

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL****THURSDAY, 10th JULY, 1947.**

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C., President, in the Chair.

**PRESENT:**

- The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Campbell Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C.
- The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.
- The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. F. W. Holder, K.C.
- The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.
- The Hon. Sir Eustace Woolford, O.B.E., K.C. (New Amsterdam).
- The Hon. F. J. Seaford, C.B.E. (Georgetown North).
- The Hon. C. V. Wight, O.B.E. (Western Essequibo).
- The Hon. J. I. de Aguiar (Central Demerara).
- The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated).
- The Hon. J. B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).
- The Hon. F. Dias, O.B.E. (Nominated).
- The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E. (Georgetown Central).
- The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E. (Georgetown South).
- The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).
- The Hon. H. C. Humphrys, K.C. (Eastern Demerara).
- The Hon. C. R. Jacob (North Western District).
- The Hon. A. G. King (Demerara River).
- The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).
- The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).
- The Hon. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

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

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

The Clerk read prayers

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 13th June, 1947, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS****PRINCESS ELIZABETH'S MAJORITY & BRETROTHAL**

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members, I would like to refer to the Resolution passed by this Council on the 25th of April in which the Council tendered its heartfelt felicitations to Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth on having attained her majority, and to say that I have now received a message from the Lady-in-Waiting to Princess Elizabeth which reads:

"I desire on behalf of Princess Elizabeth to thank the Members of the Legislative Council for their Message of good wishes on the occasion of Her Royal Highness's 21st birthday, which the Princess very much appreciates".

Hon. Members, we have now learnt of the betrothal of Princess Elizabeth and I feel quite sure that I should be interpreting aright the wishes both of this honourable Council and of the people of British Guiana, if I send a further message to Princess Elizabeth conveying to her our warmest and most loyal greetings on the occasion of her betrothal and our best wishes for her future happiness. That I propose to do. (applause).

Council unanimously approved.

**FARMERS' GUARANTEED MINIMUM PRICES**

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. W. L. Heape) communicated the following Governor's Message:—

**MESSAGE No. 17**

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

As you are aware Government has from time to time guaranteed to pay minimum prices for certain farm products purchased by the Government Produce Depot and the prices so guaranteed are subject to periodic review.

2. The present guarantee as to prices expires on the 14th of July, and the *ad hoc* Marketing Committee has re-

commended, with the full support of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee, that they should be continued for another year.

3. The prices in question are as follows:—

Plantains	2 cents per lb.
Sweet Cassava	1¼ " " "
Sweet Potatoes	2½ " " "
Eddoes	1¼ " " "
Tannias	3¼ " " "
Yams (Buck and Bell)	4½ " " "

When the matter was last under review prices were also fixed for pulses but as there has been no worthwhile response in production, it is not proposed to renew the guarantee of a price for the purchase of this commodity.

4. It is estimated that payment of the prices may involve a loss of possibly \$20,000, although profits made on other commodities bought and sold by the Depot may absorb a part of this loss. In the last message to Council on this subject it was stated that there might be a loss of about \$50,000 on the working for the period now coming to a close, but it is satisfactory to be able to record that the deficit is now likely to be only about \$1,000.

5. The need for ensuring maximum supplies of locally grown food is still important, and the extension of the period for purchase at guaranteed prices will, it is hoped, encourage farmers to maintain local food production at a high level. I therefore have the honour to invite Honourable Members to approve of the continuance of the above-mentioned guaranteed prices.

C. C. WOOLLEY,  
Governor.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
British Guiana.  
17th June, 1947.

#### PAPERS LAID

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following documents:—

The Report of the Superintendent of Prisons for 1946.

The Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Imperial War Graves Commission.

The Report of the Trotman Trust Fund for 1946.

The Post Office Telegraph Amendment) Regulations No. 13 of 1947.

Schedule of applications for gratuities from the dependents of deceased teachers for 1946.

Statements of the accounts of the Georgetown Mariners Club for the year ended 31st December, 1946.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. F. W. Holder) laid on the table the following:—

The draft Specialist Officers (Consultation) Regulations.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. McDavid) laid on the table the following:—

The minutes of the meetings of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council held on the 26th of June and the 3rd of July, 1947.

Supplementary Estimate for the quarter ended 30th June, 1947, embodying Schedules of Additional Provisions approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council during the Quarter.

Supplementary Schedule of services and works to be met from loan funds under Loan Ordinance No. 5 of 1945.

#### GOVERNMENT NOTICES

##### FARMERS' GUARANTEED MINIMUM PRICES

The COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motion:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 17 of the 17th of June, 1947, this Council concurs with the recommendation of the *ad hoc* Marketing Committee that the Government Produce Depot minimum prices guarantee, as set out in the Message, should be extended for a further year from July 15th, 1947, to July 14th, 1948.

##### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills intituled:—

An Ordinance to regulate and control prospecting and mining for Radio-active minerals and the export thereof and for purposes connected therewith.

An Ordinance to confer on the Supreme Court of British Guiana temporary jurisdiction in certain matrimonial causes where the relevant marriage took place on or after the third day of September, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine.

An Ordinance to provide for the temporary registration of certain medical practitioners for the

purposes of the Colonial Medical Service (Consolidation) Ordinance, Chapter 186.

An Ordinance further to amend the Tax Ordinance, 1939

Notice was also given of the intention to move, at a later stage, the suspension of the relevant Standing Rules and Orders to enable those Bills to be taken through all their stages at this meeting.

#### SPECIALIST OFFICERS (CONSULTATION) REGULATIONS, 1947

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL also gave notice of the following motion:—

That, this Council approves of—

- (a) the Specialist Officers (Consultation) Regulations, 1947.
- (b) the repayment by Government of 50% of fees paid into the Treasury by Specialist Officers under the Specialist Officers (Consultation) Regulations, 1947, with effect from the 1st of January, 1947.

#### GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' TEMPORARY WAR BONUS

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motions and also of his intention at a later stage to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Rules and Orders to enable the first motion to be taken at this meeting:—

That with reference to Resolution No. XXII of the 19th of January, 1947, this Council approves of the payment of temporary war bonus to Government employees in respect of the year 1947 in accordance with the following revised rates:—

30% on the first \$720 per annum  
10% on the next \$720 per annum  
Flat rate of \$24 per month on all salaries over \$1,440 per annum.

#### 2nd. QR: SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE 1947.

That, this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimate for the quarter ended 30th June, 1947, embodying Schedules of Additional Provision approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council during the quarter.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES AND WORKS

That, this Council approves of the Supplementary Schedule of services and

works to be met from loan funds under Loan Ordinance No 5 of 1945 which has been laid on the table on the 10th of July, 1947.

### UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

#### RECONDITIONING OF ALL PUBLIC ROADS

Mr. THOMPSON gave notice of the following motion:—

WHEREAS the roads of the Colony on account of heavy vehicular traffic, poor materials used for road building and methods of repair and seasonal rains, have for too long a time been, and continued to remain in an unsatisfactory condition, and at certain periods are a great danger to the lives of persons who are compelled to use them;

AND WHEREAS this unsatisfactory condition of the said roads could only be remedied, and the roads made safe and satisfactory for the travelling public by the use of materials capable of standing up to the present and increasing heavy vehicular traffic;

AND WHEREAS this improvement would necessarily call for a large expenditure on granite and other suitable and adequate road-building materials, machinery and labour;

BE IT RESOLVED that this honourable Council recommends to Government the raising of a loan of \$5,000,000 (five million dollars), or any sum estimated to be required for the proper reconditioning of all country roads with materials and workmanship which would render them safe and of a permanent nature and which could be used without danger to life or loss of property at any season and throughout the year.

#### 42 HOURS NORMAL WORKING WEEK

Mr. CRITCHLOW gave notice of his withdrawal of the motion standing in his name and of his intention to move the following in its stead:—

THAT WHEREAS recent Trade Union and Labour Conferences in Europe and in the West Indies have urged the introduction of social and industrial legislation in the interest of the working class;

AND WHEREAS the World Federation of Trade Union Conference held in London in February, 1945, in its declaration on Post War Reconstruction and Immediate Trade Union Demands stated:—

"This Conference further emphasizes that increasing production fully justifies, and indeed demands, the extension of the leisure hours of working people. Accordingly, it demands the speedy and universal introduction of a *maximum working week of forty hours without loss of pay*. This demand is made without prejudice to the claim for a *shorter working week* by trade unions in countries where economic and industrial development makes this possible and desirable. Every worker should be guaranteed an annual holiday or vacation at full pay of at least two weeks' duration with appropriate arrangements for casual workers. All public holidays should be paid for."

AND WHEREAS the Caribbean Labour Congress held in Barbados in September 1945, in its report on Social and Industrial Legislation, resolved:-- "Congress desires to invite the Colonial Governments in the Caribbean area to introduce legislation providing for a *maximum working week of 40 hours where the principle is not applied, and that in so doing there should be no reduction of wages.*"

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that the Government of British Guiana should give favourable consideration to the recommendations of these Conferences;

AND WHEREAS the present tendency is for a gradual reduction in hours of work by stages towards the goal set above;

RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommend to Government the need for the early introduction of legislation to limit the normal working week to forty-two hours.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

##### WEST BANK RIVER DEFENCES

Mr. EDUN asked and the COLONIAL SECRETARY laid over replies to the following questions:—

Q 1.--Is Government aware that 98 reinforced concrete piles were being driven in the wrong places, and had to be abandoned at the River Defences on the West Bank?

