

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 29th November, 1928.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR GORDON GUGGISBERG, K.C.M.G., D.S.O., President. *in the Chair.*

ABSENT:—

Hon. R. V. Evan Wong, B.Sc., (Elected Unofficial Senior Member for South-East Essequibo).

Hon. E. G. Woolford, K.C., (Elected Unofficial Senior Member for New Amsterdam).

Hon. A. R. F. Webber (Elected Unofficial Junior Member for Berbice).

MINUTES.

The CLERK read the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the wish of hon. members that I shall confirm the minutes? Those in favour will say "Aye."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Mr. Hector Josephs): With regard to Rule 26, it does not appear in the minutes, but there was an amendment. The words "Save as is provided in the proviso to Order 27" were struck out. I therefore move that the minutes be amended accordingly.

Question put, and agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: I propose, if hon. members are in agreement with the convenience of it, in future merely to ask the question, if it is the wish of members that the minutes as printed and laid before them should be confirmed. It will save a great deal of time. If we do adopt that idea we shall have to take steps to let hon. members have the printed minutes rather earlier. I think

we would be able to do that, and I should like any hon. member who feels that that would be cutting the thing too short to give his views on it. My suggestion is that I should merely say to you this morning, "Is it the wish of members of the Council that these minutes as printed and laid before them should be confirmed?"

Question put, "That the procedure as suggested be adopted."

Agreed to.

PAPERS LAID.

The following reports and other documents were laid on the table:—

Despatch from Secretary of State dated 6th May, 1928, regarding the repatriation and temporary relief of distressed British subjects in France.

Report of the Commissioner, North West District, for the year 1927.

Report of the Commissioner, Corentyne District, for the year 1927.

Report of the Harbour Board for the year 1927.

Eighth Annual Report of the Imperial War Graves Commission.

Revised List of the Trade Intelligence Officers abroad upon whom the duty of corresponding with Colonial Governments, etc., devolves (February, 1928).

Report of the Board of Governors on the work of the Imperial Institute for the year 1927, by Lieutenant General Sir William Furse, K.C.B., D.S.O., Director of the Institute.

Consolidated return of Immigrants for half year ended 30th June, 1928.

Report and Accounts of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture for the year ended 31st August, 1921.

Reports under Food and Drugs Ordinance for half-year ended 31st December, 1927. —(*Colonial Secretary.*)

Report of the Deeds Registry for the year 1927.

Report of the Lutheran Fund for the year 1927.

Report of the Official Receiver for the year 1927.—(*Attorney General.*)

Report of the Chief Commissary for the year 1927.

Report of the Comptroller of Customs for the year 1927.

Report of the Post Office Savings Bank for the year 1927.

Report of the Postmaster General for the year 1927.

Report of the Colonial Treasurer for the year 1927.

Report of the New Widows' and Orphans' Fund for the year 1927.

Despatch from Secretary of State dated 2nd July, 1928, re the Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 1928.

Report of the work of the Co-operative Credit Banks for the year 1927.

Report of the Directors of the Widows' and Orphans' Fund (Old) for the year ended 31st December, 1927.

Report of the Committee of the Trotman Trust Fund for the year 1927 (Sessional Paper No. 4/28).—(*Mr. Millard, Colonial Treasurer*).

Report of the Director of Education for the year 1927.

Report on the Government Industrial School, Onderneeming, for the year 1927.

Report of the Chairman, Poor Law Commissioners, for the year 1927.

Report of the Principal of Queen's College for the year 1927.

Report on the working of the Georgetown Free Library together with the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year 1927.

Report on the Finances of the Walter Mitchell Fund and the Mitchell Scholarship Scheme for the year 1927.—(*Major Gray, Director of Education*).

Report on the Georgetown Fire Brigade for the year 1927.

Report on the British Guiana Militia for the year 1927.

Report of the Inspector General of Police for the year 1927.

Report of the Inspector of Prisons for the year 1927.—(*Colonel Bradburn, Inspector General of Police*).

Report by Messrs. Beeby Thompson and Partners, dated 5th January, 1928, on Coastal Belt Water Supply Scheme.—(*Major Craig, Director of Public Works*).

Report on the Forestry Department for the year 1927.

Third Annual Report, 1926-1927, and Prospectus of the Imperial Forestry Institute, Oxford.

Report by the Conservator of Forests on his activities in England during 1927. (Combined Court Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1928).

Statement prepared by the Conservator of Forests for the British Empire Forestry Conference, 1928, to be held in Australia.—(*Mr. Wood, Conservator of Forests*).

Report on the Colonial Transport Department for the year 1927.—(*Mr. Bayley, Managing Director, Colonial Transport Department*).

Report on the Lands and Mines Department for the year 1927.

Report of the Local Government Board for the year 1927.—(*Mr. Mullin, Commissioner of Lands and Mines*).

Letter from the Mother Superior General of the Convent des Dominicaines, dated 6th July, 1928, breaking off negotiations for the engagement of Religious Nursing Sisters for Leper Asylum.

Report of the Medical Superintendent of the Public Lunatic Asylum, Berbice, for the year 1927.

Medical Department—Statement of Salaries, 1929 (Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1928).—(*Dr. Boase, Acting Surgeon General*).

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

Notice was given that the following Government Bills would be introduced and read a first time at the next meeting of the Council:—

Imperial War Graves Bill.

