

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Thursday, 11th July, 1935.*

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR GEOFFREY A. S. NORTHCOTE, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

## PRESENT.

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

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. Hector Josephs, K.C.

The Hon. T. T. Smellie, O.B.E. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

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

Major the Hon. J. C. Craig, D.S.O., Director of Public Works.

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

The Hon. G. J. De Freitas, K.C. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. J. Mullin, O.B.E., Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Hon. W. A. D'Andrade, Comptroller of Customs.

The Hon. G. I. Goring, General Manager, Transport and Harbours Department (Acting).

The Hon. M. B. Laing, District Commissioner, East Coast Demerara District.

The Hon. B. De Freitas, Surgeon-General (Acting).

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

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

The Hon. Jung Bahadur Singh (Demerara-Essequibo).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. J. L. Wills (Demerara River).

The Hon. R. V. Evan Wong (Essequibo River).

The Hon. F. J. Seaford (Georgetown North).

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

The Hon. W. S. Jones (Nominated Unofficial Member).

## MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 10th July, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICE.

### TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS BILL.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer) gave notice of the following amendment to the Transport and Harbours Bill :—

That the following proviso be substituted for the proviso to new section seven of clause two of the Bill.

“ provided that with regard to the dues, fees and charges mentioned in Part III. of this Ordinance, the Board, with the previous sanction of the Legislative Council, may at any time fix, levy and collect such dues, fees or charges other than those contained in the estimates as it may deem necessary for the purposes of this Ordinance.”

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

### SALARIES OF POSTMASTERS.

Mr. DE AGUIAR asked the following questions :—

1. What are the salaries attached to the offices of Postmaster of Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Suddie?

2. Has there been any change in the scale of salaries since the 1928 scheme came into operation?

3. What is the salary paid to the recently appointed Postmaster at Suddie?

4. If this officer is at present receiving a salary below the minimum under the 1928 Scheme would Government make the necessary

provision in the Estimates for the adjustment of his salary?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Major Bain Gray) replied as follows:—

1.	YEARS	SALARY.
Georgetown	...1928-35	\$1,284 by \$72 to \$2,280.
New Amsterdam	...1928-29	\$1,800 by \$96 to \$2,280.
	...1930-35	\$1,284 by \$72 to \$2,280.
Suddie	...1928-29	\$936 by \$48 to \$1,176.
	...1930-35	\$960 by \$48 to \$1,176.

2. (1) The 1928 Scheme did not include the posts of Postmaster at New Amsterdam, Georgetown and Suddie, which were regarded as "prize" offices, *vide* para. 2 of B of Sessional Paper No. 12/1927.

(2) In 1930, as shown in the reply to Question 1, the minimum of the scale of salary for the Postmaster at New Amsterdam was reduced and the minimum of the scale at Suddie increased on a change in the holders of the posts.

3. The Postmaster at Suddie has been paid from the date of his appointment (1st November, 1934), at the rate of \$1,008 per annum.

4. In view of the answers to questions Nos. 2 and 3 this question does not arise.

#### BANANA CULTIVATION.

Questions—1. What steps are being taken to encourage the cultivation of bananas for export?

2. Are the Government aware that the Gros Michel type can be successfully cultivated in commercial quantities?

3. How many trial shipments will be made during 1935 and to what markets?

(b) State the approximate number of stems of Gros Michel and Cavendish intended for each market.

4. What arrangements have been made with steamship agents for economical carriage of the fruit?

(a) to the United Kingdom.

(b) to Canada.

5. What arrangements have been made for the sale of the fruit in each of these markets?

6. Would Government consider the necessity of rendering early financial assistance for the proper establishment of the industry along the following lines:—

(a) for the experimental cultivation of selected plots.

(b) for assisting the formation of an Association of banana growers and exporters.

(c) for advances to farmers through a marketing organisation?

Replies—1. Suckers have been issued free to persons interested in this industry. Advice has been and is being given as to growing methods. Investigation into shipping and marketing problems are in hand.

2. Government is not as yet in a position to assert that Gros Michel bananas can be cultivated successfully over a period of years.

3. No arrangements are as yet in hand for a trial shipment of Gros Michel bananas. As a result of information obtained by the Director of Agriculture at the 1933 Fruit Conference, Jamaica, in regard to the decision of the C.N.S. to provide accommodation on their boats on the

eastern route, the United Fruit Company were invited to send representatives to British Guiana to consider the marketing, in the first place, of fruit of the Gros Michel type which might be grown within easy reach of the port of Georgetown. After full enquiry and investigation they decided that local conditions and difficulties did not justify hope of any economical arrangement being made by their Company in regard to bananas produced in this Colony. If, however, an exportable surplus of Gros Michel fruit is shown to be likely to be forthcoming and if adequate and suitable supplies for export can be guaranteed, Government will at once take steps to re-open the question with the Company which controls the marketing of Gros Michel bananas in Canada from the neighbouring Caribbean Colonies. Government would welcome any opportunity for such action.

(b) A trial shipment of Cavendish bananas will be made by the Harrison Line in August. The question of further trial shipments will be considered in the light of outcome of first experiment. Correspondence is in process between the Agricultural Departments of Trinidad and British Guiana with a view to co-operating in shipments and sale of Cavendish bananas and results are still awaited from these efforts.

4. See replies to Questions 1, 2 and 3.

5. In Canada—see reply to Question 3.

In United Kingdom—the Secretary of State has suggested the name of a firm willing to undertake the marketing of fruit contingent on the results of trial shipments.

6. (a) Experimental plots are already in progress.

(b) Yes; when circumstances justify such consideration being given.

(c) See (b).

#### DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION.

MR. ELFAZAR: I beg to move:—

That Government be respectfully requested to forward to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies the petition of the inhabitants of the Colony to be laid on the table praying for effective drainage and irrigation schemes for the coast lands in terms of a Motion accepted by Government at the fifth annual session of this Council.

Sir, I apprehend that I would have no difficulty whatever in my endeavour to recommend this motion to the careful consideration of Government but for the fact that in this community there are many persons who, while otherwise in sympathy with the purport of the motion, have got hold of what I have always considered a popular economic fallacy that the government of the country is identical with a commercial concern. On that principle whenever any measure of some magnitude is proposed for the progress of the country the question is asked: "Will it pay?"

It seems, sir, that those people who are otherwise optimists become pessimists, because they refuse or neglect to address their minds to the proposition which they themselves enunciate, and it needs very little investigation to demonstrate that that question is certainly an economic fallacy. Will it pay to maintain the British Army and Navy at their present standard? Coming a little nearer home: Will it pay to maintain the Sea Defences of this Colony so long as the vagaries of the sea continue? Will it pay to maintain the Sewerage System of Georgetown as it is to-day? Will it pay to expend \$300,000 a year to educate the children of the masses of this Colony?

It is a common and general economic principle that everything has a cost and nearly everything has an economic value. When the latter is the lower the difference between the two must be regarded as the price that will be paid for any direct or prospective benefit which need not necessarily be economic. On that principle, which I submit is a sound economic principle, the question should not be "Will it pay?" but "Is it worth it?" That, to my mind, is the question. On that principle I will ask: Is it worth exporting from this country 18,000 tons of rice in a peak year and 8,000 or 9,000 tons in a lean year? Is it worth saving thousands of head of cattle, sheep and other small stock every year? Is it worth, while finding employment for the thousands of boys and girls who must live by the sweat of their brow and their hands and are thrown on the community every year? Is it worth saving the health of the community when in times of flood they have to drink liquid sewage and in times of drought to drink the same stuff only a little bit intensified? And is it worth saving the community from Malaria, Filaria, Hookworm and other diseases? For all the years this country has been suffering from the disadvantages which I have mentioned. There is a flood every year in some part of the country while once in seven years there is a severe drought. I submit that an effective and comprehensive scheme of drainage and irrigation will avert these evils. And is it worth putting all the people who are now suffering from want of employment into beneficial occupation?

This condition of things was unknown

years ago. Sugar was then King. With a comprehensive scheme of drainage and irrigation the country will progress and flourish and immigrants will come into it because they will be able to live. I know of more than half-a-dozen sugar estates that were running until German bounty fed sugar killed them out. To-day Government is seeking to provide protective measures for those estates which are still existing. If one travels from any point on the coastlands to another one would find relics of the system of drainage and irrigation which the Dutch laid down during their occupation. Because of the abandonment of those schemes the Colony has been retrogressing. The sugar planters themselves have demonstrated that without drainage and irrigation agriculture cannot progress. They discovered that the Dutch had the system throughout the coastlands. Can anyone attempt to confute the loss in health, wealth and generally that the Colony has suffered through the neglect of maintaining a system of drainage and irrigation? Your Excellency might be inclined to ask how it is that a problem which seems to be an axiom should so long have escaped attention. It did not. When Sugar was King it was easy for the labourer to find remunerative employment and he did not seem to mind what was happening. The necessity for a comprehensive scheme has now reached its lowest ebb with the attendant evils which neglect was apt to bring in its train. And we are still deliberating on the question: Will it pay? The question is not "Will it pay?" but "Is it worth putting the country on wheels to run instead of having it stuck in the mud as it is to-day?" The time is long past for discussion; it is the time for action now. We can delay no longer. I cannot conceive how it is possible for Government to view with equanimity the thousands of boys and girls coming out of the schools every year with no prospect of employment.

