

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 7th November, 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, Mr. E. J. Waddington, C.M.G., O.B.E.

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

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

The Hon. F. Dias, O.B.E. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

Major the Hon. W. Bain Gray, C.B.E., Director of Education.

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

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo (Eastern Berbice).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. E. M. Walcott (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

The Hon. A. R. Crum Ewing (Essequibo River).

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

The Hon. A. G. King (Demerara River).

The Hon. S. H. Seymour (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. J. W. Jackson (Nominated Unofficial Member).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 6th November, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

PAPER LAID.

The following document was laid on the table:—

Correspondence with the Secretary of State for the Colonies regarding an application for a further loan from the Colonial Development Fund for the extension of the Geological Survey. (*The Colonial Secretary*).

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

THE CIVIL SERVICE.

Mr. DE AGUIAR, on behalf of Dr. SINGH, gave notice of the following questions:—

1. How many vacancies existed this year in the following branches of the Civil Service:— Probationers, Assistant Clerks, Class III, Class II and Class I?

(a) From when did the above vacancies become vacant?

(b) How many of the above-named vacancies in each class have been filled and for how long did these vacancies now filled exist?

(c) How many vacancies are there left to be filled?

(d) What time did the vacancies in (c) exist and when will they be filled?

(2) When will the Committee appointed by Government since 1933 to deal with "Unclassified Officers" function?

(i) For what period have these officers been in their respective class?

(ii) For what period were they drawing their maximum salary in their present class?

(iii) How does Government intend to remunerate their hardships and difficulties suffered by these officers?

QUESTION OF PROCEDURE.

THE PRESIDENT: I again suggest to the Council that they consider adopting the practice with regard to questions, which is followed in some other Colonies, that the questions should be printed on the Order Paper so as to save Members the trouble of having to read them aloud. Members will have an opportunity of reading the notice and at the same time the time of the Council will be saved and equally well served. If I hear no objections in the next few days to that method I shall regard that as approval to introduce it.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: That would mean that a Member would have to send in his questions to the Clerk of the Council the day before.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1936.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The Select Committee recommends that item 1 (b)—(2 Assistant District Commissioners \$3,904)—should be reduced by one. There was an original motion that both posts should be abolished, but that did not find favour with the majority of the Committee and it was decided to reduce the number by one. That is a sort of compromise and I hope Government will see its way to accept the recommendation. In order to carry out the wishes of the Committee, I formally move that the item be reduced by one.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I understood that the findings of the Committee by a large majority would have counted with Government and Government would have accepted some of these findings. I was inclined to think that there was no need for Assistant District Commissioners at all, but with the majority agreeing to a compromise Government should accept that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid I cannot accept that as a working principle.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If Government cannot accept the amendment I ask that the item be left over until some vacant seats are filled. I ask you, sir, to let the matter stand over until we can get some Members who are engaged on other public duties at the Town Hall.

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot grant that request; it is quite unheard of.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Well, sir, as far as I am concerned, I will move that the whole item be deleted. In my view the Commissioner has very little to do himself, and I cannot conceive what his assistants have to do. This scheme came into operation only two years ago, and at that time we were told that it would cost very much less than it is costing now. In 1934 it was something like \$84,000; to-day it is 11 cents less than \$100,000. A considerable portion of that increase is due to the fact that Government is now putting on two other officials besides increasing the emoluments of two Commissioners themselves. I cannot conceive what kind of retrenchment Government is acting on, or when this country will ever be able to get out of debt or to keep its nose above water on a principle of that kind.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is not aware apparently that these officers are already members of the Service. This item was passed last year and there is no addition. The hon. Member is asking the Council to undo what it did a year ago.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If the officers are in the Service already or they are to be drafted from some other branch of the Service to the District Administration Scheme then there will be vacancies somewhere. If that is the case, what is the gain? I would like Government to tell me

exactly how the matter stands. I see Mr. Roberts is now being appointed to Berbice. What position was he filling before his appointment? Let us know it. I also desire to make some remarks on what appears to me likely to be the position in Essequibo on the retirement of Mr. Nightingale. This Council ought to be informed of what is going to be the future policy of Government in relation to that district. In my judgment the administration of Onderneeming should not be undertaken by the District Commissioner. There are, and must be, occasions when matters of discipline within that institution will be the subject of appeal to himself. There have been many scandals at that institution, and if the conduct of the Superintendent is in question he becomes culprit and judge, which is an invidious position to place the Commissioner in if he is allowed to continue in the position of Superintendent.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not wish to interrupt the hon. Member, but we are discussing the Commissioner. I gave an undertaking that before the post is filled I would consult the Council.

Mr. WOOLFORD: If we are to have a District Commissioner, an Assistant District Commissioner and a Commissary who may or may not be Assistant District Commissioner, it seems to me that before these estimates are passed it is important that Government should declare its policy. If you are not going to combine the offices of Superintendent of Onderneeming and District Commissioner, you will have to provide a vote for the Superintendent of Onderneeming, and, speaking for myself, I cannot see how you can divorce one question from the other. We ought to know now what is to be the policy of Government. The Council should be allowed to express its opinion whether Onderneeming should continue under its present management or whether it should not be placed under the supervision of a special officer, and the opportunity should be afforded us to do so before the end of this session. I cannot help recalling that it is owing to the fusion of the duties that we have been faced with very serious loss in regard to certain public works. There was not present in Essequibo a qualified engineer when certain public works were executed, and through lack of supervision

considerable loss occurred in that district. I think we ought to decide whether we should have a District Commissioner, a District Engineer and a Commissary, and I cannot see any useful purpose in discussing the District Commissioner without considering the duties combined in the post of District Commissioner and Superintendent of Onderneeming.