Bill to amend the law relating to Pawnbrokers.—(*Colonial Secretary*).

Bill to amend the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance, 1918.—(*Attorney General*).

Bill to amend the Widows' and Orphans' Pension Ordinance, 1923.

Bill to amend the Miscellaneous Licences Ordinance, 1861.

Bill to amend the Pensions (Increases of Pensions) Ordinance, 1924.

Bill to amend the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Ordinance, 1913.—(*Mr. Millard*).

Bill to amend the Georgetown Public Free Library Ordinance, 1908.—(*Major Gray*).

Bill to restrict the privileges and immunities of Rural Constables.

Bill to facilitate the identification of Prisoners.—(*Colonel Bradburn*).

Bill to amend the Trade Marks Ordinance, 1914.—(*Mr. Wood*).

European Nurses (Retiring Allowances) Bill.

Bill to amend the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, 1899.

West Indies Quarantine Bill.—(*Dr. Boase*).

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

—
DRAINAGE SCHEMES (ESTIMATES AND COSTS, &C.)

Mr. FREDERICKS gave notice of the following questions to be asked at the next meeting of the Council:—

1. When was the personnel of the Committee appointed to enquire into matters concerning the excess of estimates and actual costs of the Drainage Schemes finally settled upon?

2. Who are the persons composing the Committee and the date on which each was invited to serve, and also the date of their acceptance of Government's invitation to serve?

3. Will Government make a statement as regards acceptance or otherwise of the non-contentious portion of the Village Administration Commission Report; *Vid* Combined Court Sessional Paper No. 13, of 1925?

PETITION.

Mr. LUCKHOO presented a petition from the Demerara Electric Company, Limited, praying that all materials imported by them to be used in the construction of their new Power House and certain transformer oil be exempt from the Bill of Entry Tax.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Douglas-Jones:) Sir, I beg to move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to consider the Second Supplementary Estimate for 1928. In moving this motion, sir, it is not necessary for me to say anything about the Estimate, which is before the Council, as the items are fully explained in the explanatory memoranda.

The Attorney General seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Considered in Committee.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

ITEM 13—7 CLERICAL ASSISTANTS, \$1,050.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to move the reduction by \$1 of this item so as to be permitted to make a few observations. As a matter of fact my remarks will be very brief, on account of the assurance Your Excellency gave yesterday, that you intend to investigate yourself the personnel of the different Government

offices during 1929 with a view to effecting economy. Although the explanatory memorandum is not very illuminating, there is not much to complain about, except the fact that it requires seven additional clerks to reorganise the Colonial Secretary's Office, and this at a time when the cry all over the country is that Government is far too elaborate and the cost of administration is becoming almost unbearable. I see the memorandum says that these persons are engaged until the end of the year. I do not know what will become of them after the year, as at that time this memorandum will not be before the Council. I therefore hope when the time does come and Your Excellency has had an opportunity of making your promised investigation that you will see to it that the Government Service is not added to in the manner indicated, because these people cannot be clerks at \$30 per month for all time, and if they are to be retained in the office the time will come when they are to be promoted, if not in that office in other offices to which they will have to be shifted. The policy is not consistent with the Governor's expressed view that Government should go in for much retrenchment. This is the other way about it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The remarks of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam give me an opportunity to explain the reason for the employment of these seven Clerical Assistants. The position is that in the past the whole of the registry work of the Department has been performed by young men—keen young men who have been in my opinion wasting time in merely registering the correspondence of the office. This work is now being done by women, and just as efficiently as the men, who will be absorbed by the District Commissioners' Scheme, and therefore the establishment of the office will be reduced by the transfer of those young men whose places have been taken by women at much less cost. It is quite impossible to wait until the District Commissioners' Scheme actually comes through. These young women have to be brought into the office and trained.

The work of the registry which is now entirely in the hands of these Clerical Assistants is being done exceedingly well. There are also other women who have been brought in as typists and stenographers. They would also replace other men clerks in the office. In that way a considerable saving in the cost would be effected. It could not be done at once, as those women had to be brought in and trained, and that is the reason why the supplementary estimate is brought. It may not be possible to begin with the District Commissioners' Scheme until the 1st of April next year, and therefore a little re-arrangement may be necessary during the first few months of next year.

AUDIT OFFICE.

SALARY OF AUDITOR.

ITEM 1—AUDITOR, \$360.

Mr. **ELEAZAR**: I move that this item be deleted from the Estimates. I do so on the score that the Legislature now defunct was in session until March this year, and at that time the salary of the Auditor was fixed at a certain amount. It was the function of the then Combined Court only at the commencement of the year to have increased that officer's salary for 1928, but it was not thought fit by that Legislature to do so, and it does seem to me to be a very high-handed policy on the part of Government to increase that officer's salary in the way it is sought to be done, and to withhold the information from the members of that Legislature until when they had practically changed the Constitution, thus giving those who were instrumental in putting on the item an opportunity of carrying it *volens volens*.