Around this table there are men of far more experience than myself in matters of this kind. Village life has certainly improved in a social way, but villagers are only what they are on account of the finding of gold and diamonds. Is it worth saving the social fabric of the country and over-crowding of perhaps a husband and wife and seven children in a room 10 feet

square? That is what is occurring in the country to-day, because the people can hardly find money to buy food, much less to pay rent. I move this motion, sir, only because I feel it is my duty to do so. I have heard somebody saying "The General Election is coming." I have made it perfectly clear that I have no fear. The possibility of successful opposition in my division is as remote as the possibility of my going from here and allowing a motor car to knock me down. No description of mine can give Your Excellency an adequate description of conditions in 1934 when the coastlands were flooded. One saw calves swimming behind their mothers and nothing to save them, and that has been going on for years in some part or other of the country. The flood of 1934 was one which had no parallel, while the drought of 1926 was worse than anyone had previously seen. The most prolific part of the country where one would expect to see vegetation was like the floor of this House. People drank liquid sewage until there was no more to drink. And still we deliberate.

Is it worth saving the country, the granary of the West Indies, by an efficient drainage and irrigation scheme which it has been denied all these years? I do not know if by "comprehensive" is intended one scheme for the whole Colony. I have heard somebody saying that. The physical condition of the country prevents that and makes it an absurd system to put forward. What is meant is that in a district, such as the area between the Mahaica and Mahaicony Creeks, which is subject more or less all the time to the vagaries of the elements, the scheme can be inaugurated to meet the needs of the district. Further afield on the Corentyne will be found a district which would also lend itself to the scheme. When I say "a comprehensive scheme" the idea is that it is high time for Government to put into action what has been demonstrated for all these years: that without an adequate drainage and irrigation scheme you cannot properly put people on the land. As I said, I do not apprehend any difficulty in Government accepting the motion as it stands, but I thought it my duty to allay the fears and explode the theory that everything must be brought down to the basis of a commercial concern. I beg to move the motion.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: It gives me very great pleasure to second this motion and in doing so I do not intend to take up too much time, because the whole position is well known to Members of this House and the inhabitants of the Colony generally. I quite agree that the one and only thing to give this Colony a push forward is an efficient scheme of drainage and irrigation. Year after year, and for many years, it has been urged on Government that it was absolutely necessary that the lands should be effectively drained and that there should be a scheme of irrigation available in times of drought. It is quite true that every seven years, more or less, there is a drought, yet nothing is done. In like manner floods come periodically. I go further than the hon. mover of this motion. I do not think it is a question of "Will it pay?" or "Is it worth it?". The people living in this Colony are all British subjects. Some of them have come here of their own free will, some of them have been brought here or are the descendants of immigrants who were brought here under contract, and some of them are the descendants of slaves. However they came all are British subjects, and I say with every respect: it is not a question of is it worth it but whether the people of this Colony are not entitled to it.

As British subjects are we not entitled to expect decent living conditions in so far as floods are concerned? Is it unreasonable for the farmer to expect, and to hope, to reap the crop he has sown? For years there has been the expectation that he would not reap the crop he had sown, and his wonderful optimism to sow every year is nothing short of a miracle. These farmers pursue their calling because they have to do something to earn a living or to procure some part of the crop to furnish themselves with food. We have vast areas of fertile lands which are capable of producing many crops in abundance and would be increased if we had irrigation and drainage. The question of what crops can best be grown on those areas can be investigated, but sugar, rice and ground provisions have been proved to flourish on the coastlands wherever there is drainage and irrigation of some kind. I need hardly point to the fact that sugar cultivation is proof positive of what can be done where you have irrigation and drainage. It is not possible for the small proprietor, the rice or provision farmer,

to have a scheme of drainage and irrigation as the sugar proprietors have for their estates, and I submit that where there are numerous small proprietors in a district they are entitled to look to Government for proper drainage in times of flood and irrigation in times of drought.

It might be said that it is easy to talk, but where is the money to come from. The object of the motion is earnestly to pray for substantial assistance from the Mother Country. The time has come when His Majesty's Government must consider what this Colony is entitled to, and it is hoped that when the petition goes forward it will receive very favourable consideration and something substantial will be done. I quite agree with the hon. Member for Berbice River that the idea is not to have schemes throughout the country. Each district has its own peculiarities. Some districts are purely cattle districts and they would not need the same system of irrigation and drainage as purely agricultural districts. We are asking the Mother Country to help us and the question is: What will they give us for an efficient scheme of drainage and irrigation? It will have to be a very large sum of money, and, as the mover of the motion says, the Imperial Government will have to consider the question: "Is it worth it?"

In considering that question there must be no idea of getting back £1 for every pound invested here. We have in this Colony 300,000 British subjects. Is it possible to think that His Majesty's Government will grudge this Colony assistance of even £1,000,000 when one considers the immense bounty lavished on the Beet Sugar Industry in England, which I observed recently is to be continued in spite of the recommendation of a Commission that it should be discontinued? Millions have been spent on that industry, which admittedly does not pay but loses all the time. We are the same Britishers as the people in England on whom this money is being spent. No doubt the Imperial Government think that the Beet Sugar Industry should continue because it affords employment to many people. That being so I again ask the question: Is it possible to think that the Imperial Government will grudge British inhabitants of this Colony assistance of a couple of million pounds? The terms on which the money

is granted would have to be very liberal. There can be no question of repayment of the loan or of payment of interest for a considerable number of years.

This Colony has been in British occupation for 100 years. During that period its inhabitants have manifested the utmost loyalty to the British Throne and will continue to do so. Great Britain has given us gifts for which we are very grateful, and, as the Mother Country, I venture to think she will say "We have given our children in British Guiana gifts here and there but never a real chance to make good, and they cannot go forward with any improvement in Agriculture unless we materially assist them with drainage and irrigation." I do not know to what extent Your Excellency's predecessor has urged this matter on His Majesty's Government, but I feel the utmost confidence that if Your Excellency will endeavour to help us a great deal will flow from your efforts and something really substantial done. There can be no doubt that the Imperial Government are aware of conditions in this Colony, and I feel that what we really need at the present time is, to use a local expression, a God-father to plead with the Secretary of State that the petition should be given very grave consideration and material assistance afforded us. Your Excellency has been here a very short time, but even in that short time you have had an opportunity to see what flood conditions are like. Flood and drought conditions mean death to Agriculture. When provision lands are covered with water the land becomes water-logged and the cultivation is destroyed. A similar result ensues on cane-farming in the villages. That does not occur on the sugar estates to any extent because the estates have a very good system of drainage, which, of course, is maintained at tremendous expense which the small farmer is unable to afford. Drainage schemes have been inaugurated and pumps erected on the coastlands, but there can be no doubt that many of these pumping plants are totally inadequate to cope with the surplus water. In addition to that the sea defences undoubtedly hamper drainage to a large extent. In the 1933—34 flood one cattle farm alone lost 2,000 head of cattle.

In many ways we have a lot to be grateful to the Mother Country for, but we

would be forever grateful if our prayer in this instance is seriously considered and responded to. It would have to be a very substantial amount and I ask you, sir, seriously to give the matter your most careful consideration and assist us to obtain the assistance we are asking for. I urge that it should be pointed out to the Imperial Government that the people of the Colony are all British subjects and the Colony a British asset, and that given an efficient scheme of drainage and irrigation the Colony will become a greater asset and the brightest jewel in the British Crown. With an efficient scheme of drainage and irrigation for the villages the sugar industry would increase materially. There are vast areas that can be absorbed for cane farming, and the people in the villages are keen and only too willing to engage in it, but even in villages where cane-farming is pursued the farmers not infrequently fail to reap the reward of their labours as the results of floods. Having regard to all the circumstances and the fact that this Colony is the only British possession in South America, the fundamental question is not "Is it worth it?" or "Will it pay?", but whether we are not entitled to ask the British Government to assist us to make a place in the Sun for ourselves.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I have very great pleasure in supporting this motion. I anticipate no trouble or refusal from Government in accepting this motion, bearing in mind that a few months ago Government accepted a similar motion which was also tabled by the hon. Member for Berbice River. I quite agree with the view expressed in some quarters that we have not got the time or the money for experimenting or investigating indefinitely. We have had reports from experts sent out by the Imperial Government, which are available to this Government. In those reports Government will find that all of the coastlands are fertile and suitable for the crops which have been growing on them for years and are still growing. Our complaint for years has been that these corps suffer from the absence of drainage and irrigation. I do not think any member of this Council can convince Your Excellency more fully than the many appeals made to you on your tour to Berbice. In Your Excellency's address at the opening of this

session you said that in the course of that tour you received a large number of addresses from villages and country districts between Georgetown and Crabwood Creek on the Courantyne River, and added "An almost universal feature of those addresses was a request that Government should put in effect a 'comprehensive scheme of drainage and irrigation'." Drainage and irrigation are vital to the existence of the farming community. I need hardly say more in support of the motion for embarking on a scheme for the benefit of the Colony as a whole.

Mr. AUSTIN: With Your Excellency's permission I should like to make a few comments on the remarks of the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara. The Mother Country has not been ungenerous to us, but, unfortunately, as I think most of us realise, the money has been mis-spent. It has been used in directions other than in improving drainage and irrigation in established parts of the Colony, and there is no sign, nor will there be any sign, of productivity of the expenditure for many years, if ever. Last year a sum in the neighbourhood of \$60,000 was spent on obtaining water on the Essequibo Coast, and that scheme has not materialised nor will it ever do so. The Home Government cannot be blamed for the mis-application of funds which have been generously given us, and it would be wrong if it is broadcasted that we are ungrateful for past help.