A --The piles mentioned were driven in the centre of the earth dam. It was intended that a row of piles be driven in the front of the dam but by an error they were driven two feet inside it. After inspection it was decided that rather than withdraw the piles they should be left in position

as they helped considerably to strengthen the dam.

Q 2.--If the answer is in the affirmative, what action has been taken against the person or persons responsible?

A --In all the circumstances, it was not considered that any special disciplinary action should be taken.

Q 3.--Is Government aware of the fact that about five sections of wall built on the West Bank River Defences, had to be broken up immediately after it was built, and had to be re-casted?

A --It is the case that certain sections of wall recently cast along the West Bank River Defences had to be recast shortly afterwards. This was due to a settlement in the foundations on which the wall rested. This is no uncommon occurrence in the building of sea or river walls in this Colony, as the behaviour of soil foundations is most uncertain and unpredictable.

Q 4.--Who is the person or persons responsible?

A --The District Engineer, West Coast, Demerara, was in charge of these works.

##### SCHOOL BOY EMPLOYED BY P.W.D.

Q 5.--Is Government aware that a school boy attending Government aided school at Uitvlugt is being paid as a labourer by the Public Works Department for work for many fortnights on the West Coast, when during the specific time and dates referred to above, the school register recorded him as being present and attending school?

A --Yes.

Q 6.--If the above is in the affirmative, what action Government intends to take?

A --The Law Officers are considering the report of investigations made with a view to taking appropriate action against the officer responsible for making the false entry.

##### WEST DEMERARA DISTRICT ENGINEER

Q 7.--Is Government satisfied that the District Engineer in charge of the West Demerara is a person fully qualified to perform the said duties as District Engineer?

A --Government is satisfied that the Officer in Charge of the West Coast, Demerara, is capable and competent to carry out the duties entrusted to him as District Engineer, West Coast, Demerara.

Q 8.--Will Government lay on the table the qualification of this gentleman who is serving as a District Engineer on the West Demerara District ?

A --The qualifications of the Officer serving in the post of District Engineer, West Coast, Demerara, are as follows:--

Professional Qualifications :  
Sworn Land Surveyor under Land Surveyors Ordinance, Certificate dated August, 1915.

Other Qualifications :

(a) Served as an apprentice to the Colonial Civil Engineer, Public Works Department, from June 1910 to February, 1915.

(b) War Service from 1915 to 1919.

(c) Surveyor, Department of Lands and Mines, from 1919 to 1932.

(d) In charge of Public Works, embracing drainage, irrigation and sea defence works, roads, bridges and buildings from 1939 to date.

#### RE-EMPLOYMENT OF GOVERNMENT PENSIONERS

Q 9.--How many pensioners are at the present time re-employed in all

departments of Government ? Give names, dates of re-employment, salaries being received and pensions being received.

A --Eighteen. Particulars are given in the attached Schedule.

Q10.--Will Government state how soon this irrational policy of re-employment of pensioners will be terminated ?

A --There is no such irrational policy as the Honourable Member suggests. Pensioners are mainly re-engaged on a temporary basis in posts for which they have special qualifications and for which no other suitable candidate was available at the time of their appointment. In the few cases where pensioners are not employed in posts of a purely temporary character they will be replaced as and when this can be done without detriment to the efficiency of the public services.

Q11.--Will Government place on the table for general information the number of applicants seeking employment in the various departments of Government ?

A --It is not possible to answer this question as the position changes from day to day. Applications are continually received by all departments either for specific posts or for employment generally; if the applicants are not acceptable or there is no vacancy they are informed accordingly.

#### List of Pensioners at present re-employed by Government.

Name	Date of re-employment	Post	Present Salary Scale	Annual Pension
Belmonte, C. G. (a)	1.10.32	Clerk, Lands & Mines Department	\$1,920 p.a.	\$ 167.66
Klass, S. C.	1. 1.39	Supernumerary Constable, Magistrates Department ..	\$ 384 p.a.	\$ 132.60
Cameron, P. N.	1. 1.39	— do. —	\$ 384 p.a.	\$ 134.40
Parsley, C. H. (a)	1. 9.39	Assistant Engineer, Public Works, Department	\$3,000 p.a.	\$ 293.17
Thompson, C. G. A.	1.10.40	Commodity Control	\$2,160 p.a.	\$ 902.92
Weatherhead, C. R.	1, 1.41	Courier, Secretariat	\$5.00 per diem when working	\$ 803.25
Farraon, J. R.	31. 1.41	Commodity Control	\$2,400 p.a.	\$1,134.00
King A. F.	2. 2.42	Currency Officer, Currency Commissioners' Office	\$2.88 per diem when working	\$ 850.46
Ruhomon, P.	11. 5.43	— do. —	\$2.88 per diem when working	\$ 971.13

## List of Pensioners at present re-employed by Government—(Continued).

Name	Date of re-employment	Post	Present Salary Scale	Annual Pension
Christiani, E. S.	9. 8.43	Secretary, Local Government Department ..	\$1,800 p.a.	\$1,080.00
Armstrong, A. C.	1. 1.45	Old Age Pension Enquirer (part-time) ..	\$ 84 p.a.	\$ 281.21
Muss, J. R.	1. 2.45	Superintendent of Archives ..	\$ 720 p.a.	\$ 736.54
Gainfort, Miss H.	12. 3.45	Clerk, Post Office Savings Bank	\$1,028.76 p.a.	\$ 591.30
Graham, A. A.	15. 3.45	Curator, Agriculture Department	\$1,500 p.a.	\$1,500.00
Downer, Miss M. I.	19. 3.45	Clerk, Post Office Savings Bank	\$823.68 p.a.	\$ 462.15
Allen, F. H. . .	26. 1.46	Resident Engineer For Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes	\$4,800 p.a.	\$1,617.18
Niven, E. P.	1. 1.47	Land Settlement Officer	\$1,961.70 p.a. +\$480 house allowance	\$1,158.30
Lashley, C.	21. 1.47	Currency Officer, Currency Commissioners' Office	\$2.88 per diem when working	\$ 960.00

Note: (a) Messrs. Belmonte and Parsley retired voluntarily in the year 1932 (under a retrenchment scheme) prior to attaining retiring age and have since been re-appointed to posts in the Public Service.

## SUSPENSION OF STANDING RULES AND ORDERS

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move the suspension of the relevant Standing Rules and Orders to enable me to deal to-day with the Bills of which I have given notice today.

Sir EUSTACE WOOLFORD seconded. Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Rules and Orders suspended.

## RADIO-ACTIVE MINERALS BILL, 1947

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move that the following Bill be read a first time:--

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to regulate and control prospecting and mining for Radio-Active Minerals and the export thereof and for purposes connected therewith".

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In view of the consent of hon. Members to the suspension of the relevant Standing Rules and Orders to enable me to take this Bill through all its stages today, I now beg to move its second reading. I think it is un-

necessary for me to emphasize the necessity for legislation of this nature, since from the Objects and Reasons which accompany the Bill it is shown that the object of this Bill is to regulate and control prospecting and mining for radio-active minerals in the Colony and their export therefrom, so as to prevent them from falling into undesirable hands and from being utilized for improper purposes.

It will be seen from a perusal of the Bill that clause 3 provides that radio-active minerals are not to be prospected for or mined, except under a licence granted by the Governor. Clause 4 provides that the holder of a licence is to report to the Colonial Secretary, month by month, his operations with respect to radio-active minerals. Clause 5 provides that radio-active minerals are not to be exported, except under a permit granted by the Governor. Clause 6 provides that the grant of a licence or of a permit is within the absolute discretion of the Governor, and that a licence or a permit may be revoked at any time by the Governor. Clause 7 makes provision for the form of a licence and the form of a permit. A licence or a permit may be granted subject to such terms and conditions as the Governor may think fit to im-

pose. A fee may be charged for a licence or permit. Clause 8 provides that any person who is not the holder of a licence and discovers any radio-active mineral is to report his discovery, with full particulars thereof, to the Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Schedule contains a list of radio-active minerals, and clause 9 provides that the Governor may from time to time alter, vary or in any manner amend the Schedule. Clause 10 contains a list of offences and penalties. Clause 11 contains powers of search, arrest and seizure. Clause 12 is a saving clause. Clause 13 provides for the making of Regulations for the purpose of the Ordinance.

As I said, I do not think it is necessary for me to emphasize the desirability of a Bill of this nature, and accordingly I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

On a motion by the ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded by Mr. DIAS the Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

#### COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

##### *Clause 10 -- Offences.*

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I move in 1 (c) the deletion of the word "of" at the end of the second line.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause passed as amended.

The Council resumed.

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

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### MATRIMONIAL CAUSES (WAR MARRIAGES) BILL 1947

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I beg to move that the following Bill be read a first time:--

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to confer on the Supreme Court of British Guiana temporary jurisdiction in cer-

tain matrimonial causes where the relevant marriage took place on or after the third day of September, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine."