This, I submit, is one of the ways in which Government has continued to add to the weight of burden of the taxpayers of this Colony, and I am asking Your Excellency in all sincerity to relieve these people of this weight and to prevent things of this kind happening again. Your predecessors

made the burden of taxation very heavy and grievous, and we are approaching you and are asking that you relieve them and us of the yoke. We have no power to say "No" and that is why this item finds itself on the Estimate. Is this the way Government intend to carry out re-arrangements? Is this the way Government intend to lighten the burden of the people? These are not whips, these are scorpions. I am serious in this matter and ask Your Excellency to see that this thing does not continue.

The **CHAIRMAN**; I agree with the hon. member's remarks, but he must remember that 1929 is the year of re-organisation and retrenchment, and we are more or less committed to what we have got here now. I am very interested to hear the remarks of the hon. member on the subject.

Amendment not pursued; item passed.

LANDS AND MINES.

SURVEYING EXPENDITURE.

ITEM 34—TRAVELLING, LABOUR AND MATERIALS FOR SURVEYS, \$7,475.

Mr. **MULLIN** (Commissioner of Lands & Mines): I ask to reduce this amount by \$1,000. The Surveyors have now come back and I find that I can do with \$1,000 less than the amount now asked for.

Hon. Members: "Hear, hear!"

The item was accordingly carried out at \$6,475.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

ITEM 20—GOVERNMENT LANDS—SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS, \$12,407.

Mr. **ELEAZAR**: I take it for certain that we are committed to this expense and have to pass it, but I cannot do so without bringing to Your Excellency's attention some things ap-

pearing on the Estimate which I am sure Your Excellency will make enquiry into. Though you cannot undo what has been done you will see that it is not done in the future. Somebody has bungled in this matter. I do not say it is the Government or the Town Council or the Contractors but there was bungling somewhere and work was ceased, Government using the services of labourers engaged by the Sewerage Contractors. Government thought that these people would be scattered all over the country and gave them next to nothing to do on unoccupied lands which had remained so far all these years and would remain so for a century more. \$12,000 odd saddled on the taxpayers of the Colony is the result of these men being there helping Jack to make pins.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the hon. member is not actually correct in the accusation he is making. In the first place, he says this was done to keep the men together. It is nothing of the sort. Hon. members are aware that when the contract was cancelled about 800 men were employed on the Sewerage Scheme and it was considered undoubtedly a wrong thing to do, in fact a very dangerous thing to do, to turn off 800 men in one day. Something had to be done and therefore those men had to be employed for six weeks until the whole thing had been re-organised by Government. Under the Resident Engineer the men have done exceedingly useful sanitary work on the Thomas Lands. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam was not speaking the truth when he said the men did nothing. I know those men did a great deal of useful work.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I rise to a point of order. To say I was not speaking the truth is tantamount to saying that I was lying. I think that is very unparliamentary. The Colonial Secretary knows very well that is not proper.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I withdraw the remark, sir. At all

events it is inaccurate to say that they did nothing. They did extremely useful work, and the effect of that work was to reduce the mosquito nuisance in those lands. It was one of those instances that something had to be done, and I think the best arrangement that could be made was made. The idea of placing the amount on the Estimate is to bring the expenses out of the cost of the scheme. If they remain as part of the expenses of the scheme the Town Council would have to pay interest on their share of that amount. It is a better method to bring it to account in the expenditure of the year.

POST OFFICE.

ITEM 1—CHIEF ENGINEER AND ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR, \$720.

Mr. CANNON: I do not quite follow what this amount means. Perhaps the hon. Colonial Treasurer may let this Council know whether this amount has been paid. The old Legislature, of which I happened to have been a member, had in its wisdom decided that the sum should not form part of the 1928 Estimate and it was struck out. I am very surprised to see it re-introduced in the form it now takes. I will be glad if Your Excellency give permission to the hon. Colonial Secretary to say how that sum is to be paid, to whom it is to be paid, and what is to become of that money.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member will remember that when the Annual Estimates for 1928 were being considered certain items were struck off the Post Office vote. The matter was referred to the Secretary of State whose instructions were that Government must replace those items on the Estimates.

Mr. CANNON: Well, sir, I am surprised to hear that the Secretary of State directed that those items be replaced on the Estimates after the Combined Court then in existence had struck them out. All I need say, sir, is "God help us."

Mr. CRANE: Sir, it does seem a little arbitrary of Government not to have accepted the ruling of the old Legislature and let us start afresh in 1929 when even the elected members may have fallen in with Government and placed on the Estimate the very sum now stated here. When the old Legislature held the field it held the field, and what it did was in law correct. It seems not a little wrong to tell officers who were employed on a certain basis by that Legislature which has now passed out of existence "You go ahead. When the new dispensation comes in we will rectify that."

The old Legislature passed the Estimates for 1928. Officers should be made to understand they can only ask for what the old Legislature decided they should have. It does seem that this and one or two other items in the same position are not the correct things to do. The old order has passed away and in the new order very much more co-operation and easy working might be obtained if Government accept what was done last year for this year, and next year start under this new regime. I do not think it is correct, and elected members here feel that it is a direct flouting of their authority. Whether it was right or wrong the power was theirs to do it, and to come now and flout it for the same year seems wrong.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: What I would like to know, as the Constitution question is involved, is whether the Estimate passed for the year 1928 by the old Legislature does not hold good unless a resolution is brought by Government. I am not questioning the propriety of it but it does seem strange that the difference of salaries of officials is to be voted again for this year, after it has been refused and when it can be dealt with next year.