In connection with cane-farming, one is very glad to see that matters are improving in that direction. Two or three years ago cane-farmers never thought of digging trenches or side-lines or trying to assist the factories by getting their canes to a point nearest to the factories, but these shortcomings have now more or less disappeared. I think I am right in saying that estates' managers, town agents and shareholders of certain sugar companies in the United Kingdom, welcome the extension of cane-farming. They would like to see it further extended with proper and reasonable safeguards; and if the co-operation of the farmers is forthcoming they would benefit by the technical assistance of the men in charge of the fields and factories. That can be achieved with the assistance of Members of this Council who have influence in the village districts, and

I suggest to them and also to Government that this matter be taken further.

There are several estates which might be willing to enlarge existing factories, by perhaps adding to their machinery, if proper safeguards as to the reaping of canes when ripe would be forthcoming from the farmers. I feel sure that managers would willingly assist recognised and hard-working farmers by giving them advice and information on drainage, manuring and general cultivation. Cane-farmers are now benefiting by the experience they have gained. What managers, town agents and proprietors feel is that there has been very little co-operation in the immediate past. If with the assistance of Members of this Council we could impress on farmers the necessity of co-operation, and also get more farmers interested in increasing the acreage in the neighbourhood of the factories, it would not only benefit the individual but greatly assist the District Commissioners in collecting village rates and the Colonial Treasurer in obtaining quite a large amount of revenue from many sources.

Mr. WILLS: I have little to add in support of the motion. The question of drainage and irrigation has been discussed in this House for many years. Its first advocate was the then Member for Berbice, Mr. J. P. Santos, who went so far as to offer to finance a particular scheme. It must be admitted that Government always gave the question a patient hearing, but, unfortunately, nothing has been done and I believe that is the reason why the mover of the motion is now asking that the petition be forwarded to the Secretary of State. We feel that Government realise that with effective drainage and irrigation prosperity will come to the Colony, and acceptance of the motion would strengthen Government's hands and show that the inhabitants are supporting that view. It has been pointed out that in order to bring about effective drainage and irrigation large sums of money are needed. Some years ago the Imperial Government expressed a willingness to spend large sums of money in the Colony on development schemes, but the offer was subject to the condition that the Constitution was surrendered as security. Fortunately or unfortunately, it was not considered advisable to accept that condition; but to-day

we have neither development nor the Constitution. At the present time the Colony is under Treasury control and I am sure that the Imperial Government would welcome some scheme which would relieve them of the large sums now advanced from year to year for the purpose of carrying on the country.

The greater portion of the Colony is agricultural and the prosperity of the country is dependent on Agriculture. Government has been encouraging the small farmers to return to the soil. We have been running an expensive Agricultural Department. Is the money well spent? The answer to that question is that we are endeavouring to educate the people in the right methods of pursuing Agriculture. But while we are spending that money on education, what is happening? The people are acquiring a love for the soil and planting their crops, but every year they see that their labour is in vain. At the time of the floods early last year we saw water all over the coastlands and loss of crops in every direction. Are we doing anything to prevent a recurrence of that experience? Temporary relief works have been done, but what we need is a comprehensive scheme of drainage and irrigation to protect our very existence. That drainage and irrigation will bring prosperity to the Colony has been demonstrated by the sugar planters.

It is clear from the speech of the Hon. Mr. Austin that the sugar planters would welcome any effort by Government to assist the cane-farmer. The sugar planters would therefore not be averse to a measure which will bring prosperity to the Colony. Would it not then be a wise policy for the Imperial Government to help this Colony along the lines of prosperity? The hon. Nominated Member said the Mother Country has been generous to us. We admit that. But in going through the country Your Excellency has been struck by the clamour for drainage and irrigation, and you will be doing this Colony a lasting benefit if by your representations you influence the Imperial Government to the view that this question is vital to the welfare of its inhabitants. This motion must commend itself not only to Elected Members but also to Nominated and Official Members, and with its acceptance the Colony will embark on the march of prosperity.

Dr. SINGH : Those of us who have followed events in the Colony know only too well how many times we have suffered from floods and droughts during the past 20 years. That state of affairs will recur if something is not done to prevent it. The Colony has now reached the climax and something should be done, even if it is done piecemeal, in carefully considered areas. If the population is still to continue in agricultural pursuits it is inevitable that conditions must be made more attractive for them. In my experience of 15 years ago Mahaicony was a flourishing rice district. Owing to repeated floods and droughts the people in that district have been demoralised and have left their lands and trekked to the City and elsewhere. If this motion is accepted it would be the means of putting British Guiana a step forward.

Professor DASH, (Director of Agriculture) : From time to time and on occasions every year the question of drainage and irrigation is debated in this Council, sometimes in connection with the estimates of the Department of Agriculture and sometimes in a separate form, but the debate to-day suits me and I think it will appeal to all who have the agricultural interest of the country at heart. The Agricultural Department has been blamed for floods and droughts, for outbreaks of pests, and for all the ills to which Agriculture is prone. I have frequently had occasion to draw attention to the ills from which other agricultural communities suffer, in some places worse than ourselves. Nevertheless it is true that this question of drainage and irrigation crops up here with unfailing regularity. It is, of course, right that it should crop up in this Council, because Agriculture is the biggest industry we have to-day, and it behoves us all to do our part to keep it together and to increase it. There has been a tendency, however, during the course of the debate to give one or two wrong impressions. In the first place comes the question of production. The hon. Member for Berbice River was rather inclined to think that we have made no progress at all and are standing still just where we were before. He mentioned, for example, that in a peak year we could only export 19,000 tons of rice. As a matter of fact the export of rice has nearly reached 30,000 tons. It is true that last year, on account of the

floods and the drought, we have dropped back, but we all hope that is only temporary. In the case of sugar the hon. Member suggested that Sugar was no longer King. There is no doubt, however, that sugar production has gone up by a very substantial margin—something like 40 to 50 per cent.—in the last few years. Everything on the whole, as far as production is concerned, has gone up, so that we have made progress and should recognise it.

In so far as sugar is concerned I think there is still a tendency in some quarters not to back it sufficiently and not to recognise the important part it plays in this community. A number of persons sometimes speak unkindly of it and think other crops can do better than sugar. What we have to bear in mind in this country is that under our conditions we must have a crop of high financial return, not necessarily of high profits but of sufficient revenue not only to justify capital but also to justify maintenance. The question of capital may sometimes be easy to solve, but the question of maintenance of drainage and irrigation schemes is not always so easy. We know that from our experience here. People who get benefit from a drainage scheme will not pay their drainage rates, and one of the reasons given is that the crop they cultivate does not give a sufficient margin to enable them to pay their rates. The question of drainage and irrigation schemes therefore has to be looked at very seriously from that angle. If you put down a very expensive scheme and cannot maintain it there must be a loss. The policy which Your Excellency adumbrated, that the Colony should seek in the first place to put right all those areas which at present need it, I think is absolutely sound and will, I am sure, receive the approval of all those who know anything about economics and have studied the problems of the country closely.

I should just like to say a word about cane-farming. It certainly has been very pleasing to me to hear the Nominated Member, Mr. Austin, say what he did in regard to the sugar estates. It has been the policy of the Department ever since we started to improve conditions that cane-farming is one of the things the villages should go in for where they have the opportunity near the sugar estates.



We have achieved a great deal of success in our efforts in that connection, which have been stimulated by the assistance of at least one of the District Commissioners and the sugar estates. The figures have in some cases doubled and in other cases trebled themselves, and I do hope that nothing will be done to deflect from the mind of the Agriculturist that he can do nothing better than prosecute cane-farming under conditions that are favourable to it. The hon. Nominated Member stressed the value of co-operation in cane-farming. We have been endeavouring ourselves to stress the point in the villages where cane-farming has developed. We have been stressing the block system where canes can be cultivated on large areas, subject to flood-fallowing and subject to the methods pursued on the estates. We have offered substantial money prizes and in other ways endeavoured to promote cane-farming on those lines, but we are not getting the support that should be forthcoming and it would mean a great drawback in future years if these lands cannot be treated in some way to maintain or increase their fertility. That is one of the points I should like to see taken up and Members of this Council should be able to stress the importance of co-operation when they are strengthening and improving the agricultural outlook.

There is no question of doubt that Government has done a great deal since I have been here in the way of improving drainage and irrigation in village areas. We all realise that there is a great deal more to be done, and, as I said before, the policy Your Excellency has adumbrated is a sensible one. But this much has to be remembered. These are days of very poor prices and every penny spent on Agriculture has to be carefully watched. Any scheme involving expenditure will have to be carefully studied and carefully drawn up from the point of view of revenue both to Government and to the man himself who is likely to take part in it. World depression, as His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales said some days ago, has hit Agriculture harder than any other industry, and what is true of England and the Dominions is equally true here. But we all hope that times will improve and we shall be able to satisfy the demands for improved drainage and irrigation where such is practicable. I do not think I can

add anything more usefully. My hon. friend the Member for Demerara River threw a shot at the very high expenditure incurred by the Agriculture Department. If 2 per cent. of the total expenditure on the Agricultural Department of the Colony is high, I should like to be shown where it is high.