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : By virtue of notice given I now beg to move that this Bill be read a second time. By the Matrimonial Causes (War Marriages) Act, 1944, temporary jurisdiction was conferred on the High Court in England in certain matrimonial causes where the relevant marriage took place on or after the 3rd day of September, 1939. It is considered that provisions to the like effect should be enacted in this Colony. This Act is a temporary measure and it is designed to deal with problems as the result of the presence in England of a large number of men domiciled overseas many of whom contracted marriages in England when they were domiciled in the United Kingdom. It is considered that the conditions in the law relating to such, as passed in England, should be enacted in this Colony. Some hon. Members must have some knowledge of a matter of this kind, where some of our local women have been married to persons who are not domiciled in the Colony and who have since left the Colony. It will be appreciated that it is a very necessary measure in order to enable those, who have contracted such marriages and who are unable to find out the whereabouts of their spouses, an opportunity of getting release. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Sir EUSTACE WOOLFORD : I am glad to take this opportunity to draw the Government's attention to the status of spouses in this Colony who also have been unhappily married and cannot get release from their matrimonial bond. I am not opposing this legislation which seems to be quite necessary, but in this Colony there are cases where petitioners, husbands as well as wives, have brought divorce petitions and have got a *decree nisi* and are unable to get the *decree absolute* because the petitioners will not go any further and there is no law by which to force the petitioners to proceed to get the *decree absolute*. This is

a matter which has been brought to the attention of the Government before, and the position of these spouses is just as unhappy as in the cases to be met by this Bill. I think some attention should be paid to the requirements of other people in the community who are similarly situated. I do ask to press for this legislation to be passed. What is the good of having a decree which does not permit of its being completed ?

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without discussion.

The Council resumed.

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

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (TEMPORARY REGISTRATION) BILL

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : In pursuance of the notice which I gave earlier I move the suspension of the relevant Standing Rules and Orders to enable me to take the Medical Practitioners (Temporary Registration) Bill through all its stages now.

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Rules and Orders suspended.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I move the second reading of a Bill intituled :

"An Ordinance to provide for the temporary registration of certain medical practitioners for the purposes of the Colonial Medical Service (Consolidation) Ordinance, Chapter 186."

In doing so I would point out that under the provisions of the Colonial Medical Service (Consolidation) Ordinance, Chapter 186, only persons who were registered under the repealed Medical Ordinance of 1886, or who were registered or entitled to be registered under the Medical Acts of the Imperial Parliament, could be registered as medical practitioners in the Colony. Owing to the recent war it was

found impossible to recruit a sufficient number of new practitioners with the statutory qualifications to fill vacancies caused by death or otherwise, or to meet the growing needs of the Colony; hence as a temporary measure the statutory qualifications were relaxed by Regulations made under the Emergency Powers Defence Act, 1939. Those Regulations, the Defence (Medical Practitioners Temporary Registration) Regulations, 1943, will continue in force until the 31st December, 1947, by virtue of the Defence Regulations (Temporary Continuance) Order, 1945, but since the 24th February, 1946, no new registration can be effected under them.

The dearth of medical practitioners with the statutory qualifications still persists, and this Bill seeks to continue the relaxation introduced by the aforementioned Regulations until, at least, December, 1951, for the limited purpose of employment in the Government Medical Service or in any institution or service approved by the Governor.

The duration of the Ordinance may be extended as provided for in the proviso at the end of clause 5 which reads :

"Provided that the Legislative Council may, prior to the expiration of this Ordinance, by resolution (which resolution shall be published in the *Gazette*) declare that this Ordinance shall continue in force for a further period of one year from the date of that expiration and may from time to time, prior to the expiration of that or any further continued operation similarly declare that it shall continue for a further period of one year."

It will be appreciated by hon. Members that this relaxation is not limited to medical practitioners with qualifications from any particular country, but is general in its nature. I move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Dr. SINGH : In view of the understaffing of the British Guiana Medical Service due to the shortage of medical officers, and realising as I do that the medical officers attached to the various institutions have to perform more work, and that it is difficult at times to maintain that standard of efficiency which is necessary for the general



well being of the Colony, I am supporting this Bill as a temporary expedient. However, I very much regret that this concession is not being extended to American qualified doctors. American qualified doctors must not be underrated; they are well tained and well equipped to take up practice anywhere. The Medical Schools in the United States are staffed by teachers and professors of the United States and of Europe. By some means they have been able to attract some of the best professors from Europe, and I can definitely say that the Medical Schools in the United States are as good and, in some cases, superior to the Universities in the United Kingdom.

I realize, however, that American doctors will not take up appointments in the Medical Service of this Colony because the salaries offered are not attractive, but I feel sure that there are some Guianese with American qualifications who would be willing to return to this Colony and accept the salaries offered for sentimental reasons. They would like to return home to work among their own kith and kin and live in the environment to which they have been accustomed. American qualified doctors are being allowed to practise in Barbados. Jamaica is doing the same, and I believe that in Trinidad the concession is also being given. I am asking that American doctors, especially Guianese, should be permitted to practise in this Colony. It is true that the law cannot only be applied to Guianese doctors, but as I have said, only Guianese doctors with American qualifications would wish to come to this Colony for sentimental reasons.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : May I intervene at this stage to clear up a point, I think the last speaker has left us in some doubt as to what he desires. I think this Bill will permit doctors with American degrees to practise in this Colony for Government, but what the hon. Member is asking is that the concession should be extended so as to permit doctors with American qualifications to do private practice in this Colony. Is that correct ?

Dr. SINGH : Yes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I would not like hon. Members to be under any wrong impression. This Bill is in-

tended to meet the immediate needs of the Government Medical Service, to permit Guianese or any doctor qualified with American degrees to take up service with this Government, subject to conditions which the Medical Board, as constituted in this Colony, may advise. For instance, the Medical Board may advise that no doctor with American degrees should be qualified to practise in this Colony for Government or in any other capacity, unless he has obtained a certificate from the New York State Board. That is just an example, but this Bill will permit Guianese who are qualified in the United States to take up a Government appointment here. It is intended to meet the emergency in the Government Medical Service, and I think hon. Members should not be under any illusion about that. This Bill will permit doctors with American degrees to practise in this Colony, but only in the service of the Government.

Mr. EDUN : I have listened with some interest to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Medical Service, and also to the remarks made by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, but what I want to get out of my mind is the suspicion as regards the employment of European doctors or, to be precise, Polish doctors. There has been some controversy in this Colony regarding this possibility. I am not in a position to say whether the Medical Board of this Colony would be able to grant them permission to be employed here, but after all we are within the sphere of the American periphery, and since we can take everything from them — as a matter of fact we get films, literature, and radio-programmes day and night—why shouldn't we take this opportunity and get their doctors to come here, especially when it is known that so far as medicine is concerned the Americans far surpass the Europeans ? (Mr. Roth : Question). Someone said "Question" but perhaps he will realize that during the last six years hardly anybody in Europe has had a chance to study, while the Americans have done everything possible to pursue their studies, and have done wonderfully well to catch up with the others. But since we are in America and are Americans ourselves, why should we do anything to hurt the susceptibilities of the Americans, our good and kind friends ? We

should endeavour to build upon the friendship we have established, instead of creating suspicion.

Apart from that, the suggestion has come from the Chairman of the Medical Service Advisory Committee that Guianese, having left this country for America and acquired medical qualifications, should be allowed to practise in their homeland. I have seen some of those young men myself and I know the positions they hold—perhaps better than most doctors in this Colony. They are willing to return the Colony simply to do a little service to their country, but they are precluded from doing so because the Medical Board might say "No". We make a law which, on the surface, looks very just and equitable, but somebody in authority is able to twist it to suit the policy of Government. I want to understand very clearly whether this is an attempt to bring Polish doctors to British Guiana. I am not against the Poles or anybody in this world, but I prefer to have Guianese doctors here first and foremost, if they are qualified to give us service. I endorse everything that was said by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The hon. Member says that many Guianese doctors with American degrees would like to come to this Colony for private practice. I would like to ask him if he could give me the names of any Guianese doctors who would volunteer to come here and practise.

Mr. EDUN : I will endeavour to get those names.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I received a deputation some time ago on the same subject, and I asked them to let me have a list of names. That was four months ago, but they have never given me the name of a single Guianese doctor who wants to come back from America and practise here.

Dr. SINGH : I think I can get some names.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without discussion.

The Council resumed.

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

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### REVISED COST OF LIVING BONUS RATES

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I beg to move the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders in order to enable me to move the first of the three motions of which I gave notice this afternoon.

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : The motion reads :

"That, with reference to Resolution No. XXII of the 10th of January, 1947, this Council approves of the payment of temporary war bonus to Government employees in respect of the year 1947 in accordance with the following revised rates :—

30% on the first \$720 per annum.

10% on the next \$720 per annum.

Flat rate of \$24 per month on all salaries over \$1.440 per annum."

I think that Government and the Legislative Council need fear no criticism as to the action taken, and the efforts which were made in this Colony to avoid inflation during the war and in the immediate post-war period. We in this Colony have endeavoured to hold down salaries and wages to reasonable levels, and we have also taken great care, by means of various devices, such as subsidization, bulk purchases, price control and so on, to stem the rising tide of the cost of living. Unfortunately, the cost of living is not a matter which is effectively under our control, because it is to a large extent influenced by the factor of external price levels in regard to imported commodities which enter so very largely into our means of existence.

As regards the salaries and wages of Government employees, the Government has always been most anxious to do nothing that would disturb the general economy of the Colony, and also, of course, that would have an adverse effect on its own finances.

I well remember that the predecessor of the present Colonial Secretary, in the early days of the war, invented a formula which he used in answer to representations of Government employees. It was just this: "No increases during the war." But the time came when that seemed a crude defence against the rising tide of circumstances and events, and was no longer effective, and we commenced in 1942 to grant some relief to the lowest paid workers in Government employ.