Mr. FREDERICKS: For my part what I have risen to say is that the Colonial Secretary's remark, that the Secretary of State has ordered it to be put back without any further explanation, is a stupendous statement at

this time. Why have us here at all, why have a Legislature, if the Secretary of State is to order the finances of the country to be diverted everywhere he likes? The best thing is for the Secretary of State to issue orders daily to somebody to run the Colony. It is an unfortunate remark to make. That is my humble opinion. The old Legislature, which was always accused of obstruction, had decided that in the face of the financial stress we are unable to spend further money and turned it down. Some communication passed between here and Downing Street and as a result at the instigation of Government it comes to the new Legislature and we are asked to pass it. For myself, out of personal dignity I shall refuse to vote any item of the kind. Undoubtedly this is the kind of treatment which no self-respecting citizen ought to submit to, and so far as I am concerned I am against the indecent manner in which it is put on the Estimates. Common decency at least ought to have prevailed.

Mr. SEERAM: I move that the item be deleted.

Mr. GONSALVES: I unfortunately did not quite catch the words of the hon. Member for North-West Essequibo. At one time one was able to hear him but his voice has now got somewhat soft.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I am sorry. I trust I will be heard in the future.

Mr. GONSALVES: I hope so. Do I understand you to say that it is the difference for this year and can be dealt with next year? I accept that because it is reasonable. The matter having been brought before the old Legislature on the Annual Estimates and struck out it does seem to me not quite the correct thing to bring it back again during the year. I question really, subject to the views of the hon. Attorney General, the legality of the item on the Supplementary Estimate to-day. We are very curious to know from the hon. Attorney General what is the legal aspect of it.

Mr. LUCKHOO: The procedure in this matter seems very peculiar, and I would very much like to get the opinion of the learned Attorney General on this point, as to the legality of re-introducing this item when the matter was fully dealt with at the last Annual Session. I do not think there is sufficient justification for bringing forward some proper grounds for re-introducing this item and we were satisfied as to this item. If the hon. Colonial Secretary had set forth before this House the advisability of having it on the Estimate we would have voted for it, but it is only put on the Estimate and I have heard nothing from Government which would justify my supporting this particular item.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It is needless to expect me to sit quiet and allow this item to pass. I will complain about it because it is the big stick principle—the tyranny of the majority, a tyranny which brings Government—

The **CHAIRMAN** (interrupting); A point of order. That is a remark I do not consider should form part of the discussion in this Council—the question of the tyranny of the majority. We are now discussing whether it is right or not that we should pass this supplementary estimate for the Chief Engineer and Electrical Inspector, and I would be glad if the hon. member would confine his remarks entirely to this and ask, if he wishes, why this motion has been submitted to the Council.

Mr. ELEAZAR: What I was saying was it is unconstitutional to have this amount on the Estimate. The old Legislature in its wisdom or unwisdom decided that the vote should be a certain amount, and passed it for the whole of 1928. We are told to-day when we see it is highly increased that the Secretary of State decided it must be paid. "Pay him and then keep the whole thing from the old Legislature or keep it back until you get the new Legislature, when the old one has no voice or power to strike it out, and then bring it forward

and it must be carried." I have some ways of calling things, and I know it is not always delightful. I am agreeing with that member who spoke and asked that the item be deleted. Dealing with items as they stand—mere figures—nobody falls in love with them.

Your Excellency, the officer referred to is a junior officer, who had been serving in the Colony for three years at the time when the senior officer was retired, and it was sought to divide what would have been a surplus, and which had been left in the Colony's Chest, among the officers of that Department, and that officer was to share in it. The Legislature thought that if there was to be a saving it must remain to the profit of the taxpayers at least. We have been told to-day that it was referred to the Secretary of State. Why a refusal by the old Legislature of an increased salary to an officer—a junior officer—should be referred to the Secretary of State? If the Secretary of State had said "Carry it back to the Legislature and let them re-consider it," if we had heard that the Secretary of State wished us to reconsider the amount and thought it wise that it be passed, then there would have been some reason for falling in with his wish, as the Court has always done. But here we have the Secretary of State saying "Put it on the Estimate and carry it to the Court at a time when the Electives are powerless to oppose it." I will vote against it though it will be passed, but let it be known that this is how British Guiana is being governed and how the Government knows to govern.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hon. members will notice that I have said nothing about this matter, and in the absence of any remarks they do not know what my remarks are. I had hoped to be spared the necessity of reminding this Council of that very unpleasant debate on this head of this vote, which I think reflected no credit on the late Combined Court. Hon. members who were present then will remember that in the interest of economy it was decided to retire a senior officer,

who was ripe for retirement, and employ a junior officer in his place, thereby effecting considerable economy. For personal reasons the Court objected to that, and decided not to vote the salary for the Electrical Engineer. The matter was reported to the Secretary of State in conjunction with other injustices which were done at the time, and the instructions of the Secretary of State were that at the first opportunity the item be replaced on the Estimates, and that, sir, is now being done.

The hon. Member for North-West Essequibo referred to the question of a motion. The very fact that this item is here on this Supplementary Estimate is in effect a motion. Each of these items is a motion before the Council. I do not wish to say anything or to wake up what was an extremely unpleasant discussion in the old Court. The fact is it has not reflected any credit on the old Court, and I think the best said about it the better. If, however, hon. members desire to pursue the question further, I am quite prepared to answer any remarks they may make.