Mr. MULLIN (Commissioner of Lands and Mines): I have listened to this debate, as I have listened to others on the subject of drainage and irrigation in this Colony, with very great interest. There is one motive throughout these debates which I think ought to be clarified a little more in the minds of the people here. Repeatedly I hear what the Dutch did about their comprehensive drainage and irrigation schemes. I, sir, have gone very carefully into the question with maps and other evidence of Dutch occupation, and in no case have I ever been able to find any comprehensive scheme of drainage or irrigation either adumbrated by the Dutch or carried out by them. It was left entirely to British brains, enterprise and money to carry out comprehensive drainage and irrigation schemes in this Colony, and I think people are apt to forget the men who were leaders in these things. For instance, the late Mr. William Russell, to whose memory a statue has been erected in this town but whose name has been forgotten, was the man who evolved the schemes for East Demerara and the Lamaha Water Conservancy at great personal exposure and hard work which eventually led to his death. These were the first comprehensive irrigation schemes in this Colony, and they were conceived, executed and put into working order entirely by British brains and enterprise. The money was provided by means of a Government loan, all of which has been faithfully repaid, and it redounds to the credit of those who conceived the idea and loyally carried out their undertakings in connection therewith.

Another matter connected with drainage is the sea defences. What did the Dutch do in regard to our sea defences? When the British Government assumed control of the Colony every man was responsible for his own sea defences, and if he or his neighbour did not attend to them the sea came in and probably flooded the lands of both. Under British rule the

sea defences were first put under the control of Government, and as time went on and the troubles of sea defence increased as they naturally did with the country below sea level, Government went further and erected permanent sea defences involving enormous expenditure. They not only did that but eventually assumed the entire cost and maintenance of these sea defences. There has been a slight reversal of that policy by which a Board is now formed and those who directly benefit contribute to a very small extent. Schemes for sea defence were due entirely—and I think history will bear me out—to the foresight of Sir Walter Egerton, and during his regime works were carried out. Nor was any attempt ever made for an organised solution of the problem of drainage of the coastlands, particularly as regards the villages, until during the regime of Sir Graeme Thomson when the coastal drainage schemes were evolved and brought to fruition. These schemes have undoubtedly conferred a great benefit on the village districts. All might not have been successful, but there is no scheme which is perfect, and in dealing with lands below sea level you can only go by experience. I think the Colony owes a great debt of gratitude to the individuals who were responsible for those various works, all of which have been done under British administration.

Anyone who has been over the East Demerara and Lamaha Conservancy Schemes must be struck with the very large expenditure involved in schemes of that kind. They also must be struck by the problems which the creation of those schemes in turn bring in their train. The East Demerara Conservancy Scheme, which joins the Lamaha, for instance, is blamed entirely for the flooding of the Mahaica district. There is no doubt that it is a contributory cause, but it certainly is not the primary cause. It has caused a great deal of expenditure in attempting to relieve the Conservancy, and in getting the water off there may be times when damage is done to property on the banks of the Mahaica river. In that connection there is a scheme now under consideration, as Your Excellency mentioned in your comprehensive speech, whereby additional relief will be given to that Conservancy through the Demerara River. When that is joined to the scheme for the extension

of the canal and dam of the Lamaha Conservancy, flooding of the areas of the East Demerara Conservancy will be avoided and additional land made available under conditions which will enable them to be cultivated with safety and success. On the Boerasirie a similar problem has arisen. Very large expenditure has been incurred there. Water has been percolating in various directions. Comprehensive levels and surveys have been done by the Lands and Mines Department in conjunction with the authorities, and a scheme has been drawn up for improvement in that direction, which if carried out will also lead to very large areas of land being made cultivable with safety.

Another complaint was about drinking water. I have never seen any Dutch solution for drinking water except a few vats; but I have seen expenditure of one-and-a-half million dollars on artesian wells and water distribution schemes in the villages during British administration, for which I think they ought to be extremely grateful and which is a policy Government is extending as funds permit.

When the mover of the motion referred to a comprehensive scheme of drainage and irrigation I did not take him to mean one scheme for the whole Colony, but I certainly understood him to mean widespread systems between the rivers. Even in those cases it is an extremely difficult thing to evolve a scheme which is at all commensurate with the possibilities of success or the benefits which would accrue. One of the areas which has been mentioned is the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary area. Dutchmen were exceedingly shrewd farmers and businessmen and they took care not to touch any of those areas with a long pole. You will find evidence of their settlement in this Colony up the Berbice, Demerara and other main rivers, but you will find none in the Mahaica, Mahaicony or Abary, and very wisely too. Those rivers run through a huge estuary or swamp which they are absolutely and utterly incapable of draining when there is any storm water. I have never been able to see in what possible way that drainage could be provided by human agency. However, anything is possible with money, but I think it will take more money than our resources would justify, and even then it would not be done efficiently within the whole of the

Public Debt of the Colony. Unfortunately, settlement in the Mahaica, Mahaicony and Abary has been rather fortuitous. In the old days of indentured immigration when a shipload of new immigrants arrived a certain number of the older immigrants were turned off the estates as there was no accommodation for them. Those immigrants had to find other places to reside or to cultivate and they started to settle up these rivers. They just shied rice and it grew well and good, and they were quite content with that and have done well. Now that rice is low in price they are not doing so well. But I deprecate the idea that people can go and settle in an estuary or swamp and then clamour now that Government must provide them with a comprehensive scheme of drainage and irrigation because they are subject to floods. If a little enterprise had been shown in placing these people, there would not now be this outcry, but it is not too late to effect measures in the directions I have indicated.

The question of drainage and irrigation schemes is one which cannot be rushed into. Most careful surveys and levels have to be done, also soundings made through the pegs to the clay to determine whether dams can be constructed with a reasonable possibility of their being water-tight, and there would have to be a very large expenditure on these surveys before anything at all can be evolved in the way of a comprehensive scheme even in the areas that warrant such a scheme. The point I would like to stress is that the areas that warrant the first attention are those where there is a reasonable possibility of a scheme being successful. In the areas where the large sugar estates are on the East Coast, East Bank and West Coast, Demerara, there are already irrigation schemes, but these schemes are not complete. They do not hold enough water for irrigation purposes in dry weather and they hold too much in the rainy weather. There is therefore the necessity for carrying those schemes to completion by providing further dams to impound the water to a greater degree and a better height in dry weather and to provide adequate relief sluices in times of rain.

It must be remembered that when these schemes were executed the demands for water were very much less than they are

to-day. Only sugar estates needed irrigation in those days, and the water was otherwise used for domestic purposes. With the advent of the rice industry there came the necessity for very large quantities of water, and the sugar estates therefore find themselves now with too little water for their requirements. You therefore have the two chief industries dependent on these conservancies, neither of which is getting enough water in dry weather while both are in danger of being flooded during the wet weather. When these are put right it will be time enough to talk of comprehensive schemes throughout the Colony. At the same time a considerable amount of work has been done, and it should not be allowed to go forth that the British Government has regarded the Colony as a poor relation as it would create a wrong impression in the minds of the people. This Colony is far in advance of Dutch and French Guiana, both in the matter of roads, railways, drainage and irrigation, and conditions of living generally. Persons who are capable of expressing an opinion from personal experience have told me that British Guiana is a model for the other Guianas.

Mr. WOOLFORD: The speech I have just listened to has given me considerable personal pleasure, and I am sure it will be regarded by every Member present as a very valuable and interesting contribution to this debate. I have been in public life for 25 years and I am the oldest Member of this Council. I have listened to innumerable speeches on this question and whilst I have not—and I am not likely to—encouraged a settlement of water on my brain, I have in a very large measure been induced to remain silent on very many occasions when this subject has been under consideration. I hope, sir, that any criticisms I may venture to make will be taken kindly both by Government and by the representatives of the districts affected. The criticisms which have been advanced by the hon. the Commissioner of Lands and Mines are those which I happen to know very largely influence the Home Government and this Government in not giving assent, or even a nod of approval, to very many schemes and proposals submitted both in the old Combined Court and in this Council. In 1926 a petition on similar lines to the one in circulation for signatures, dated 26th March, 1926,

was sent to the Secretary of State, and Your Excellency and hon. Members will find on page 20 of the "Memorandum prepared by the Elected Members of the Combined Court of British Guiana in reply to the Report of the British Guiana Commission" an extract from that petition which I think sufficiently indicates the alleged grievances of the inhabitants of this Colony.

In my own opinion I think this petition will be useless in its result, and I am inclined to believe that the better plan will be to allow further consideration by you, sir, and your advisers as to what is the real need at the present moment. What the Commissioner of Lands and Mines has said about the Dutch occupation is perfectly true. I have often seen in the Press reports of the failure of the present modern Engineers to measure up to the Dutch standard. The only evidence of sea defence construction by the Dutch here is on the Sea Wall. The idea about the Dutch has gone abroad because that sea wall was constructed under the direction of Baron Siccamma, a Civil Engineer and a Dutchman, who was then Colonial Civil Engineer of British Guiana, but I doubt whether the construction of the wall at that point was the result of any considered opinion with regard to sea defences. It was a simple method of construction and not very difficult in its design. I do not think that is the real value of the criticism to-day, but I think it is in favour of the argument that if the construction of that wall had been continued from the date it was commenced in 1881 we would not have seen the disappearance of *Pin. Bel Air*, which was then owned by the late Mr. Quintin Hogg and was the first estate adjacent to the City. I remember quite well reading Mr. Hogg's very valuable contribution to a Commission which sat in London to investigate the possibilities of the continuance of sugar in this Colony. Mr. Quintin Hogg told a very influential Commission then that unless Government continued the line of sea defence which had been inaugurated, he felt it his bounden duty to abandon his estate because he was not prepared to allow his private fortune, which after all had not been made in this Colony but in Ceylon, to be dissipated by resisting the attacks of the sea.