In 1942 we introduced the first temporary war bonus. It was a very limited allowance granted only in respect of wages and salaries not in excess of \$60 per month, based on a sliding scale, and at the maximum point or ceiling of \$60 per month. The effective brake of that scale was only 10 per cent., or \$6 per month. That is how we started in 1942. In 1943 we increased the sliding scale by the addition of two-thirds, and we also extended the scope of the allowance so as to embrace salaries up to \$200 per month. On salaries between \$90 and \$120 per month there was a flat rate allowance of \$15 per month, and on salaries between \$120 and \$200 per month there was a flat rate allowance of \$10 per month. That is as far as we went, but concurrently with all that we also proceeded to a series of revisions of the basic salaries and wages of Government employees, commencing with the lowest paid workers in the Post Office Department, the Transport and Harbours Department, and the teachers of the primary schools. Eventually those revisions became comprehensive throughout the Service, and they were in full effect by 1944.

Now I have mentioned the matter of the revisions that have taken place in the basic wages and salaries because it may, of course, be held to be an important point in the issue now before the Council, but I want to emphasize here and now that those basic revisions of salaries and wages which have taken place were never tagged on or consequential upon the cost of living. They represent an attempt to put right a long-standing grievance as to the inadequacy and inequalities of Government pay, particularly in comparison with the pay prevailing outside the Public Service.

In the case of the lowest paid workers these revisions were an attempt to grant

what might be considered a living wage. In the case of the rank and file of the Public Service—that is to say, the large majority of clerks, the subordinate employees, the junior technical and professional employees, and so on—it was an attempt to grant an appropriate commencing salary at a scale which would permit these employees to attain a reasonable salary at a reasonable age. The immediate cash benefit which was obtained by most of these employees was small, and in some cases nothing at all although, of course, their future prospects were very much improved. Of course, the benefit to new entrants into the Public Service was considerable because the new entrants could see before them a better goal as regards pay than was given to those whom they succeeded. The point I am trying to make is that while it is true to say that the salary revisions which have taken place since 1944 have, undoubtedly, eased somewhat the financial situation of a number of Government employees, they do not and were not intended to offset the effects of the increased cost of living. And this is, of course, supported by the fact that the 1943 war bonus has continued in force and has been authorized by this Council from year to year until now.

I should now like to say something as to the origin of the present proposal. When the Civil Service Association approached Government in August, 1946, they made representations as result of the increases which had up to that time taken place in the cost of living, and they pointed to the fear of a further increase owing to the change in the value of the Canadian dollar which had taken place in July of that year. Their representations were supported by details—family budgets and so on and so forth. Government gave the matter very careful consideration, but in October, 1946, they were forced practically to reject the representations made on the ground, of course, that the financial position, as it was then seen, could not permit of a heavier charge in war bonus. Furthermore, Government claimed that steps were being taken to ameliorate the position as regards the cost of living—to prevent inflation as regards prices and so on, and to prevent further deterioration. Although this matter was talked over between October, 1946, and the early part of this year, nothing

further was done until April, 1947, when the Civil Service Association again pressed their case. At that time they were joined by representations from other quarters of the Public Service—both from the ranks of the small wage-earners and from the ranks of even the senior officials themselves.

I have tried to indicate to the Council that this is not a sudden proposal. I have heard it alleged that the civil servants having learnt that there has been an unexpected increase in the yield of revenue are staking their claim for this increase. I am obliged to make it clear that that is not the case at all. When they presented this case again in April, 1947, even the senior civil servants could not say that the finances of the Colony were rather better than they were expected to be. As a result of this second pressure the matter was represented to the Secretary of State who has approved of the working out of some scheme by the Government for granting an increase and the result is before the Council today.

Before I deal with the terms of the motion itself, I think, I ought to examine the merits of the case put forward for the increase. Is it true that there has been a very substantial rise in the cost of living which justifies this proposal? Well, Sir, in this respect we have a yardstick which is known as the cost of living index. It has been very much criticized—even by myself now and again—nevertheless, it is an index very carefully prepared and is supposed to be the best in this part of the world. I will not go into details as to how it is prepared, but suffice it to say that the index is based on the cost of living of working-class families with an income under \$60 per month. The basic year is 1938, so that 1938 is taken to have an index of 100.

Now, what are the comparative indices that follow? In December, 1943, the index was 1.61—that is 61 points above the basic year. In December, 1944, it fell by 2 points—to 1.59—and in December, 1945, it rose again to 1.61. In January, 1946, it rose slightly to 1.67 and in December, 1946, it jumped to 1.82. That was, of course, the effect of increased prices for imported goods as well as a change in the value of the Canadian dollar. Since December, 1946, the index has stood more or less steady with very little variation until May, 1947,

which is the last record I have, and that is 1.84. The future of this index is, of course, uncertain. We have taken steps, as hon. Members know, by the appointment of a Price Margins Committee to introduce certain changes and, maybe, the effect of the recommendations made by the Committee will cause this index to go down. It is largely influenced by external price levels and, particularly, for that important commodity, flour. We can only hope for the best, and I do not know whether by September, when the recommendations of the Committee are put into force, it will go down.

For those of us who do not like these indices and do not pay much attention to their value, and who, perhaps, prefer what I may call absolute figures, I would like to quote a few figures comparing prices in December, 1945, with May 1947. I will take a few items only and will begin with bread. In December, 1945, it was 8½ cents per lb., and in May, 1947, it was 11.3 cents per lb. Milk :—in December, 1945, it was 6 cents per pint and in May, 1947, it was 8 cents per pint. Deodorised Oil :—in December, 1945, it was 14 cents per pint and in May, 1947, 18 cents. Sugar (Y.C.) :—in December, 1945, it was 3½ cents per lb. and in May, 1947, 4½ cents. Flour :—in December, 1945, it was 5 cents per lb. and in May, 1947, it was 6½ cents. Margarine :—in December, 1945, it was 27.7 cents per lb. and in May, 1947, it was 29 cents. I will not worry the Council with any more items, but that is the sort of thing we have in the food list. As regards fuel, we have charcoal which was sold at 3.3 cents for 2½ lbs. in December, 1945, and at 4.2 cents for 2½ lbs. in May, 1947. As regards clothing, we have here material for working suits costing 68 cents per yard in December, 1945, and 95 cents per yard in May, 1947. Pyjamas :—\$3.23 per pair in December, 1945, and \$6.22 in May, 1947. Shirts :—\$2.84 each in December, 1945, and \$3.54 in May, 1947. Underpants :—75 cents per pair in December, 1945, and \$1.52 in May, 1947. Woollens :—\$5.84 per yard in December, 1945, and \$7.60 in May, 1947. I do not want to worry the Council any more and from a sense of modesty I did not want to refer to women's clothing, but I see in this list that women's dress materials rose

from 75 cents per yard in December, 1945, to 91 cents in May, 1947. But, curiously enough, materials for what are called night dresses have gone up from 45 cents to \$1.04 per yard during the same period—an increase of 105 per cent. I do not know why night dresses should have jumped up like that. (Laughter).

Mr. SEAFORD : They have decreased in size.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Now, Sir, what is the present proposal? In a memorandum submitted to the Finance Committee there are set out the new proposed rates of war bonus, and I do not want to take up the time of the Council by reading it. I will again emphasize however, that that scale provides for a flat-rate allowance of a very small amount—\$288 per annum—which is only applicable to salaries over \$1,440 per annum. The scale of the new proposed rates starts with 30 per cent. on the first \$720 per annum, 10 per cent. on the next \$720, and then the flat rate of \$24 per month to every public officer in receipt of a salary above \$120 per month, without exception of anyone.

I will not, of course, try to win the support of the Council by comparing this scale with those in existence in Trinidad and Barbados. In those Islands the scales are very much higher, but I do not want to be drawn into any argument as to the comparable cost of living between Trinidad, Barbados, and this Colony. There is no means of proving the case but, I think, it is generally accepted that the cost of living in Trinidad is very much higher than it is here. However, as regards the present proposal, I do not want to state that it has been worked out on any comparative scale at all. It is solely designed to give relief in the present situation, and it is fortunate that the total cost is now within the means of the Government.

The memorandum to which I referred gave the total additional cost for this year, and it is \$600,000 in addition to the \$1,000,000 or so already provided on the basis of the existing scale. I think that the analysis of this additional cost in the various groups may be of interest to the Council. The cost of applying this new scale to the lowest-paid wage earners in

Government's employ—that is to say, all the unskilled people, the casual workers and so forth—has been calculated at \$98,000; let us say a round sum of \$100,000. Now, for the group with salaries or wages ranging from \$70 to \$120 per month—that is, the great bulk of the rank and file or the junior people in the public service—the cost is \$398,000; let us say \$400,000. So you see, Sir, the bulk of this cost is just in that big block of the lower paid—not the lowest paid—public servants. The third group is that of public officers earning salaries ranging from \$120 to \$400 per month, and the cost for this group is \$94,848; let us say \$95,000. The cost for the group of that select band of which I happen to be a member—the group with salaries above \$400 a month—is \$5,000. That is how the \$600,000 is made up.

The next point to which I should refer is the financial position. To inflict a financial commitment of \$600,000 on the budget this year is, of course, alarming but, fortunately, I have already alluded to the unexpected large increase in the Customs revenue. In fact, the last figures I saw represented an increase over the amount estimated of a sum approaching \$1,000,000; so hon. Members would see that so far as meeting the amount this year is concerned, we have got the money. When this matter reached a certain stage in the Executive Council the Colonial Secretary and I met representatives of the Civil Service Association and we had a full and interesting discussion of this important subject, in the course of which we warned those representatives that the financial position was not settled, and that they had to understand that if this motion was approved this war bonus would be in the nature of a temporary cost-of-living allowance; that it would be granted only for this year and it would be subject to review in the light of any change downwards in the cost of living next year, and also in the light of the actual financial position of the Colony as we see it.