Mr. CANNON: The hon. Colonial Secretary has said that the item was struck out for personal reasons. I do not know if the hon. Colonial Secretary is suggesting that any member of the Legislature had a personal motive in moving the deletion of the item. I believe I was the individual who moved it in the old Court, and I do not know whether it is being suggested that I had some personal reason for my action in the matter. I will be glad if he gives me some explanation.

The CHAIRMAN: Honourable members, I asked you yesterday to as far as possible make a fresh start under the new Constitution. I regret extremely that either an unofficial member or any member of the Government should have cause to allude to any acts under the old Court. It is far better to make a clean start. I am afraid there may be occasions on which some legislation—some principles supporting the old Court—will have to be met by new legis-

lation and new principles, but sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Let's wait until those days come. Here we have a clear case in which the Court for reasons best known to itself refused to vote this particular salary, and the Secretary of State has given instructions that it should be replaced on the Estimates at the first opportunity. The first opportunity has been taken, and here we are faced with it. We are only wasting time in discussing this matter.

The question about the necessity for the employment of this Chief Engineer and Electrical Inspector has been gone into thoroughly on the re-organisation of the new Department. It is only sufficient to say to-day that owing to the delay in getting this salary put in what was considered the right place, rightly or wrongly, we have lost first of all an extremely valuable man who has gone to another country, and we are going to lose also for the same reasons a very valuable man who knows this country. I think if hon. members can overcome their objections to this particular case it would be far better that we should pass it and get on with the business, pinning our energies to the reorganisation next year. I can assure hon. members that they will have plenty to talk about when that reorganisation comes on for discussion. Does the hon. Member for Demerara wish to press his motion?

Mr. SEERAM: Yes, please, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: Seconded by—?

Mr. CANNON: I have very much pleasure in seconding the motion. I do not think it is necessary for me to say anything more.

Question, "That the item be deleted," put.

The CHAIRMAN: The "Noes" have it.

Hon. MEMBERS: Division, please!

Ayes:—Messrs. De Freitas, Seeram, Fredericks, Gonsalves, Eleazar, Wight, Luckhoo, Crane, Humphrys, Cannon,—(10).

Nocs:—Messrs. Seymour, Smith, Dr. Boase, Messrs. Mullin, Bayley, Wood, Major Craig, Col. Bradburn, Mr. Brassington, Major Bain Gray, Messrs. Millard, Dias, Smellie, Austin, the Attorney General, the Colonial Secretary, —(16).

The item stood as printed.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

ITEM 11—1 AGRICULTURAL SUPERINTENDENT, \$360.

Mr. CRANE: This item comes within the same class, and as far as I am concerned, in deference to Your Excellency's expressed and apparent desire to leave over consideration of these matters until 1929 when they would be re-adjusted, I am going to await that opportunity to discuss them.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I desire to do the same as the last hon. member except to enquire whether this matter was also referred to the Secretary of State, and under that heading—

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid I find it extremely hard to hear the hon. member.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am sorry, Your Excellency. I desire to know whether this matter was also referred to the Secretary of State. As far as I can remember this item caused a more acrimonious debate in the old Legislature than the last one just disposed of.

The CHAIRMAN: That was referred to the Secretary of State and comes under the same head. I take it that it is sufficient that the hon. member's objection to the principles involved are recorded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Yes, sir.

Mr. FREDERICKS: I wish to join with the hon. Member for West Demerara and say that in view of the very clear utterances of Your Excellency just now as to what you intend, which I appreciate and which I am sure the electorate will appreciate, I shall not

object to the item. I do not object to it simply on the grounds of those very pregnant words uttered by Your Excellency just now, but nevertheless I and the body of electives shall watch our principles.

PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES.

LUMP SUM BONUS.

ITEM 7—LUMP SUMS FOR PENSIONABLE OFFICERS, \$17,000.

Mr. CRANE: I desire just to indicate to Your Excellency that this is an item which is guarded very zealously by the Electives—this question of lump sum bonus. I think it has been in force for three or four years, during which time the electives have noted that a sum approximating \$300,000 has been expended under this one head of the retiring allowances to Public Officers. The last Legislature voted a sum which it was thought would have been sufficient to enable officers to retire this year, but it does seem that Government permitted more retirements than had been contemplated. The result is that Government is now asking for this additional sum of \$17,000.

I must confess that while I am not an entire Socialist, I like to regard the entire question of bonuses with a zealous eye, and more so these lump sum payments to officers on retirement. It is the cause, sir, of much of the financial stringency which the Government is experiencing at the present moment. I am sure when Your Excellency finds time to examine the Pension List you will see the tremendous sum which is expended in that part of public expenditure. These lump sum bonuses appear to increase the burden much more on the taxpayers. I make the request on behalf of my brother electives that Your Excellency, when you have the time, very carefully attend to this mode of expenditure.

PUBLIC WORKS ANNUALLY
RECURRENT.

QUARTERS OF OFFICIALS.

Mr. CRANE : Is not there an omission? I notice in the "explanatory memorandum" on page "12a" an item—7 ("Leonora—Quarters occupied by G.M.O.—\$50") but I do not see exactly where it comes in on page 12 of the Estimate.