The real cause of complaint on the part

of the inhabitants in regard to the neglect in constructing sea defences, in my opinion, has been the waste of time that has elapsed between the failure to continue these defences and their subsequent erection. The price of cement at the time to which I refer was \$1.50 to \$2 per bag. When is considered the vast quantities of cement used in the construction of sea walls within recent years at prices of \$5, \$6, \$7, \$8 and even \$9 per barrel, one can easily realise the lack of economy there was in dealing with works of that kind. That is largely the problem we are discussing. Neglect to avail ourselves of opportune moments for doing works of this kind is responsible almost entirely for our present position. I think it ought to be remembered that Mr. William Russell was also responsible for the construction or the idea of the Boerasirie Conservancy. The Commissioner of Lands and Mines forgot to mention that. I agree with the criticism of the difference in methods between those who have the control of the estates and the villages. I have known many planters, some of whom have died while others have left the Colony, whose services and willingness to assist Government in drainage and irrigation schemes were always available, but Government never sought or even entertained them. I can recall a considerable cleavage between Government, as represented by its technical advisers, and estates' authorities in regard not merely to the supervision and control of public works such as irrigation and drainage but as to the methods to be employed, and it was then a matter of very grave complaint on the part of the estates' authorities.

The Council adjourned for the luncheon recess.

Mr. WOOLFORD: When the adjournment was taken I was endeavouring, sir, to recall events of the past, sometimes quite a useful thing to do. I was indicating the attitude of the planters *vis à vis* Government and the village community, and endeavouring to show why some of the works undertaken are now the subject of criticism. As an instance of what I mean I recall, speaking now on the subject of drainage and irrigation, that at the time when the present pumping stations were installed on the East Coast it was a matter of complaint on the part of both the planting interest and the village communities

that the pumps were not being put in their proper places. Of still more severe criticism were the estimates of cost of those pumping stations when the estimates had been considerably exceeded. The result of that is that the cost of drainage to the village communities has now become a burden which they are entirely unable to bear. Despite the proffered assistance of the planters and village communities, those responsible for the construction of the pumping stations adhered to their original plans and rejected all advice, and when it was known to the Department that the estimated cost would be greatly exceeded, both the planters and village communities were kept in complete ignorance and it was only after the huge excess had become almost a scandal that that information was released.

Can it be wondered at that when any proposal is made it is received with a certain amount of suspicion and distrust, not only because of the failure of many of these schemes in their operations but in the ultimate cost to the people who have to pay? It is because I feel some sympathy with these village communities and the planting interest that I am pleading with you, sir, that when any large public schemes are to be undertaken you will encourage the open opposition, if necessary, or at any rate try to encourage the active sympathy of those upon whom after all the burden of cost will eventually fall. That is why at the beginning of my speech I welcomed the intervention of the Commissioner of Lands and Mines, because similar attempts by Heads of Departments have met with the sternest opposition to that idea. No less a person than a former Colonial Secretary was made to sit down in this House, and we never knew the real views of Government as expressed through recognised channels.

It is only within recent years that we have got to know that the real opposition on the part of Government to these schemes is that they are reiterated almost at every session. I do not know where my colleague, the hon. Member for Berbice River, gets the energy. He has never failed at any session to introduce a motion dealing with drainage and irrigation, and while I admire his enthusiasm and persistence I cannot see any great objective is to be gained by this motion, which in its terms is a repetition of many motions

which have received the assent of this House. Everything from the public point of view is known to the authorities in England. What will be the fate of this petition? When it reaches the Secretary of State it is going to be sent back to this Government for consideration and advice. Does any Member of this Council know what is the answer to the petition of 1926? Can any Member say whether that petition was considered sufficiently weighty to be considered at all? That is one of the complaints that have always been made by Elected Members. In every district it is a subject of comment that these drainage and irrigation schemes are possible. This is the first time I have heard the very grave reasons why some of these schemes should not be undertaken, and I have no doubt that the release of that information from time to time would clear the air and nullify the enthusiasm of certain Members in making similar motions.

The appointment of Engineers of the Public Works Department, sir, is a matter which at some time or another will have to receive your very careful consideration if drainage and irrigation schemes are to be put into operation. It may not be within the recollection of every Member of the Council, but I am sure it is within the knowledge of some, that there was actually an attempt on the part of the Imperial Government to deal with this matter. They appointed an officer who was described as an Irrigation Engineer. What did we find? On the officer's arrival in this Colony he was heard to confess that his appointment was a mistake, because he had no previous training or experience in a level country and the problem here was certainly beyond his capacity. There was an evident mistake in the appointment of that officer, who, whatever his other capabilities may be, was unfitted and unsuited for the problems of this Colony. I do hope therefore that appointments of technical officers will not be made without due regard being paid to the necessities of our local problems and to the waste of public money. I believe that officer did recommend—I hesitate to speak with certainty—but I believe he was more or less responsible for the Abary scheme. I am correct that he sponsored the Bush Lot scheme. I do not wish to appear even in the position of critic but only give

an instance of an officer unsuitable to the position who was allowed, against the advice and objections of the community, to undertake a scheme which ended in failure. I think that such action is to be deprecated.

On this particular subject I hope I will be excused if I say that in the constitution of the Council, as I knew it then, we did not have representative men like the hon. Mr. Austin and the hon. Member for Georgetown North. For some reason or other considerable opposition to representation of interests like theirs was shown by the electorate. It was almost impossible for men such as I have mentioned, except in rare instances, to have gained entrance into public life. While I agreed myself with the politics of the moment—it was a Party organisation—I recognise to-day that the effect was that we never learnt the planters' point of view. Representations were made here to Government by the people's representatives and we never knew the reasons which stopped them from being put into effect. Those of us who know to-day what transpired in those days will recognise that the planting element and other interests who were deprived of audience in this Council secretly and confidentially informed Government of their opposition to this measure or to that, and usually they were able to convince Government that their objections were sound. Nowadays that secret diplomacy is not available. That is why I welcome the constitution of the Council as it is to-day. It would be impossible for those gentlemen to approach Government and instil ideas inimical to the public interest, but which they conceive to be just to their own policy. Such representations are likely to fail because this is the forum in which those representations would be made.

There is no planter who will deny that when the rice industry was being fostered there was considerable objection to the occupation of rice lands on the sugar estates. There was then, on the one hand, a scarcity of labour and the fear of a reaction on the labour supply of the sugar estates, and, on the other hand, the covert independence of the rice farmer who was divorced from co-operation with the sugar estates. Who can tell me to-day that was not the prevailing influence in

those days? I think that was also the case in regard to cane-farming. I have heard to-day a speech of a representative of sugar welcoming cane-farming and the extension of cane-farming areas. I heard him say that the estates' authorities are willing to lend their assistance, technical and otherwise, to the extension of that crop. Such a thing was impracticable 15 years ago. It is a good sign. If it is due to stress of circumstances it is one which the people's representatives are bound to honour and respect. It is a move in the right direction. With the composition of the Council as it is now and the elimination of Party discrimination from public life, Government will be afforded the benefit of the collective opinion of men qualified by their position to express that opinion, and the confidence so greatly needed on the part of village communities will be established in any proposals made for their benefit. The fact remains that it is only by their lands being properly empoldered and the assistance which the planters say they are willing to give them can we hope to see improvement in the agricultural activities of village communities and in their economic position.

In the Memorandum of the Elected Members in reply to the Report of the British Guiana Commission will be found a valuable summary of events preceding that date and in a measure illustrative of what is taking place to-day. If hon. Members would look at a document of that kind and previous debates on the subject they will find a mass of material that is easily available. Can anything emerge from sending this petition to the Secretary of State? What is going to be the result? It is far better that those who are competent to do so should examine it first of all to see whether there is anything in it that is not already known to the Secretary of State. I have had many discussions with responsible officials of the Colonial Office and I have been told: "These representations are well known to us. Are they supported by local opinion?" No one could at that moment say "Yes" or "No" for the very good reason that no member or section of the community can say to the Government or the Imperial Government at any time "Yes we are a united whole." The people's representatives never knew what

were the views of the planting section, nor did the planting section stop to think what were the views on the other side. We have gone a long way towards obtaining that objective. I am in sympathy with the motion, but there is a mass of information from which Your Excellency can form an independent view on the whole situation, and I do deplore—because that is what it means—any action by which this Government will be unable to take the initiative as the result of evidence before it and as Your Excellency has already indicated. If the object of this petition is to postpone Government's proposals, I strongly oppose it. It is rather a peculiar position to move a motion that a petition be forwarded, the information in which is not before us. I appeal to my hon. friend to say whether he considers, not as a politician but as a lawyer, he should ask this Council to vote approving a petition the contents of which they have never seen.

**THE PRESIDENT:** The petition was laid on the table.

**Mr. WOOLFORD:** But we have never seen it. We are discussing a document we have not seen. I entirely appreciate that it must have been properly drawn and properly signed, but there may be in it statements reiterating statements which have been already made, and it might discourage the Secretary of State from giving attention to our representations. I have no doubt that Your Excellency will be satisfied from the records in our possession. Nothing is to be gained from further representation on the subject. I believe in securing the object we have in view, but I cannot conceive that this motion will secure that objective. While I am not going to vote against the motion, I do hope that the hon. Member will consider the advisability of not pressing for presentation of the petition at this moment if it means delay in the execution of any works now under consideration of the local Government (Applause).