I think, Sir, the civil servants fully appreciate that position. I will repeat again that, in fact, war bonus applies only to the year in which it is granted. In order to make assurance doubly sure, I propose to ask Departments to exclude from their

Departmental estimates in 1948 the detailed items of temporary war bonus as is usually done here, and to put a separate item of their immediate requirement so that if we have to continue the measure it would be done under a separate block vote and under a separate resolution. I think that will indicate my view that this is not a vote which will be passed from year to year.

I think I have covered the ground very fully, and from what I have stated I hope hon. Members will be able to come to a decision in this important matter. I do hope the motion will be supported. I myself approached this subject with a great deal of reluctance. The hon. the Colonial Secretary can tell you that within the ranks of Government I was among the sturdiest opponents of this measure, but I am afraid that the events and circumstances which have since taken place have convinced me that it is a measure of justice to the civil servants. One point escaped me and that is, of the total cost of \$600,000 for the war bonus on the proposed new scale, the employees of the Transport and Harbours Department alone will absorb the sum of \$77,000. I now beg to move the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. RAATGEVER: As one of the critics of Government in financial matters, I desire very heartily to congratulate the hon. the Colonial Treasurer on his very able presentation of the case for increased war bonus to Government employees. I stated at a meeting of the Finance Committee, last week, that I thought the matter should have been deferred until later in the year, so that we could see the effect on the cost of living of the reductions in profit margins which are coming into effect on September 1. I also stated that we had very heavy stocks of merchandise in the Colony at the present time—from arrivals within the last six months—and competition would have the effect of reducing further the price of merchandise, particularly dry goods. In mentioning these facts I should like to make it clear that I am not against increasing the bonus for civil servants, but I desire to point out to hon. Members that there is danger of inflation with its resultant bad effects on Government's finances and those of the Colony in general.

I remember what happened here in 1920, and I repeat that that is what is worrying me. As the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has said, we have at the present time nearly \$1,000,000 in what he calls unexpected revenue. I disagree with him when he says it is unexpected revenue, because I stated several months ago—when we were discussing the estimates for 1947—that we will collect over \$500,000 in extra revenue this year. We have got this amount on account of the large quantities of goods which have been coming into the Colony recently, but that is not going to continue. I have a very high regard for the members of the Civil Service of British Guiana and, I think, the majority are a credit to the Colony. I have given this matter very serious consideration and I am prepared to support Government's proposal in full. I am doing so because the proposal will not result in increased taxation, as the extra money we have received is more than enough to meet the amount required to pay the increased bonus.

Mr. ROTH: Sir, we have listened at some length to the interesting remarks of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer both here and in Finance Committee, and to the briefer if not equally eloquent remarks of the hon. the Colonial Secretary on the subject of increased war bonus for civil servants, but I regret to say that neither of these gentlemen has succeeded in convincing me of the justice of such a proposal at the present time. So long as no consideration is given to the Government pensioners in the lower ranks and to old-age pensioners, who in New Amsterdam receive the magnificent sum of ten shillings per month and in the City \$3 per month, I cannot support the proposal because I feel that if Government undertakes to increase the war bonus for civil servants it is only just that Government should also increase the allowances given to the two classes of persons I have mentioned.

Not long ago, a Government officer enjoying a salary of £400 a year complained to me about finding it difficult to meet increased house rent, income tax and other expenses with his salary, and if Government intends to give relief to officers in the higher brackets I think it is only reasonable that Government should relieve the smaller men in so far as income tax is

concerned. Unless Government is prepared to give favourable consideration to increased allowances for the smaller pensioners and also for the old-age pensioners, I am not prepared to support this motion.

Mr. GONSALVES : The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, has complimented Government on this motion which is asking us to vote \$600,000 for increased bonus to civil servants. I wish, Sir, to compliment him on this : That he has been able to change from the very radical view he had, that this Council was not to vote one cent more of increased expenditure. I had told him that the remark was a rather wide and general one, and that there might arise a question in respect of which it might become necessary to vote for increased expenditure. I am happy in the thought and idea that today he has fitted in with my view, that the time or the day has come whereby he is willing to vote for an increased expenditure outside of the Estimates which have been passed. When he does so, I can assure him that he will not be doing anything so wrong and violent against his own conscience, because I think the plea which has been put up for the voting of increased bonus—and here I use the word “bonus” widely as, I think, to describe it as “War Bonus” does not seem to be quite in order unless you wish to say “Post-war Bonus” from my point of view—is indeed strong. We are through with the days of war at the moment. Though there is some talk of war in other parts of the world, we have not reached the stage of talking about another war so far as this Colony is concerned. Therefore I much rather to see the term “Post-war Bonus” used or preferably “Bonus” alone.

We have heard the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Raatgever) say in Finance Committee that he thought that prices were coming down not only in respect of footstuffs but particularly clothing. Whilst that may be true—the statement he has made—it is equally true to say that since he made that statement about two weeks ago there has been no material change so far as I have heard in regard to the sale of those commodities in the Street. So there is, therefore, evidence remaining that the cost of living is either the same or has gone up. If there is the desire in the commercial community to assist in breaking

down the cost of living, then that assistance can be given by a reduction of prices. It seems to me that until that is done, until we are satisfied that we are going to have these reductions, the difficulty which exists at the moment will continue to be for not only civil servants but generally speaking everyone finds it difficult to live reasonably on the incomes which he is receiving.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, rather anticipated me because I was going to raise the point myself with regard to the small pensioner. I do feel that there are classes of people who deserve, and very properly, too, some consideration on the question of Bonus. If the men in the Civil Service today, who are drawing full salaries, find it difficult to live on those salaries, how much harder is it not for those pensioners who have to try and exist on the small pensions given to them? I know that representations have been made a few months back by some of these pensioners on this very question. The matter was not then favourably decided, and I understand that further representations were made quite recently knowing that these proposals were coming up today. I do not know if Government has given the matter any further thought or consideration, but I do in support of this motion desire to support the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, in his plea for some bonus for these pensioners who complain so much in regard to the difficulty of living under present conditions. It should be possible for the hon. the Colonial Treasurer to give some indication as to what the additional amount would be if the low class pensioners' case is to be met.

I think before the motion is put, the question may well be considered and decided as to whether the increase in bonus suggested here should be made applicable to pensioners, which the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, and myself intimated. I would like to get the decision of the Council on that particular point before I am asked to vote on this motion for the civil servants. I am not saying for a moment, however, that if it is not agreed with I would not support the motion for increased bonus to civil servants, but I would like to get an expression of opinion

from this Council on that particular question.

Mr. JACOB : The position, as I understand it, is that this Council voted at the end of last year approximately \$1,000,000 as War Bonus for the year 1947. This Council is now being asked to supplement that amount by \$600,000, making it \$1,600,000 for this year. I have no objection to this additional \$600,000 being voted, but I do think that the scales should be varied, and if we were to go into this question as fully as the Civil Service Association has done, then, I think, we would get nearer the point as to whether all the employees of Government are justly treated. In that, I am not excluding the ordinary toiler on the road. We would then be doing something in the interest of all concerned. I have looked at this statement here, and what have I found? — A Comparative Statement of Wages or Salaries from \$20 per month and the proposed increases. The proposed increase will carry up the salary of \$20 per month to \$26. I know, and I think, every Officer of Government knows that there are wages far below \$20 per month in respect of people who are employed with the Government. I understand that some of these people earn only 64 cents per day, the males and 32 cents per day the females. Surely those people should be considered when a living wage is being considered for the entire Civil Service. So I say, beginning from the first scale of \$20 per month, that scale should be increased to \$28.80 by increasing the proposed increase by \$2.80. Taking 24 working days for the month, the minimum wage will be \$1.20 per day.

I cannot imagine that this Government is pursuing the policy of not paying an able-bodied workingman \$1.20 per day. I am satisfied, from what I have heard here today and the discussion which took place in the Finance Committee, that this motion will be carried. I am going to make a plea for those working people who do not get \$1.20 a day. Their case should be considered immediately and put on the same basis of treatment as the others'. If you are taking salaries or wages not only from \$20 per month upwards but the others too, you would have to increase this \$600,000 which is provided, if this motion is carried.

It is not quite clear here whether the Civil List employees are included in this increase. Their salaries are provided by law and, I take it, from the wording of the motion all Civil List employees will be included and, perhaps, the Judges too who are paid under the Summary Jurisdiction Ordinance. (laughter). It is fixed by law, but the amount is paid through the Budget and cannot be varied. That is my point.

Sir EUSTACE WOOLFORD : The hon. Member made a mistake in referring to the wrong Ordinance in respect of the Judges' salaries.

Mr. GONSALVES : The hon. Member is accustomed to the Summary Jurisdiction Ordinance !

Mr. JACOB : Perhaps the name is wrong. It is not quite clear in this motion whether those on the Civil List and others paid according to law are included in this increase. Perhaps it is, and so I say if all the employees of Government including Your Excellency—

The PRESIDENT : I think so, excepting myself.

