meetings in Barbados, but it really does not matter where the Board functions; the same results would be achieved. The main point is that the Board should not be empowered to make any changes of principle without the consent of the contracting Governments.

The only opposition to the motion came from the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, and I am not at all sure on what grounds his opposition

was based. He played with words and with the suggestion that we are going to lose \$90,000 a year. I tried to point out that in any case that large income was wholly fortuitous. It was derived from an expanded circulation due to war circumstances. Our normal currency note circulation is very much less, and I assume that our normal income would be about one-third of that. In any case, whatever happens we are not at all likely to lose any revenue from a unified currency note issue, because it would be distributed in proportion to the currency note issue in circulation in each territory. The hon. Member forgot one point. The whole object of this set-up of a unified currency is the aim to have a new West Indian coinage, and if and when that happens the profit derived from the new coinage would be large, and we in common with the West Indies would stand to gain. At the present time we use British silver and make no profit at all on it. If and when the time comes for coinage to be minted and used here we should expect a substantial amount of profit. I cannot understand how it can be reasoned that we are going to lose financially.

Certain argument was raised in regard to the design of the unified currency note, and you, sir, regarded that as important. The hon. Member for the North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) seemed to suggest that it was possible to have a unified note with separate designs for each Colony. That, of course, would be defeating the entire object. The object is to have one note for the Colonies, and it is inconceivable that with that one note you should have separate designs. The best we can hope to achieve is some design common to all the Colonies concerned. I sympathize with the artist who is going to be called upon to design that note. We would like to have our Kaieteur Fall and our toucan; Barbados its lady riding on a chariot, and

Trinidad a picture of what appears to be a lake fringed with palm trees. How the artist is going to combine in one design something common to all the Colonies concerned defeats me. Nevertheless, I suppose some artist will try, but I would be content, speaking for myself, if the note bore the simple signification "British Guiana and the West Indies," or "West Indies and British Guiana."

The hon. Member for Georgetown North touched on a very important point. He raised the question of the Customs Union which is now under discussion in this Colony. The Chamber of Commerce has a Committee at work now on the suggestion that there should be a Customs Union. This goes hand in hand with things like unified currency and a unified West Indian University. With a Customs Union British Guiana has more to gain than any other West Indian Colony, for the simple reason that we supply the West Indies with a larger volume and value of goods than they supply to us. Everyone knows we sell them every year over \$1,000,000 of rice while we do not buy \$1,000,000 worth of anything. So British Guiana has the most to gain, and I entirely agree, however we may feel about the Colony and its continental destiny, that we are still economically allied with the West Indies, and we have to try and combine with them in every direction that we can short of Federation. This is the beginning and, therefore, let us try and adopt the scheme as quickly as possible.

The last speaker, the hon. Member for Western Berbice, is not present. He raised a point which I did not quite follow. He said that some Islands may issue more notes than are required, and those notes may filter into this Colony, thereby reducing the amount of profit that will come to us. I cannot follow that, but I would like to tell him that notes are issued in exchange for sterling in London; that is to say,

Colonies requiring notes for their trade will automatically have to provide a sterling balance in London to cover those notes. Consequently, no Colony can order through the Central Board more notes than it requires, merely for the purpose of pushing around notes to other Colonies. It has to find backing for it. During the crisis after the recent fire in Georgetown, hon. Members know we put out in this Colony a very large amount of new currency notes to the tune of \$100,000, and every dollar of those notes had to be backed by sterling in London. That will be so even if the currency is unified. I am very grateful that the motion has received the support it has.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: We have had a very interesting debate, and I propose to put the motion.

Motion put, and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT OF COUNCIL

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I wish to consult hon. Members about our meeting next week. The ordinary Members' Day will be Wednesday, and with hon. Members' concurrence I propose to adjourn the Council to Thursday next owing to other business, but I am sure the President will allow the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, to have his motion taken then. Though it is not Members' Day the President will give his motion priority if he wishes. The Council stands adjourned to Thursday next at 2 p.m.