**Mr. SEAFORD:** I should like to start off by congratulating the mover of the motion on his persistency and insistency. I think most Members of the Council would feel there was something lacking if they do not see a motion on drainage and irrigation tabled by the hon. Member at

every session. So far as I am concerned I find it very difficult to deal with the subject of a petition about which I know nothing. I believe it was laid on the table, but it was never shown to me. The mover of the motion stressed to a very great extent the question whether his proposal was worth while. He argued that whether it paid or not had nothing to do with it, the point being whether it is worth while. I find it very difficult to separate the two things. The hon. Member dealt with the matter of health in regard to drainage. I admit that health is a matter worth while. In this Colony we are dependent on the health of our people and I look upon health as a very great asset. But I find it difficult to separate "worth while" and "paying." I am not quite clear also about what "a comprehensive scheme" really means. Does it mean one scheme after another to go through the whole Colony? I feel there is no one here who is against drainage and irrigation. We all know it is the life and soul of the Colony, but I prefer the expression of the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo: "drainage and irrigation in well considered areas." That confines it to certain areas where we know that cultivation can be done and where people live.

The Commissioner of Lands and Mines has made a point in regard to that, and that it is the very large area over which people in this Colony are distributed. It is impossible to irrigate and drain lands for all, and I make the point now that I have made before, that if Government propose to carry out drainage and irrigation schemes they must first initiate a movement of concentration. The Colony cannot afford to put up little schemes here, there and everywhere. They must concentrate the people in what is considered the best areas from an agricultural and health point of view, and what work is to be done will be done in those areas. The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara used as an argument the bounty given to beet sugar, in saying that he felt sure the Mother Country would give substantial assistance to this Colony. Members of this Council know as well as I do that considerable assistance has been given to this country already, and I think it would ill become us not to recognise that we have received that consideration. The

question of the bounty given to beet sugar should not be raised now. I do not know what would have happened to this Colony and the sugar industry in the absence of the extensive preference we are getting, and we should write that off against the bounty to beet sugar. Although it is said to be given for employment in the Mother Country, I feel sure that the only reason why we have been given the preference is for employment in like manner.

Reference has been made to the flood which took place last year and it has been said that we ought to be in a position to prevent a recurrence. I am prepared to state that there is nothing Government can do within reason to prevent the flooding of the coastlands, if we have such a heavy rainfall again, in view of the fact of their being so flat. It is not only in this Colony we get floods and drought. We get them all over the world, even in the great City of London. I do not think we can prepare for floods, droughts, volcanic eruptions or anything else, and there is nothing we can do within reason to prevent flooding. It was mentioned that cane-farmers lose canes every year through floods and drought. The most extensive cane-farming in the East Coast villages is done at Buxton and Beterverwaging, and I am prepared to state that when a comparison is made between the estates and villages it will be found that the drainage of the villages is better than on the estates. During the floods in 1934 the first part of the East Coast to be relieved of water was the village of Buxton; it got rid of the water very much sooner than the estates on either side. It is not quite correct to say that the farmers lose canes every year through floods and droughts, because if that were so the estates would lose just as much or more and would no longer be in existence. There is one village higher up the Coast, Golden Grove and Victoria, where the drainage is not good. The area to be drained by the pump there is far too large, but in other villages the drainage is as good as can be expected. Drainage and irrigation is a very big question. The mover of the motion said it is the one thing to save the Colony if we want progress and other speakers said the same thing.

Things have happened recently which

put me rather in a quandary. A short time ago I went to Essequibo where a considerable sum of money has been spent on drainage and irrigation. I was told by the people of that district that they have plenty of water and the drainage is alright, yet we find the people in Essequibo petitioning Government to help them as they were unable to carry on. Is drainage and irrigation worth while there? I am in a quandary to answer the question. People send petitions to Government asking for markets. That seems to point to the fact that they want something else besides drainage and irrigation. I am not speaking in any spirit of opposition because I am entirely in favour of the motion, but I have been brought up in a hard and practical school and do not believe in leaping in the dark. I want to see where I am going to jump. I do not think it can be said that Government has done nothing in this line. When sea defence troubles first started it was pointed out that the making up of the foreshore would interfere considerably with drainage. The pumping plants existing at that time were not powerful enough to get rid of the water. It is always going to be a difficult matter. We are spending money to get the foreshore to build up and also to assist drainage. One seems to fight the other. When the time came that the villages could not get drainage, Government went into the question and various schemes were formulated. I agree with the hon. Member for New Amsterdam that the schemes cost very much more than was estimated—they cost considerably more—but the hon. Member went on to say that they cost very much more than the villages were able to afford to pay. A Committee, of which I was a member, was appointed to go into the whole question of cost, and Government relieved the villages of a considerable amount of that expenditure. I think eventually the villages only paid the amount originally estimated for the scheme: in other words, the amount which they agreed to pay and said they could pay.

There is no doubt that the schemes on the East Coast and in other parts of the Colony have been of very great benefit to the Colony as a whole. No cane-farming would have been in existence to-day if those drainage schemes had not been put into effect. We can go further than that. Only



a short time ago, sir, you stated that Government is prepared to spend a very large sum on the Canals Polder. That shows that Government recognises the fact that schemes of this kind are essential and is prepared and proposes to go ahead with them when they are proved to be worth while. To touch on the point of the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara with regard to substantial assistance from the Mother Country, one wonders whether it is to be by way of a loan or a grant. If we are going to get a grant I suggest that instead of getting it for prospective works to get it to wipe off the heavy Public Debt burden around our necks. If that debt is wiped off we would then have money to deal with schemes as they come up. The money represented by the Public Debt was spent on salvage works and we are more likely to get assistance for that purpose than for new works. With respect to the East Coast Conservancy, it is proposed in a very short time to extend that scheme to improve irrigation and at the same time to improve drainage. That involves an expenditure of \$200,000. It is also proposed to improve irrigation on the West Coast, Demerara. From the debate which has taken place to-day one would imagine that we are absolutely stagnant and not going forward. I maintain that we have been going forward both in respect of drainage and irrigation; we are still doing so and propose to continue to do so.

The real object of the motion is to get a grant from the Imperial Government. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam referred to works on sugar estates and Government works. Since the introduction of the District Administration Scheme there has been a great deal of co-operation of its officers and the managers of sugar estates. I have myself often seen the District Commissioners consulting managers as to the cost of work and what they would recommend in certain cases, and the Commissioners get technical advice and use what they think fit and discard what they think unfit. It is a move in the right direction and a great thing where we can all work together with the same object in view. It was also said that the estates were not prepared to encourage the cultivation of rice on their lands. That might have been so before my time, but I am certain

it is not so to-day. The planting of rice is encouraged on the estates, and, as a matter of fact, several estates give rice lands to their labourers free of charge. It is for the good of the labourer and also for the good of the estates. We on the estates are prepared to help as much as we can. I have told cane-farmers in the districts that any assistance they need they can get from the estates. We are prepared to help them, and they know that. That has been pointed out to the Agricultural Department, and I believe the Department has so advised the cane-farmers more than once. I do not want anything I have said to be regarded as indicating that I am opposed to drainage and irrigation. I feel it is the life and death of the Colony. Whatever is for the good of the Colony is for my own good as well as for the good of everybody else, and I am prepared to press it as far as I possibly can. All I wish is that before any schemes are undertaken by Government very careful attention should be paid to them to see that they are going to be of advantage to the Colony.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Owing to a temporary illness I would have contented myself merely with rising to support the motion, but in view of certain remarks which have been made I find it necessary to make a few observations. Quite a few of the speakers spoke both in favour of and against the motion and some of them introduced extraneous matter into their speech. To my mind the question before the Council is whether or not this Council will approve of a motion the terms of which are set out in a document that was laid on the table. Some Members have complained that they have not had an opportunity of seeing this document, but there are others, including myself, who have not only seen it but also have given it some attention. One thing stood out prominently in the various speeches, and that is the great necessity for something to be done in connection with irrigation and drainage. All the speakers have stressed the point, in no uncertain terms, that irrigation and drainage have been operating in the minds not only of Members of this Council but of other Councils in the past.

In their remarks several of the speakers referred to the motion as asking for a

“comprehensive” scheme of drainage and irrigation. I have a recollection that the word “comprehensive” was used in the previous motion of the hon. Member for Berbice River, but it will be found that what the petition now asks for is not a “comprehensive” but a “progressive” scheme of irrigation and drainage. If that is so quite a number of the arguments that appeared to be against the motion are removed. Appreciation has been expressed for the generous gifts of the United Kingdom, but it must not be lost sight of that a substantial part of those gifts was given to balance the Colony’s Budget when money was being mis-spent. While at that time it was necessary to obtain money from the Imperial Government, I do not see why that should operate against acceptance of the motion today. It is true that the Imperial Government has been generous to the Colony, but it is equally true that this Colony has also been generous to the Imperial Government. Is it forgotten that this Colony gave a substantial preference to Empire goods?—in some instances 100, 200, 300 and 400 per cent. If that is not generosity then what is? The Imperial Government gives us a preference of \$20 per ton of sugar while the sugar beet industry gets a preference of £12 per ton.