Mr. JACOB : If everyone is to get \$24 per month from the 1st January of this year, I take it all those humbler employees should be paid a living wage. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, raised the question about pensioners and old age pensioners. I support that view too, because it is impossible for those people to exist under ordinary conditions as they are today with the pensions they are getting. When some of us pleaded that old age pensioners should get at least \$5 per month, the plea by Government was that we could not afford it. We should certainly afford to increase Old Age Pensions when we increase all payments through the Budget with this very moderate increase that is proposed at the present time. If the Government is satisfied that for 1948 all employees of Government should get \$24 per month more, I can hardly imagine that the same Government would feel that all other employees should not get some increase. It may be argued that these humbler employees to whom I refer are getting some bonus, perhaps 30 per cent. or a little more, but when that bonus is added do they get a living



wage? Do they get 24 days' work per month? They do not get six days' work per week and not four days per week at some times. When a man gets \$24 a month as suggested, he has to live 30 days on an average on that and, therefore, his earnings per month do not amount to a living wage of \$1 a day. Most of these people have families, and I am going to urge on Government to consider very carefully and seriously the raising of the basic wage of the working-man in this Colony. Ever since I had the honour to be a Member of this Council I have stressed the point that we have to pay our working people a living wage, but it has not been considered. Government has not given this matter the consideration it deserves all these years. Now that the cost of living is so high, I think, the time is very opportune that all Government able-bodied employees the males, should be paid a minimum wage of not less than \$1.20 per day.

Reference was made to the fact that Customs Revenue has appreciated to the extent of \$1,000,000 up to the present time. I hope and I believe that Customs Revenue for this year will be far more than what has been estimated. When the Budget was considered I made the point, I think I was the first, that Customs *Ad Valorem* Duties and General Specific Duties were underestimated by not less than a half million dollars. For the last five months those estimates have appreciated \$1,000,000. But the estimates may depreciate for the balance of the year and that million dollars may not be seen at the end of the year. Nevertheless I have no doubt whatever that with increasing prices, increasing population and increasing imports of various kinds, Customs Revenue will appreciate. I think, therefore, it is all the more urgent and all the more necessary for this Government to consider very carefully the giving of a minimum wage to all workers of the Government, particularly the able-bodied workers.

When the question of minimum wage was raised on certain occasions, certain people said "Why you don't have it is because you will not be able to get people of a certain prestige to give a minimum wage to". That is a fallacy. A standard

should be set, and anyone coming up to that standard and is employed should get the minimum wage. In respect of a man falling below that standard, arrangements can be made between him and an employer as to what he should accept as a wage. The longer Government puts off the question of fixing a minimum wage for the worker the worse the economic will be. I do not want to refer to production because things are going to become a little worse. I think it is very necessary for this Government to pay all employees a living wage. I am not going to raise any objection to those who are getting over \$200 per month salary getting any increase today, as Government feels it is right to give all \$24 per month additional. I am raising no objection to that. But if you are going to pay those people \$24 more, it is but right and proper to pay all others a living wage based on \$1.20 per day.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Your Excellency, I feel you will find there is general agreement in this Council that Government should be just to its employees. But, Sir, in approaching the subject one must be careful to avoid error, and when I listened to the able speech that has been made by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer I asked myself the question, whether the measure that is now before the Council is a solution to the problem that lies in front of us. Sir, he has gone to the trouble to give us the historical background of all that has taken place in trying to improve the salary condition of the employees of Government. He told us of the decision that had been made during the early part of the war years, when it was desirable that rather than interfering with the basic rates of salaries the position should be held. He told us also of a change in that view and of the decision to pay war bonus, and he went on to tell us what transpired subsequently in the actual revision which took place from time to time in respect of the basic salaries. Now, Sir, he has told us also that the decision of Government to increase the present rates of the cost of living bonus is in order to meet a peculiar situation that has arisen. I come back again and ask the question, whether this is a solution to the problem.

I want to say first of all, that I am a believer of paying a man for the work he

does and the amount of work that he does. Have you ever stopped to think whether the average civil servant in this community, good as he may be and good as he is, is called upon—it is not his fault I think—to perform the maximum amount of work he is capable of performing and even within the time it is expected of him to do so? I know I am going to be told that the civil servant is required to perform only a certain amount of work within certain hours per day, and so long as he arrives in office on the stroke of the hour that is expected of him to arrive and leaves when he is expected to leave, he has performed a day's work. There are lots of us, and I am going to say I am one of those, who feel that even within the number of hours he is expected to be in office on that day he has not served the public in the manner he should. He has not given to the Government the amount of work that is expected of him. He is not made to work a sufficiently long number of hours, in the same way as people in other walks of life are expected to do. If the answer to that is the Regulations are at fault, then by all means let us have those Regulations amended. I think, Sir, and I believe that if a man gives of his best he must receive the best.

Turning to the proposal that is before the Council, let us examine it a little more in detail and see what is the result. The entire structure, if I understood the hon. the Colonial Treasurer correctly, has been built on what is known as the Cost of Living Index. I am not going to say it is wrong, but I would like to say this: If the figures are right, then it seems to me to be an unheard of mystery how such a large number of civil servants are still alive today. I cannot see how they could have lived if those figures quoted by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer are correct, and it leads one to the conclusion that theoretically the figures may be correct but in practice they are hopelessly wrong. They must be, otherwise the result will be disastrous. The possible answer is that the items that are used in computing those figures are substituted. That is to say, on certain occasions cheaper articles are used for those quoted on the list. I agree that will be a possible answer, but I refer to that in order to show that however good the hon.

the Colonial Treasurer has presented his case to the Council today, it is not an answer to the problem. Am I to understand him, Sir, to say that if those Cost of Living figures go up another 10 points, this Council would be approached for an increase in these rates? Am I to understand also that if the Cost of Living goes down another 10 points or 20 points this Council would be told that these rates are to go down? I think I am correct in assuming that is what is likely to occur, because the whole basis of his argument and—as I started at the beginning to say—the whole structure on which these proposals are based is the Cost of Living Index. I think I am right in assuming that if the rate goes up the Council would be approached for an increase and if it goes down this Council would be told there must be reduction in the rates.

If I am asked, therefore, to agree with the proposals that are now before the Council on the ground that the rates fluctuate, I do not think, speaking for myself, that I can offer any serious objection, but that is the point which, I think, ought to be made perfectly clear. I can, perhaps, go on and even invite the hon. the Colonial Treasurer to tell the Council or to tell me what was the yardstick that was used in arriving at this rate or what yardstick would be used later on if the Cost of Living Index goes up or down. Those are very interesting questions to ask, I submit, and I am not so sure what the answer is going to be. There again when I ask myself these questions I come back to the original one I had asked myself, "Is this a solution to the problem?" I would like to believe that it is. But when I look back and remember all that has gone before—I recall the history that was given by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer very well—I am not too happy that this is a solution of the problem. I am not at all happy that the matter will end just here. I am going to confess that even although I have given the subject some study I myself at this stage at any rate am unable to offer a solution.

The next point that worries me somewhat is that we have been told that these proposals will cost an additional \$600,000. We have also been told that representations were made to Government in this matter some time last year but it was not possible then to give them favourable consideration.

I am not a pessimist but I am not going to allow the temporary (I use the word "temporary" advisedly) buoyancy in our revenue position to influence my decision in this matter, partly because I am not satisfied that it is a solution to the problem, and mainly because of my concern that we may not be able to carry the burden for long, and if so, what would be the position? If after a very careful examination of the future revenue prospects Government is advised that it would not be possible to maintain these rates of bonus, what then? How would we face that new situation?

I come now to the next point. It is true that we are living under conditions that are not normal, but in this country when we refer to abnormal conditions we are making comparisons with conditions that existed before 1939, and I am inclined to think that in doing so we fall into error. We cannot look back on what existed in 1939; those days are gone forever. Whether it is one of the blessings of the war or the outcome of the war I am not prepared to say, nor am I prepared to express an opinion as to whether it is because there is a general improvement in the education of our people or in their standard of living. If it is due to the last two reasons I have given there can be no doubt about it that it is a condition that we ought to encourage. If that is so it seems to me that we should be bold enough to approach the subject in the light of the changes that have taken place during the last seven years.

I know I am going to be told that it is too early even to think about it, but I am bold enough to ask Government the question: is Government thinking along the lines I have just indicated? Frankly I must confess that I do not think that Government is thinking along those lines. Indeed I would be happy if I could be told that I am wrong in that view. I would not mind it at all if I could be told that Government is thinking along those lines, but that it considers the present moment is not appropriate to initiate plans to bring about a new outlook in the employment, not only of the clerical staff but everybody in the Government Service. I want Government to have a new outlook, and then perhaps we may accept these proposals as a temporary measure.

I would like to warn Government at this stage that so far as I am concerned I am not prepared at any time to accept any proposal from Government in regard to the structure, status or conditions of employment of civil servants in the future unless the whole subject is carefully examined and an effort made not only to make a civil servant perform the duties expected of him but also to be just with him. Those are the lines which I think Government might well be advised to adopt. Unless we are prepared, by regulations or otherwise, to revise the outlook, I am afraid that we will always have difficulties of this kind confronting Government, and finally this Council. I know that it is almost impossible to solve any problem to the extent that it would be settled for all time. The point I am making is that the structure on which the whole Civil Service is based is one that calls for revision, and the sooner that revision takes place the better it would be for all of us—better for the Government, the civil servant, and the public.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I rise to support the motion. I am in sympathy with the appeals which have been made on behalf of old age pensioners and Government pensioners. In other countries, when the cost of living goes up pensioners are given something more. When representations were made to Government some time ago for an increase in old age pensions Government said that the financial position of the Colony did not permit it. Today we have a little finance, but I agree that we should guard it. I would not like anything to be done to prevent the passage of this motion today, therefore at a later stage we could discuss the question of increased allowances for old age pensioners and Government pensioners. The salaries and wages of some civil servants and other workers in Government employ are very low, and I am in sympathy with them.