The CHAIRMAN : That amount is included in item 9 "Magistrates—\$350." It is a printer's error that the two amounts are added together.

Mr. ELEAZAR : I wish to draw Your Excellency's attention to this amount of \$300 for the Magistrate's quarters at Friendship and to the reason assigned for the allocation of this sum. This is one of the matters the electives desire to ask Your Excellency to pay particular attention to—the residence of officials in country districts. Government took it into their heads to provide palatial buildings for certain officers at tremendous cost at a very nominal rental. In the case of this officer, who pays \$30 per month as a rental for his house, Government is asked to put down \$300 for a year for the purpose of clearing the grounds in his compound as he cannot afford it himself. He wants to pay \$30 per month and get back \$25 for clearing his grounds.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member's remarks have been noted.

ROADS, RIVERS, CREEKS AND
PORTAGES.

ITEM 1—35 MAIN AND OTHER ROADS,
\$15,000.

Mr. CANNON : This is another case in which it was found necessary owing to the financial outlook for the year to reduce the vote for the roads, and I see that we are to-day asked to vote \$15,000 further. I am, sir, asking Your Excellency to note that this item was reduced be-

cause we felt we had no money to spend on the roads. We thought so then, and, so far as I am concerned, I more think so to-day. That is our position. We cannot afford to spend \$15,000 further on the roads this year, and I ask Your Excellency whether you are satisfied that this amount is absolutely necessary. I feel it my duty to record my vote against it for the reason that, if it is carried, when we get to the end of the year we may find ourselves in a terrible mess.

The CHAIRMAN : I fancy the amount is spent. I shall have some remarks to make at the end of the Supplementary Estimate, which I think think will satisfy hon. members on the point raised.

Mr. CRANE : If my recollection is correct the figures passed by the Combined Court were the Government's own figures. As far as my memory serves me there was no question of cutting down. These were the figures of the hon. Director of Public Works. I do not say he is infallible, but I want it to be made clear that this was not one of the votes which the elective members arbitrarily cut down without rhyme or reason.

The CHAIRMAN : I think hon. members are splitting straws a bit. If you read the first part of the explanatory memorandum, hon. members would see that "owing to the financial stringency, the vote for the upkeep of public roads in the Colony was reduced from \$293,442 in 1926 to \$230,685 in 1927, and to \$170,645 in 1928." I know something about the upkeep of public roads in a tropical climate, subjected to heavy rains. If in 1926 that vote of \$293,442 was justified—I cannot say whether it was or not—certainly \$170,645 in 1928 is not sufficient to keep up the public roads. An addition of \$15,000 to that sum is very small indeed; that is as regards the amount of the item, but as regards the principle of it I shall confine my remarks on that to a short series of remarks on the Supplementary Estimate which I shall make at its conclusion.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: In connexion with the reduction of the vote for the roads on the Annual Estimates, I protested very vigorously against it and pointed out that this cutting down of the road vote meant an increase of the vote later on, and it is due to this cheese-paring policy with regard to the roads that we find ourselves to-day in this position. If in 1926 and 1927 a sufficient sum of money had been spent on the roads we would not have been here asked for another \$15,000. I was not a party to it and I did everything in my power to get my brother electives to vote the sum asked for.

Mr. GONSALVES: May I say that despite all that the hon. Member for North-West Essequibo (Mr. Brassington) has just said, if I remember correctly, at the last Annual Session when we were finished with the Estimates we complimented the hon. Director of Public Works on his being able to make such a big reduction in his estimates. In view of what has taken place I do not know whether the hon. Director of Public Works has justified that compliment and whether the hon. Member for North-West Essequibo still feels justified in the remarks he made. In view of the remarks he has just heard I suppose the hon. member would retract his remarks.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I see no reason why I should retract anything I have said.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): I think a word of explanation from me may be helpful. When the Estimate for 1928 was presented last year the road vote was certainly cut down to the figure there, but that was done to meet revenue and not to put the roads in a good condition. I remember remarking during the debate that the sum was not sufficient in my opinion to keep the roads in a state of repairs that they should be in and that I would have to come back later for a further sum. An additional amount of \$32,000 was asked for in July but I got \$15,000, and I cannot

say that as a result the roads are in a very good state of repairs.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we may accept the hon. Director of Public Works' explanation as satisfactory. I know the trouble Directors of Public Works have to go through when face to face with Governors with estimates. I have already cut \$100,000 off the Estimate as framed. We can go into the question of "road upkeep" later on when we are considering the general programme.

SEA DEFENCES.

ITEM 14—WEST BANK, DEMERARA,
\$4,000.

Mr. CRANE: It would seem from the explanatory memorandum here that there are three parties who are interested in this expenditure. When I had the honour for a short period of acting as a member of the Harbour Board the question as to responsibility in this matter there came up. I am not permitted to say what transpired there except what appears here. It seems that the Harbour Board has an interest in the work done. The technical advice given the Board, which does not appear in this memorandum, is to the effect that the Georgetown Harbour would be in danger by the strong current which would be running on its way down to the mouth of the river. The Director of Public Works complained that the roads on the West Bank are liable to be eaten away by the sea. On the other hand the villages have a duty under the Sea Defence Ordinance. There are, therefore, three parties concerned in this matter. There is absolutely no trouble about it.