Because the Mother Country has been exceedingly generous to us, is that sufficient reason for us to remain with our arms folded and say we need not ask for anything more? It must be admitted that any scheme of drainage and irrigation of the coastlands will be found extremely expensive, but that is no reason why we should fold our arms and mark time. There is no doubt that this Colony has suffered immensely in the past as the result of the lack of drainage and irrigation schemes. There can also be no doubt that it is a matter that can be remedied. The only difficulty, to my mind, is the question of cost. The hon. Member for Berbice River is endeavouring to do what he can to assist posterity, and we should not content ourselves with saying it is a matter that he brings up every now and then. We should go on agitating in this Council, every session if necessary, until we get the deaf ear to listen to our prayers. I have no desire to make any comparison as to any particular industry. I have always given credit to the sugar industry for the

wonderful organisation they have and for the progress they have made; but can it be said that the increase of sugar production in the Colony was due to improved conditions of drainage and irrigation.

Mr. SEAFORD: Yes, sir.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Entirely? Would the hon. Member deny that increased production is primarily due to improved machinery on the sugar estates? The acreage under cultivation is very much less than it was years ago.

Mr. SEAFORD: The statement of the hon. Member is not correct. The acreage under cane is not very much less than it was years ago. Furthermore, new machinery was installed in 1920–1921 and great improvement is due to that.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I have no desire to enter into any argument with the hon. Member. The hard and cold fact remains that the improvement in sugar production is primarily due to improved machinery. While it may be said that the acreage under cultivation is not less—and I am prepared to accept that statement—I did not hear the hon. Member say it is any more. If the acreage is no more and we are making a greater quantity of sugar, surely the point of improvement in machinery is an important fact. I referred to the point just to show that the increase in the production of sugar has nothing to do with the question now before us. I thought this motion would have been accepted since noon and did not expect a full dress debate again on drainage and irrigation. There has been some improvement in drainage and irrigation; but is that any reason why we should not ask for more?

I can see no harm in sending the petition to the Secretary of State. If no reply is received to the petition further steps will have to be taken. The hon. Member for Georgetown North suggested that if we get the money it should be used to wipe off the Public Debt. I agree with the hon. Member, but I expected him to say we would then borrow more money and cheaper money to carry out further works. I look upon Government’s intention to do something in connection with the Canals Polder as a step in the right direction.

Such a scheme as that is what the mover of the motion has in mind. What he and other Members complain about is that these schemes are very slow in coming. It has taken Government several years to introduce the scheme for the Canals Polder. We want to make a step forward, and quickly. I have very great pleasure in supporting the motion, and I appeal to Members to waive any opposition they might have and let us pass it unanimously.

Mr. WONG: The vital need of drainage and irrigation for this Colony is so well recognised that to speak on it nowadays is to voice a platitude. I am therefore surprised at the length of time the debate has already occupied and also surprised at the opposition that has been put forward to the acceptance of this motion. I think that opposition is much more apparent than real. I have heard nothing from any speaker, who apparently opposed the motion, which is inconsistent with acceptance of the motion. The Commissioner of Lands and Mines has pointed out that of greater necessity is the completion of certain drainage and irrigation schemes which we already have. That viewpoint is not inconsistent with the motion, which, if accepted, will include works of that kind. It goes a little further and says that in addition to those schemes we should have other schemes. The hon. Member for Georgetown North has supported the motion by pointing out the great benefit drainage and irrigation have already conferred on villages and other communities, and I take it that he supported the motion. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam supported the motion, as I understand, but thinks no useful purpose will be served because all the facts are already known on the other side. People on the other side, however, have a habit of forgetting, and for that reason I think the motion should go forward. All the motion asks for is that this Government should be enabled to adopt the policy of building the present drainage and irrigation schemes and pursuing a definite course of drainage and irrigation wherever economic and other conditions warrant it. For that reason I support the motion.

Mr. WIGHT: I rise to support the motion. I am one of those individuals who believe that we are indebted very much to the Imperial Government for the

financial assistance that has been rendered us. Had that money not come here I do not know what would have happened to British Guiana. What I feel is that this motion might have been brought forward when the new Council is elected. I am not in a position to say that I followed all the arguments very minutely, but I look at the matter from the particular standpoint that whatever is said in this Legislative Council has no particular weight with the Colonial Office. My experience has been that it depends entirely on how it is put up by the local Government. I know of several cases where the opposition of Government vetoed very good schemes, for instance, the Municipal overdraft. This being an agricultural country, sir, it depends on what you say of it and what you are satisfied to put up to the Colonial Office. I do not think any Member of this Council would say that we have had a fair chance of summing you up. Personally, I think you are "a dark horse", sir. I had the pleasure of hearing you express very candid and honest opinions, and I should like to hear a little more from you before this motion is pressed. After you have gone about and seen things for yourself and after what you have heard here to-day, particularly in regard to agriculture, I think you will be able to handle the situation better than all of us put together.

The hon. Member for Georgetown North summed up the situation in a few words and very much to the point. He has had experience and spoke for the villages and for the estates. We have had men like Mr. R. G. Duncan, Mr. G. E. Anderson and others of very high standing in the community as planters, but their weight could not be thrown into anything appertaining to British Guiana because they looked upon the country as "going to the dogs" with no hope of recovery. They had nothing whatever at stake in the Colony; everything they possessed was invested on the other side. The pleasant part of the debate came from the Director of Agriculture. Much as his Department has been criticised and abused he has made out a very good case, and when we get men like Sir Alfred Sherlock, Mr. Anderson and the late Mr. Seedorff telling us of the valuable work of the Agricultural Department under Professor Dash it should be considered.

I am entirely in favour of Agriculture

and I agree with the hon. Member for Berbice River in every sentiment he has expressed, but I ask him in fairness to Your Excellency to give you an opportunity to see for yourself and then put the matter up. I am not a pessimist by any means and I am in agreement with the idea, but I have never got the Colonial Treasurer to see eye to eye with me. I have been reading his Report, which is very valuable in assisting us in this respect, but we should not be backward in going to the Colonial Office and getting cheap money. This is the time for us to get a big loan. Don't mind that we owe twenty-one million dollars. Borrow another ten million at 3 per cent. and keep it even if you are unable to redeem some other loan bearing interest of 4, 5 or  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. People on the other side are glad to take 3 per cent. for a long time and surrender short-time bonds held by them at present. We should not run away with the idea that we should not borrow. I see Your Excellency is inclined to be a little afraid of borrowing. I ask you, sir, not to let that fear operate against you. Take all the money you can get cheaply and put it to good use.

I cannot agree with the views of the Commissioner of Lands and Mines. I put a good deal of blame on Government and bring in the Commissioner personally for most of it. Irrigation and drainage schemes are not conducted in the proper way. You want to start in a particular area and see what the result is going to be, and not, as I gather, have it scattered, say, in Essequibo. I have over \$150,000 invested there. I am not blaming the present Director of Public Works, who had very little if anything at all to do with affairs there, but the late Director, Mr. Pudsey, who threw away Government money on those schemes. I am neither an engineer nor a planter, but on an estate worth \$6,000 they spent \$60,000 in putting down a koker or koker-run, for what purpose I cannot explain. When Your Excellency has visited Essequibo and seen that work, perhaps you will admit that a layman is able to give better advice than some engineers. In this Colony we have the gambling instinct, and that is the reason why we have not "gone under" entirely. We have gone on borrowing to repay. We want more guidance from the Lands and Mines Department. When

people go there to buy or to get a lease of land tell them to go to some area where they will get a little irrigation and drainage and not up the Demerara River where there is no cultivation on either side. I speak from what I have seen. I should like to take some Members of the Council to see properties in the Demerara River planted with coffee and cocoa. At one particular place it took me from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. to get into the creek to see the coffee cultivation. The owner had 120 acres of beautiful cultivation of coffee but—

Mr. SEAFORD: No drainage?

Mr. WIGHT: No drainage; nothing at all. The owner had gone aback and started his cultivation. As regards getting to the house, the path was a quagmire, and I spoilt a new pair of trousers. At Abary conditions are the same. I have a property there but I cannot get to see it. When you have seen things for yourself, sir, you will come to the same conclusion. The cattle industry we should encourage. Cane farming is on the increase. I happen to know, as the hon. Mr. Austin has pointed out, that the directors of several sugar companies have encouraged cane-farming; they have actually gone to the expense of installing new and expensive machinery for the purpose of helping the cane-farmer. I was surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. Member for Central Demerara in this connection, as I thought his knowledge had gone much further than it appears to be and because he is associated with the East Coast which is undoubtedly the best sugar area. It is not so much a question of the acreage under cultivation but the results of the canes that are being planted. And when Your Excellency is looking for assistance in regard to irrigation and drainage, get the planting section interested in it. Don't take everything they tell you—I think you can think for yourself—but the assistance they can give is the best you can get.

There is a scheme of drainage between Victoria and Golden Grove with the poor unfortunate estate Cove and John in the centre. Some people condemned the drainage that was there, which was inexpensive, and substituted pumps. It was the experts, I think, who did it. It has cost me a tremendous sum of money. The pump there is too expensive to operate

and the estate has gone out of cultivation because I cannot pay for the expense of pumping. That is a particular case to which I draw attention, and when Your Excellency analyses it I think you will agree with me that acceptance of most of our proposals by the Colonial Office depends entirely on the manner in which they are put up by the Governor. If you have a chance I am sure you will get all you want, but do not hesitate to obtain cheap money while it is available.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Major Bain Gray): We have had a long and interesting debate on a subject of perpetual interest in this Colony. I can say at once that Government has no difficulty in accepting the terms of the motion, which is simply a request to forward to the Secretary of State a petition from the inhabitants of the Colony, which has in fact been laid on the table although many persons do not appear to have read its terms. Government takes no credit for this undertaking, because it is the normal procedure that petitions from the inhabitants of the Colony should be sent to the Secretary of State with the views of the local Government. That is, in fact, a requirement of the Colonial Regulations. I think, sir, in this instance, the best accompanying document we can send would be the report of this debate, which I am sure any reader will find rather more illuminating than the petition itself. We have had a debate containing an unusual variety of points of view on this important question.