At a later stage they should take up with their Heads of Departments the question of an increase in their basic rates of pay. I am referring to the very lowest paid workers. Someone said that they should be given a living wage. I want to go a little further; I say they should get a saving wage in order that they might put by something for the day when they are

unable to work. That is why I say that Government is in a very peculiar position at times—between the devil and the deep sea. We find the people who rear cattle telling Government they cannot sell their animals at the Government controlled price, as they do not get sufficient money. Government puts up the price of cattle and up goes the price of beef. The moment Government or private employers give their employees an increase, prices of goods are increased, so that the consumer feels the pinch all the time.

The only fair way of dealing with this problem is that when the cost of living goes up above a certain number of points employees should be given an increased cost of living allowance, and when the cost of living drops they must be prepared to accept a reduced allowance. Instead of prices dropping, they are increasing, and it is the devil's job to get certain articles. The position is that a bonus is given with one hand and taken away with the other. Where will it end? I am appealing to Government to make every effort to keep prices down as much as possible.

Mr. EDUN: I have listened to the hon. Mover of the motion with great attention, and I pictured him in my mind as a labour leader advocating the cause of his comrades before an arbitration tribunal. I think he would do well in that sphere of life. He presented the case of the civil servants masterly well, but I am placed in a dual position. As a Member of this Council my first duty is to protect the finances of the country, and while I would endeavour to give increases to non-producers, like civil servants, I would do everything possible to see that the producers get a living wage throughout the Colony. It is all very well to talk glibly about spending \$600,000 on war bonuses, and about the large increase in imports, but I want the Mover to tell me something about a large increase in our exports. How are we going to pay for those imports in the long run if we are not producing sufficiently?

I do not know how the hon. Mover will be able to refute the arguments put forward by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar). The whole matter hinges on the cost of living index which is based on faulty premises. Not even the

Mover is sure of his ground. On one hand he says that the cost of living has gone up so much, and on the other hand he says something else. Would he have recommended to this Council an increase of \$600,000 in bonuses to civil servants if there had been no enhanced revenue? I am sure that as trustee of the Colony the Colonial Treasurer would not have suggested the frittering away of the Colony's money like this. I do not know when we shall be able to have a respectable surplus and tell the world that we are solvent. With all the commitments before us I do not see how we can say that we are solvent, and I feel that somebody is endeavouring to land us back into the hands of the British Treasury. That would be a sorry day indeed.

Now that we are endeavouring to keep our head above the water, trying to build up a balanced economy, what do we find? We find more imports, more living off the sweat and tears of the people of the Colony in order that other people should live abroad well and fat. Why don't we endeavour to spend \$600,000 in the production of goods for export? Those things do not concern the civil servants. What they are concerned about is simply their entrenched positions—good salaries, excellent pensions and re-employment after they have been pensioned off. That is the kind of Government we have in this Colony, and I feel some shame about it. Look at this list of re-employed civil servants; look how much money they are drawing as pensions, and yet they are re-employed. Government will say that nobody could be found to fill those jobs. I consider that a policy of defeatism. Any young man could fill those jobs, but some old fellow who had not been able to do his work well has been re-employed.

In the case of industrial workers, as soon as they put up a claim for increased rates of pay they are met with the argument that there must be more production in order that they may be paid more. Now that we are thinking of giving civil servants an additional \$600,000 is it possible for us to demand more work or more efficiency from them? There is no guarantee about that, but we are asked to give a blank cheque for \$600,000, and as though to fool

me, the hon. Mover told this Council that \$100,000 would be spent on the lowest paid group—the ordinary labourer on the road or on the sea defences—but I would have accepted that generosity towards those labourers if the Mover of this motion had been similarly sympathetic when I moved a motion in this Council some time ago for an increase of the basic rates of pay of those workers.

Mr. JACOB : I do not think this motion includes the ordinary working people.

Mr. EDUN : The motion says "all employees of Government," which means that if a labourer is employed on sea defences and earns \$5 per week he gets \$1.50 more. Isn't that correct ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : That is quite correct. It covers all employment of every sort in the Government Service.

Mr. EDUN : I am grateful for that explanation. Since 1939 the manual labourers working for Government have been receiving 64 cents per day as a basic wage, and Government did not think of increasing that basic wage, although a motion was moved in this Council that they should be considered. The sum of \$100,000 distributed among those people of the lowest paid group means nothing at all.

Mr. JACOB : I rise again to a point of correction. If a man earns 64 cents per day and works 24 days per month he will only get 3/- more.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : What the hon. Member is reading from is an illustration of the various examples. The motion is quite clear. It covers salaries and wages of all Government employees, whether casual workers or not. The casual worker gets a bonus of 30 per cent. I did not illustrate wages because the examples given are fixed salaries starting from \$20 per month.

Mr. JACOB : He gets that 30 per cent. now; he will not get any increase. The Treasurer knows that perfectly well.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : He gets 25 per cent. now, and the idea is to give him 30 per cent.—an increase of 5 per cent.

Mr. EDUN : I was going to make that point when the hon. Member interposed. When a labourer got 64 cents per day from 1939 and was granted a bonus of 25 per cent., he got an extra 16 cents which made his pay 80 cents per day. He has been receiving that from 1939 until today.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : No.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : If he was receiving 64 cents per day in 1939 he was not getting a bonus in those days. He started to get bonus in 1942, when it was only 20 per cent. In 1943 it was raised to 25 per cent., and the present proposal is to raise it to 30 per cent. He has been getting 25 per cent. since 1943.

Mr. EDUN . Even then he was not receiving as much as civil servants of the higher grade. I am not averse to giving civil servants their just due, but the point is that those who need the most consideration from Government have not been considered at all. It will be recalled that during the war years very many adjustments were made in the salaries and working conditions of the Civil Service — Leave Passages and many other facilities were granted—but in the case of the manual workers my impression is that Government stands indicted as the worst employers in this Colony. On the West Coast of Demerara the Engineers cannot secure labour because of the competition in private industries. That gives me the impression that Government is not concerned at all about those people. Why then should I fritter away \$600,000 when the ordinary workers are not getting their just due ? I would be quite willing to vote for this bonus provided Government reconsidered the case of the manual workers.

The motion moved by me in 1944 requested an increase of the basic wages retrospective from January, 1944, improved conditions of work, an 8-hour day, overtime rates, classification and grading, annual leave, pensions and gratuities, and other conditions pertaining to the economic and social welfare of the labouring section of Government employees. All I got from Government was a promise that an officer would be appointed who would be a sort of *liaison* between the Departments, the Labour Department and perhaps the Trade Unions, and who would go into the question

of classification and grading, and other conditions of employment. I learned in Finance Committee that an officer has been appointed. It has taken Government so many years to give consideration to the claims of those loyal and hard-working manual labourers. What is actuating Government? Is it that they consider that manual workers are not human beings? Does the hon. Member suggest that the increased cost of living does not affect them? During the debate to which I have referred, I made out a very good case for these people but Government became particularly deaf.

I am very strongly of the opinion that Government should reconsider this motion—defer it and examine the whole thing—and see whether from this sum of \$600,000 the basic rates of pay for these people should not be raised. The hon. Member for North Western District says that at least \$1.20 per day should be given to them. That was the figure that was placed before this House to be accepted, but the motion was turned down. I thought, however, that the time would have come for Government to give consideration to these people along those lines, seeing that the cost of living was rising so sharply. What am I to think? Am I to accept Government as being sincere and feel that they have just cause for continuing the present rates? I think every Member of this Council ought to agree with me and say that this matter should be referred to a Select Committee for an examination of the position of these lower-paid employees, because Government should show the best example as an employer in this Colony. In addition to the argument I have adduced, I would like to take this opportunity to ask if we grant this increase, based on the cost of living index as presented to this Council, what quality of service we would get from the Government employees.

Let me examine the Departments and see how they work. Let me take the Public Works Department first. Today, after a long number of weeks, replies were tabled in this Council to certain questions asked by me affecting this Department. Those hon. Members who have read the replies will see how funds are being frittered away by this Department—frittered away in absolute waste—and nobody is being held responsible, nobody is

being called to book when funds are wasted. The Colony's funds get wasted by District Engineers and other officers, yet I am being asked in this Council to vote money for the same men who have been guilty of negligence. Is that fair? Will that be right and proper by this Council to the taxpayers and the humble producers—the sugar workers and the rice producers? Should not these people ask for better wages also? I shall call upon the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) to do more justice to the rice producers, because they too are feeling the pinch of the cost of living which has been continually going up.

I thought Government employees would have been patriotic enough to accept the present situation and say that they are working for the country, but I do not see any example of that at all. In Finance Committee we gave a certain Police Inspector £100 per annum more on his allowance, and when that item comes before this Council I shall show why he should not receive that money. I shall show this Council that the Police are not doing their duty at all, and how partiality is being exercised in the country districts by the Police against a certain section of the people, while I am being asked to vote more money for their maladministration. Suppose I pass now to the administration of the Justice department. One has to wonder at the administration when they see the kind of thing that is happening today. We find incompetent prosecutors, brilliant defence counsel, disagreement by juries, racial prejudice and partiality. All these things are occurring in the administration of justice—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Is the hon. Member seriously challenging the administration of justice by our Bench in this Colony? I notice he mentioned juries, and I would like to advise him to be careful about what he is saying. Is he challenging the Bench in its administration of justice?