The Local Government Board made recommendations to the Government that the Villages, which happen to fall in my constituency, are unable to carry out their obligations under the Sea Defence Ordinance. What therefore is the proper course, I respectfully submit, is that all those parties should put their heads to-

gether and work out ways and means of carrying out permanent works there—permanent works to protect the Georgetown Harbour which concern the Harbour Board, permanent works to protect the roads which concern the Public Works Department, and permanent works to protect the lands which concern the proprietors there. This patching and tinkering with it would not do at all. I know Your Excellency will not be a party to spending \$2,000 between March and July and then to a second \$2,000 in another few months. We are told the work is likely to last for six or twelve months. We do not want expenditure of that kind.

I am respectfully suggesting to Your Excellency's Government that some scheme be worked out whereby the Harbour Board will make a just and fair contribution towards the construction of permanent works between Teevlugt and Sisters, the Government and the proprietors also contributing. It may be possible to raise some loan on the usual terms repayable by these parties. I think, sir, that this method of spending \$2,000 every two or three months or every year is an unwise and unsound policy.

The CHAIRMAN: I am much obliged to the hon. member for his remarks. They will help considerably when we come to consider the whole question of Sea Defences which is going to be one of the burning questions of the year 1929. It needs a great deal of consideration and if possible will be dealt with in such a way that the ideas put forward by the hon. member will be in a way carried out—the definite distribution of responsibility among the various sections of the community and the various Departments of Government for the maintenance and construction of Sea Defences. I cannot say anything more at present as I have not yet worked it out in detail.

COLONY'S TRADE COMMISSIONER.
IN LONDON.

DISESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE.

ITEM 2—RENT OF OFFICE, &c., \$1,158.

Mr. CANNON: I desire to ask the hon. Colonial Secretary whether the whole amount that the late Court voted under this head has been expended. Speaking from memory, I think the sum voted was sufficient to carry on this office up to a certain period this year. Certain instructions or expressions of opinion were offered by the members of the Court and it will be interesting to know whether they have been respected or not. I am therefore asking whether there was not sufficient money at the credit of that vote to make it unnecessary to place this sum of \$1,158 on the Supplementary Estimate to-day. I realise from the remarks on the other side that it is merely a cross-entry, but I am thinking that a cross-entry can be avoided if there is a sufficient amount at the credit of the vote from which this can be met.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The question asked by the hon. senior Member for Georgetown I cannot at the moment answer—as to whether the money is sufficient for this year to enable this saving to be made. It is pointed out here that it will cover this item, but until we get the accounts at the end of the year I cannot answer definitely the question asked by the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN: The point seems to be that this amount should be approximately covered by revenue. I quite agree with the hon. member's desirability for economy. I may mention now what I intend to mention in the annual Government budget statement. Government is under the impression that the Trade Commissioner's Office in London should be disestablished early in 1929. Hon. members will have an opportunity of discussing that at the proper time.

PUBLIC WORKS EXTRA-
ORDINARY.

MORAWIANNNA STELLING.

Mr. De FREITAS: This seems the most appropriate head under which I can draw Government's attention to a certain sum of money which had been voted some time last year. That money has apparently not been spent and the work has not been done. I am referring to the building of a stelling at Morawhanna. The hon. Colonial Secretary will recall that we passed a vote of \$2,000 for that purpose. It seems very unusual that a sum of money should be voted for certain work to be done and nothing is done. I am very interested to know what the position is in respect to that money, whether it is still the intention of the Government to erect the stelling.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is not dealing with the item before the Committee. The item is LI, Public Works Extraordinary—Completion of erection of Petroleum Warehouse. If the hon. member has any question connected with expenditure that is not on this list the proper place for him to move it is as a question to the Council.

Mr. De FREITAS: Well, sir, I shall adopt that course. I was looking through the Estimate carefully and there is but one item which permits me to put myself in order. I refer to item 19 (Stellings and Buildings thereon—Public Works Annually Recurrent) because that is really the only other item under which I can raise the question, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: That item is finished with. If the hon. member has any other question to move it must be put in the ordinary way laid down under the Rules.

RAILWAY SURVEY.

PASSAGES OF OFFICIALS.

ITEM 2—PASSAGES, \$176.

Mr. CRANE: May I enquire whether Government is accepting the principle, which was enunciated in the last Legislature, that for the time being at least the passages of officials on leave were not to be paid except in the case of getting back someone who happens to be abroad? The Legislature on that occasion declined to vote passages because they thought the Colony could not afford it. I believe, if I am right, that a certain sum was placed on the Estimate to bring back officials who had gone away up to that time, and others in respect of whom there would have been a breach of faith if Government was not in a position to pay their passages. The amount asked for is small, but it is the principle involved. I want to know because arising, since the Legislature pronounced on that matter, was the case of an officer who was away at the time.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In reply to the hon. member, this particular item is entirely to meet the cost of passages to Mr. Leggate. It has nothing to do with the passages of Government Officers. Since the amount has not been voted for officers going on leave no passage money has been paid.

Mr. CRANE: It was not so stated, and that is the reason why I enquired.

The CHAIRMAN: The question of the principle of the payment of these passages will probably come up with the Estimates for next year when the hon. member will have an opportunity of discussing it.

Motion made, and question "That the Council now resume" put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed.

EXCESSES OF VOTES.