With regard to the general question that has been raised, the record of Government in the past has been ably defended by the Commissioner of Lands and Mines, and there is really no necessity for me to add anything to it. It is very desirable that the tradition that our drainage system was started by the Dutch should be dealt with from the historical point of view, and I am sure that the Commissioner's speech will be a matter of great interest not only to this Council but to the Colony as a whole. Government does not, however, stand solely on what it has done in the past, but invites criticism in regard to its present position. Many references have been made to the flood of last year, and to the subsequent investigations by a strong representative Com-

mittee that was well qualified to make recommendations on this important matter. Every one of those recommendations has been considered very carefully by Government, and, as has been already indicated, the most important of them are being given effect to with all reasonable despatch.

A similar position exists in regard to sea defences, which are closely allied to the question of drainage and irrigation. There is no doubt that Government policy is working harmoniously with the policy of the people most concerned—the sugar producers—and I think we may congratulate ourselves that on the point of organisation we now have the means by which the interests of both parties—if they can be described as different interests—are given effect to.

With regard to the more general and difficult question of development for agricultural purposes, you, sir, have dealt fully with that aspect of the matter in your recent address to the Council. It would be difficult for me to paraphrase or summarise it, and still to give it the full meaning and value which you yourself have been able to give it. I will therefore recommend to hon. Members that they should study the passages in relation to agriculture and the connected matters, and regard them as an expression of Government's policy in the immediate future. It is difficult to sum it up, but the last paragraph indicates clearly that suggestions for schemes of this kind will be invited from the District Commissioners, and that all such schemes will be carefully examined by the technical officers of Government. When these are supported by Ecological reports and estimates they will be put before this Council to be carried into effect. That shortly expresses the present position of Government, and in view of this statement of policy I do not think it can be said that Government is showing any apathy or lack of interest in this fundamental question. As I indicated at the outset, the motion will be accepted by Government and the petition forwarded as requested in the operative part of the motion.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have to thank Government for its acceptance of the motion. Incrimination and recrimination have

never assisted in the solution of any difficulties and therefore I do not accept or invite any. The hon. Member for Georgetown North seemed not to know the reason why the villages are in the condition they are at the present time. When he maintains that the condition of the sugar industry is due to the irrigation and drainage system which they have, Government can readily understand why the villages are in the condition they are. If it is necessary for the sugar estates to inaugurate and maintain an elaborate drainage and irrigation system, the need for these amenities in the villages becomes self-evident. The sugar industry in years past had the ear of Government and maintained their own system, and the argument always has been why should the sugar industry be taxed to give the villages irrigation and drainage. That argument prevailed with Government, and the job being beyond the capacity of the people they have been going backwards all the time.

The Commissioner of Lands and Mines said the Dutch never inaugurated drainage and irrigation schemes and mentioned Mr. William Russell as inaugurating the scheme on the East Coast. Mr. Russell never inaugurated that scheme. The people on the Coast obtained water from the open savannah, but Mr. Russell, a man of great foresight, suggested that they should dig a canal from which they would get drainage and water for a longer period than from the savannah. The Commissioner went on to speak of schemes for the Mahaica and Abary. I never adumbrated a scheme for such places. The motion speaks of drainage on the coastlands.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not understand the Commissioner to say that the speaker advocated such schemes; he spoke of what had happened.

Mr. ELEAZAR: My object in bringing forward this motion, sir, was to get something done on the motion which was accepted by your predecessor, and to get a move on before officers throw dust in your eyes. Government was induced by officials to undertake the Kilmarnock scheme although they were warned by people who knew that it would be a failure. That is what has been going on for ages. Everybody realise that irrigation and drainage is necessary for the country, and

I compliment myself on bringing forward the motion because Your Excellency would have learnt more from the discussion than from any amount of reading on the subject. It was also said that there were no water schemes by Dutchmen. I am in a position to say there is a well at Buxton and another in Berbice for which the Dutch were responsible. I never sought to detract from nor to depreciate what was done by the British, but was pointing out what we have been suffering all these years in order to let us get a move on. I approve of Government's action in the Canals Polder. That is a step in the right direction and of a piece with what I am asking for. I am urging that Government should not remain inert when there is a cry for irrigation and drainage all over the country. This motion is not intended to baulk anything Government is doing, but to direct attention to a crying need and ask that steps be taken as early as possible. I have no quarrel with the Mother Country. I do not know where we would have been without the assistance that has been rendered us. I thank Government for accepting the motion and trust when it reaches the Secretary of State, after Your Excellency has ascertained what the position is, some good will result from it.

THE PRESIDENT: As the Colonial Secretary has pointed out, we have listened to a most interesting and valuable discussion today—valuable to me and I believe to many others. The Colonial Secretary has also said this motion will be accepted by Government, not only as a point of duty, as it is in duty bound to forward petitions to the Secretary of State, but also as there is no reason to disagree with the terms of the motion. I will not follow the hon. Member for Berbice River in the field of dialectics upon which he entered when he began to introduce the motion, that is to say on the question of the difference between "does it pay" and "is it worth while" and on the fallacy which he deduced from that hypothesis. For myself I prefer to say, as I tried to indicate in my address, that any measures which are going to cost this country money on a large scale, or indeed on a small scale, must be able to justify themselves in the widest sense as being economic. The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara used the word "efficient." I

think it is a very sound word to use in that connection. The hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo, as was pointed out by the hon. Member for Georgetown North, approved of a "well considered scheme even if undertaken only piecemeal." That again is in consonance with my own view.

What I intend to do as long as I am Governor of this country is to keep in mind the point, which I fear has been somewhat disregarded by the mover of the motion, that in the final analysis it is the general taxpayer who has to foot the bill. I pass for the moment the suggestion of the seconder, the Member for Eastern Demerara, that it will cost the Colony nothing because we should get a not inconsiderable grant from the Mother Country. Possibly the mover of the motion did not give entirely full value to the phrase which I used when I spoke in my opening address of the profits, direct and indirect, which would accrue from the operation of any scheme. When one has to survey, as I had to survey, the affairs of a country for the first time one has to be succinct, and when I used the words "indirect profits" I intended to include in them the elimination of actual losses which, in the absence of remedial measures, would continue to occur. If a scheme can be shown to eliminate loss suffered in some part of the Colony I shall consider it as bringing a direct profit to the Colony and I shall therefore be prepared to support it.

While I think the hon. mover of the motion and the hon. Members who have supported it and I myself are not really very far away in principle, I am not prepared to jump with the mover to the conclusions which he urges. I am not prepared, for instance, to argue, from the analogy that because it has been economic in the case of sugar to spend very large sums on comprehensive schemes of irrigation and drainage, that similar measures would necessarily be economic in the case of small farming. As the Director of Agriculture has pointed out, there is a difference between industries which carry a high financial return and industries which give a much smaller return. I intend to stand generally by the policy which I adumbrated when the Council met ten days ago: that is to say, I am not prepared to advocate to the Secretary of

State the expenditure of the Colony's money on any scheme which I do not think eventually will be to the advantage of the Colony. And before I can recommend a scheme on those terms it is necessary that each scheme should be surveyed from every point of view: from the points of view of a physical, an agricultural, an economic, and an engineering survey. If for that reason I am regarded by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central as "a dark horse," I am afraid I shall have to remain in that category for some time longer. As I informed the Council, I have already invited schemes from the District Commissioners, to be put up in consultation with the local people, which they consider will be of advantage to the districts if undertaken, whether they be large or small.

The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara seconded this motion. When I had heard his speech through I was not quite sure whether he could be regarded as having properly seconded the motion. Whereas, if I may say so, the hon. mover disregarded the principle which I just mentioned—that in the final analysis the taxpayer must foot the bill—the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara walked round it by suggesting that there would be no bill to meet, as it would be met by the Imperial Government. I can find no such suggestion either in the petition or in the motion. It is not for me to say what view the Secretary of State will take upon any point, but I feel perfectly certain that if I were to ask him for a large sum of money without specifying very clearly the object for which it is required and indicating to him that it had been shown on scientific grounds to be truly economic, I might just as well not ask him for any money at all. I will say no more as to my personal view of the value and effect of the petition before the Council.

The hon. mover of the motion put me in a somewhat difficult position at the end of his closing remarks, because he suggested, as I understood him, that I should only forward the petition when I am in a position to suggest schemes which the Secretary of State is likely to accept: but I may have misunderstood him. I think it will be better if I follow the instructions laid down by the Secretary of State and forward this petition to him now, inform-

ing him that as soon as I can I shall put before him certain schemes which even now are being sought. I think that is the best way in which I can fulfil the wishes of the petitioners. I can only add that I heard with very great pleasure the practical suggestion which fell from the Nominated Member, Mr. Austin, and supported by the hon. Member for Georgetown North with regard to the importance of encouraging cane farming and of co-operation between the sugar estates and the local

villagers and farmers. I have not been long in this country but I have seen many instances of valuable co-operation of that kind. I am glad to see it and I hope it will continue and will expand itself. The question is in terms of the motion.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned until the following day at 11 o'clock.