Mr. EDUN: I am challenging the administration of justice, and I am doing so because I am not satisfied with what is happening in the Department of Justice.

The PRESIDENT: What does the hon. Member mean by "Department of Justice"? That is important because it would

be a serious matter to attack the administration of justice.

Mr. EDUN : I am saying that this Council wants me to vote money in order to give the civil servants more war bonus, and I am taking opportunity to question the propriety of giving more money to people who have not given satisfaction in certain departments to the public. I think I am quite right in bringing up the matter here. The time has come for us to go into this department—the Justice department. When I go up to the Courantyne Coast the dissatisfaction which I hear among the villagers in this respect is enough to make one's blood creep. In every department there is deterioration, and no wonder a previous Governor made the suggestion in this Council that we have a set of mediocre civil servants. I am willing to give them all their due—I am willing all the time—but, in any case, I suggest that a Select Committee be appointed to go into this matter and say whether this increase is justified.

What I am fearing is this : How far will this spiral go, and what attitude does Government intend to take towards the small people—the sugar workers, the rice producers, the small producers, the bauxite workers and everybody else who will want more money ? I shall be grateful, Sir, if you publish every word the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has said this afternoon in order that every worker would be able to read them for himself. Perhaps there will be a great country-wide upheaval as a result, and the spiral which has been started by Government may have to continue all the time in the finding of more money for the small workers and producers.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : May I ask the hon. Member one word since he has been making so much reference to the sugar workers ? Are they not getting a war bonus of 30 per cent ?

Mr. EDUN : Yes, but what else does the sugar worker get ? He will get, perhaps, a free coffin from a sugar company when he is dead. I deprecate the comparison which the hon. the Colonial Treasurer is trying to make; it is like chalk to cheese. Because of the rise in the cost of certain commodities, Government must look out for repercussions from this

measure. I had hoped that sufficient wisdom would have been shown to let us wait until things subsided a bit and see how the efforts for stabilization in the cost of living would work from September next, and if things did not come up to expectation then it would have been time to give war bonus retrospective even from January last. I am in a difficult position in this matter, for it has been refuted by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer that the civil servants have asked for this increase, because they are aware of the rise in revenue that has taken place. I think the whole thing involves the question of sacrifice on the part of the civil servants. Do they not know what has been happening in other parts of the world ? Members of the Government in India have reduced their own salaries, because they found that it was in the interest of the country to do so. Have any of the civil servants in British Guiana done anything like that ? I doubt whether any of them would be able to satisfy me if I ask him to come forward and explain how he makes up his budget. Perhaps they know how to play cards and things like that, for only today I had been reading in the newspapers of what a civil servant was doing in this respect. These are the things which Government should look into rather than continuing this spiral of expenditure.

As a Trade Union leader I would like to say "Let the Government employees have all the money if they can get it, but the British people will have to pay for all the goods coming here, perhaps, in exchange for our products — sugar, rum, bauxite and rice." That is the kind of thing we have to look at as statesmen here. I do not see how we would be able to pay for the goods coming here if we continue like this. We would end up in poverty and be landed right back into the lap of the Imperial Treasury with the loss, perhaps, of our traditional privileges. I will have to be told more in order to be convinced that the time is ripe for this measure and that stabilization of the cost of living will be necessary at the end of the year. If I am satisfied in this respect I shall be willing to vote for this motion. Further than that I cannot go.

Now, Sir, I do not want to plead unnecessarily, because when justice is required

there should be no question. I will plead, however, for justice in the case of the labourer employees of Government and urge that their case stands out very prominently indeed. I will ask you, Sir, as President of this Council and Governor of this Colony, to look at the debate to which I have already referred and see the claim of these loyal workers and say whether you think they should continue to work for 64 cents per day, plus 16 cents war bonus. They seldom get more than four days' work per week, and yet they have been told that unless they work for at least 225 days in a year they will not be entitled to gratuity after 20 or even 30 years of service. Perhaps Government will tell me that Mr. Drayton (the newly-appointed Public Welfare Officer of the Public Works Department) will go into the matter and make a report, but he has just been appointed and I doubt whether he will be able to cope with a matter like this. This is a matter for a Committee, for inquiry into how these people live, and I ask that before this \$600,000 is voted the just claims of the labourer-employees of Government—those engaged on roads, the sea defences, in the Public Works Department and other Government institutions—should be given first consideration and the other employees considered afterwards. With those observations, Sir, I ask that this motion be deferred until the question I have put forward is examined.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I am not opposing the motion, Your Excellency, but I would like to say I do not agree that those employees who are receiving over £1,000 per annum should get any further war bonus. Only 17 persons come under that category and, to my mind, it is absurd to think of giving them any further war bonus. I do not know whether they will have to pay more income tax and, perhaps, further war bonus is intended to be a contribution towards their income tax. I would like to know what £5 per month to officers like the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Colonial Treasurer and such others will amount to. I certainly think that money can be better used for making up the road to the Air Base which is in a deplorable condition. But I think the other Government employees are entitled to what the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has put up.

He has put up a good case—as he did when he took steps to increase our income tax. (Laughter).

The scale of this war bonus to my mind, however, is inconsistent. A man with one child and with a salary of say \$200 per month will get an allowance of \$24 per month, while a man who has six children and is receiving the same \$200 per month will not even get an extra \$10 (over and above the \$24). I think the time is ripe, however, for those employees earning below £1,000 per annum to receive the allowances as suggested in the motion. I will also suggest to the hon. the Colonial Treasurer that when next he comes up with the question of income tax he should think of giving family men better relief. I will suggest an allowance of \$60 per month for a man and \$50 for his wife. That is the yard-stick I would use, if I were in his position.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: In that case the hon. Member would get some relief, but that was not intended. (Laughter).

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I think it would be a good gesture if the five officers who are receiving more than \$700 per month each refuse to accept the increased war bonus.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not agree at all with the hon. Member who has suggested a postponement of this matter. I propose to support the motion *in toto*. It must have slipped those hon. Members who have spoken against the motion that a large percentage of this amount which is being voted will return to Government in the form of revenue—either directly or indirectly—and that, to my mind, alleviates the position somewhat. Certain hon. Members have stressed the position as regards casual labourers employed by the Public Works Department and other Government institutions and, therefore, I think we should analyse the situation. Firstly, how can the Public Works Department employ more labour than it does when the vote for the Department has been cut down? Further, how can the Department employ its labourers for 225 days a year and entitle them to get annual pensions or gratuities when this very Council has cut down the vote?



Secondly, with regard to the question of grading casual labourers which the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, also referred to, as he rightly stated—doubtless, from information supplied to this Council from time to time—the position is that there is to be a grading officer. At present he is in the United States taking a short course dealing with the subject he will have to administer. When he returns here I hope we will be able to grade these workers and others. It has been suggested that this work should not be done by one grading officer but by a Committee of this Council. There is, however, an Advisory Committee to the Public Works Department and that Committee will, no doubt, consider the reports of the grading officer and will be glad to give him any possible assistance. I think, hon. Members will appreciate, therefore, that the question as regards the grading of casual labourers has been answered substantially in these points.

Mr. EDUN : To a point of correction ! Has not the Grading Officer returned to the Colony already ?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : No. I am talking about Mr. Drayton.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Mr. Drayton has returned to the Colony and he has been appointed Secretary to the Committee which is enquiring into the Transport and Harbours salaries question. As soon as that Committee completes its work he will be taken on in the new post to which the hon. Members have referred.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I am glad to hear that he has returned and I hope the Town Council will be supplied with a copy of the report, because Government and the Town Council are working hand in hand in these matters. The hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Edun), in his position as a Member of this Council, has laid a charge against the Department of Justice. I do not know what he means by "we have no Department of Justice in this Colony". I do not know whether we are going to find ourselves under some other system of law, some other code. There are several codes—English, French,

and otherwise. It has been suggested that there is incompetence in the administration of justice and that there is incompetence in the jury but, surely, the jury system is one which we have advocated and if there is any incompetence in the jury it cannot be attributed to any Government action. Government does not appoint the jury. The jury is taken from among the people, and one would think that a champion of democracy such as the hon. Member (Mr. Edun) professes to be, would ask for such a thing.

Mr. EDUN : May I rise to a point of correction ? I spoke of "disagreement of juries". The hon. Member should pay attention; he was speaking outside at the time.

Mr. WIGHT : I do not know whether the hon. Member is trying to make the point that disagreement by a jury is not allowed. I thought he was trying to say that disagreement by a jury was incompetence.

Mr. EDUN : I said there was disagreement by juries and incompetence by prosecutors.

Mr. WIGHT : Incompetence by prosecutors ? Sometimes they get a conviction, but I do not know whether this has anything to do with the jury system. Attacking the jury system is going very near to the voting system. The hon. Member should be very careful as regards objections or attacks against the administration of justice, because it affects the very foundation of the Empire and every British country. It is through that very administration of justice that we can consider ourselves to be under a free Flag. The Courts are free for each and every one of us; they do not belong to any one section, and the hon. Member ought not to attack the administration of justice for, perhaps, that is a way of bringing down the Freedom of the Flag and of that Democracy for which the hon. Member is always clamouring.

The PRESIDENT : Council is now adjourned until 2 p.m., tomorrow.