The PRESIDENT: Honourable members, we have just finished discussing these Supplementary Estimates. Some of them come from the fact, obviously from what I have heard in this debate, that the members of the Government did not see eye to eye with the members of the old Combined Court. Well, that will not happen again. Others are due to causes which are beyond the control of the people estimating. These are always difficult questions to deal with and when an application for a special warrant is made by the Head of a Department in future, the procedure will be that he will have to satisfy the Governor that the expenditure is necessary. The Head of a Department has to bring forward a request for more money if he finds that the efficiency of his Department or the carrying out of any special work is going to be seriously handicapped by the absence of it, but in the first place he has got to prove his case, and then it is for the Governor to decide whether that expenditure is necessary. The Governor will decide, of course, with the advice of his Executive Council. If the Governor decides that the Head of a Department cannot have that money asked for, then the Governor himself and his Executive Council become responsible for the non-carrying on of that work—the failure to keep roads in efficient order, for example. It is the duty of the Director of Public Works or of any other public Department to bring up a request for money if he finds that his Department is going to suffer by the absence of it. Naturally, he has to stand being asked questions, and pretty searching questions too, why this money was not allowed for in his original estimate. He has got to justify his petition.

Now, whatever we do—however perfectly we may organise our Departments and our financial system—there always will be special warrants and supplementary expenditure, but not special warrants and supplementary expenditure of this nature (indicating a copy of the Estimate just considered). This is finance run riot.

Messrs. CRANE and CANNON:
“Hear, hear.”

Hon. members will say “Hear, hear.” They have got to reflect for a moment and consider whether the blame is not equally with them as with anybody else. However, that is all past history. Do not let us worry about it. We are going to have a definite system in future. I don't know, moralising for a moment, how you have succeeded in carrying on under the old system. Your Director of Public Works is not a servant of the Combined Court. He is a servant of the Government and yet his work is to be absolutely stopped by the Combined Court itself. We have got rid of all that now and the people who are responsible for the whole lot of money are the people to whom he is responsible for the carrying out of the work. That is how I look at it. I can assure you, however, that the most stringent instructions will be given to prevent any excess of the estimates of expenditure which this Council will be asked to pass for 1929.

A stop has got to be placed on this wholesale system of asking for and the issuing of special warrants. At the same time, I want to point out to you, what will be evident to you in due course, that if you are going to reorganise a Department—if you find that it is necessary to reorganise a certain Department—suppose we find that about May, 1929—are you going to defer the reorganisation of that Department and allow it to go on spending more money for the rest of the year, or are you going to say: “No, on the 1st July that Department will come into its new organisation and we shall save a certain amount of money by so doing for that six months.” Well, your answer, I feel sure, will be: “Carry out the reorganisation as soon as possible.” Now, that will involve a considerable alteration in the Estimates that will be submitted for 1929 to this Council. On the other hand, it will not involve increase in expenditure. The point I want to make clear is that it may be necessary during re-

organisation of the Government services to issue a certain number of special warrants, but care will be taken to see that these special warrants are issued on a basis of savings due to reorganisation of the Department. I feel that always when special warrants are asked for an officer should put up what savings he can effect under other legitimate heads, but I don't believe in adopting the wholesale principle of issuing special warrants simply because savings can be shown.

As hon. members are well aware, this Colony has no Reserve Fund—nothing to meet a rainy day. One of our duties in the immediate future is to form a Reserve Fund and raise ourselves to the level of a self-respecting Colony. Well, I propose to do that roughly by setting aside the surplus revenue every year, which, though, would not get us very far in the next six years, but I hope we may succeed gradually every year by putting by a certain amount to a Reserve Fund so that in due course it will amount to about \$5,000,000, which roughly at present, I think, is the revenue of this country. I mention that to show that we ought not to go on issuing special warrants simply on the basis that there will be savings under another head. If another head has been over-calculated, well, the Reserve Fund should benefit by it. The existence of a Reserve Fund is not merely a paper transaction. It is a solid asset and it is only by an asset like a Reserve Fund that this Colony can reduce the debt charges on any future loans.

That is another important point to consider, because if we are going to go ahead we have got to have loans—such loans as we can afford to pay the debt charges on out of our revenue

without increased taxation. I merely take the opportunity of mentioning these points now in connexion with the Supplementary Estimate that we have just discussed and the Supplementary Estimates that may or may not be submitted to this Council in the future. I can assure hon. members that the greatest care will be taken to see that the estimates as passed by this Council in future are adhered to and that no expenditure unauthorised by the Council will be incurred except in those very exceptional and special cases in which absolute urgency is involved, and they will be referred to you as soon as possible afterwards.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In moving that the Council be now adjourned I should like, with your permission, sir, to make a few remarks with regard to the work. It is always difficult during the first few days of a session of a Council to get sufficient work to keep the Council busy. However, that will be corrected when we meet next week on Tuesday, and I promise that from Tuesday onwards we will have a full day's work when the Council meets. Yesterday and today we got through the Standing Rules and Orders and Supplementary Estimate much more expeditiously than we anticipated. To-morrow will also be a day devoted to purely formal business, but by Tuesday we shall have a full Order paper and every day will be fully occupied. I now beg to move that the Council be adjourned until 11 o'clock to-morrow morning.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council was adjourned accordingly.