Mr. JACOB: I find myself in great difficulty in this matter as I find we are pursuing something futile. These gentlemen are on the Fixed Establishment, and no decision of an adverse nature would affect the expenditure. I think the assurance given by Your Excellency yesterday should be borne in mind, and I appeal to Government to consider the whole question of District Administration again. My policy here is to reduce expenditure coupled with efficiency, and I ask Government to give us a promise to transfer one of these officers to some other Department and on the retirement of the District Commissioner in Essequibo next year make no other appointment. In Georgetown, too, I think some saving should be effected. But at the moment I am not competent to say very much on the subject as to how economy may be effected, and I appeal to Members not to pursue a futile debate and waste the time of the House.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: If Your Excellency would defer this matter it would meet the case. It is not a case of the Elected Members wanting to tackle a vote here and there. This item evoked considerable discussion last year. Government then said that the District Commissioners required strengthening and the Elected Members reply was that if Government was satisfied that was the position the staff should be strengthened by all means. At that time in the West Demerara District there were two Class II. officers and I moved that instead of appointing Assistant District Commissioners two Class II. officers should be promoted Class I. officers on the ground of economy. One of these two Class II. officers has now been appointed an Assistant District Commissioner at a higher scale of salary. That is my complaint. If Government had said "Give us two Class I. officers" I would have had nothing to say.

The District Commissioner's Office in Georgetown should have a Class I. officer. It is a big revenue producing office and, apart from the District Commissioner, the highest officer in that office is a Class II. officer, yet in the districts we want Assistant District Commissioners. The item was passed last year by Government's vote. If I remember aright the Elected Members were unanimously against it, and I think even some of the Nominated Members voted in favour of a Class I. officer.

Mr. SEAFORD: It is difficult to follow the arguments. We heard yesterday that taxes were not being collected, or that Government was being robbed of revenue, through the District Commissioners not being able to collect it, owing to their having so many duties to perform. Today we get arguments that they can do more than they are doing. From my knowledge they have more work than they can do at the present moment. I come in touch with them very often in the country districts and I realise that the job is, in the majority of cases, more than any single man can carry out. As regards what has been stated by the hon. Member for Central Demerara, I have no hesitation in saying that the reason why the vote was opposed last year by the Elected Members was that they were under the impression that these posts were going to be filled by two gentlemen from outside the Service altogether. I think that was the real reason for the opposition last year, but apparently that is not the case this year.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: That was only one of the reasons.

Mr. SEAFORD: That reason, apparently, has been dissipated now. As I said yesterday, if the District Commissioners cannot carry out the work alone it is no good our trying to save a little money here and there. It is merely taking the officers from one district and putting them in other districts where they will be of more service to the Colony than they are at the present moment. As regards Essequibo, I do not see any Assistant District Commissioner at the moment and we can deal with it when it arises.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will it be convenient if I ask the District Commissioner, East Coast Demerara, to explain why it

is necessary to have more than one Assistant District Commissioner; I think hon. Members will probably agree that what is true of Demerara is also true of Berbice.

Mr. LAING (District Commissioner, East Coast Demerara): I should like, first of all, to explain that the appointment of Assistant District Commissioner does not mean additional staff. In my district we had a Class I. officer. In the Berbice District there was a Class II. officer. These Assistant Commissioners take the place of those Class I. and Class II. officers. It does not mean that we are asking for increased staff; what we are asking for is a different type of officer. The hon. Member for Central Demerara in his general remarks on the Estimates on Tuesday deplored the reduction of the number of Class I. officers, and he said at that time that the Assistant District Commissioner would be required to do no different work than the Class I. officer whose post was abolished. If that were so I would agree with the hon. Member, but, of course, that is not so. The Class I. officer has certain departmental duties to perform. It then rests entirely with the District Commissioner to carry out the administrative duties of his district more or less single-handed. The Assistant District Commissioner will be in an entirely different position. In addition to his ordinary departmental duties he will be required to undertake special jobs which have not been possible up to the present time. In addition to that he will have to keep himself in touch with the general working of the district and with the District Commissioner himself, so that during the time the District Commissioner is absent from his office temporarily the Assistant Commissioner will be able to carry on the work.

When District Commissioners go on leave, as they must, the Assistant Commissioners, being then fully acquainted with all the work of the district, will be able to carry on the policy without disturbing the general scheme of work of the district. The position really is that if continuity of policy and the general efficiency of the administration of these two large districts is to be maintained, the appointment of Assistant District Commissioners for Berbice and the East Coast Demerara is essential. That is the difference between the Class I. Officer and

the Assistant Commissioner. I have no complaint against my Class I. officer; he did the work he was given to do well. But he was not an Assistant, nor did he take my place when I was temporarily absent from the district, consequently when I returned there was a tremendous amount of work undone with possible inconvenience to the people. The Assistant Commissioners are officers who have shown administrative ability and have been appointed to those posts, and I think the responsibilities they will have to shoulder justify the small increase in their pay. The salary of Assistant District Commissioner is £400 to £500, while that of a Class I. Officer is £357 to £417, and the salary of a Chief Clerk goes up to £517.10s., so that actually an Assistant District Commissioner, although he will have to discharge very responsible duties, is actually paid less maximum than a Chief Clerk in Georgetown. Those are the reasons for the appointment of Assistant Commissioners. We are not asking for increased staff but for the appointment of men who have shown administrative ability and would be able to assist the District Commissioner in his duties.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am sorry that the District Commissioner was not a Member of the Council last year when this item was discussed, because if he had said then what he has said this morning Government's case is very weak indeed. We have it on his own showing that in Berbice they had a Class II. officer and in place of him they have created the post of Assistant District Commissioner and appointed the same person to it. The person who has been appointed Assistant Commissioner of Berbice was the same Class II. officer they had last year. If that is the case and this vote is not being increased I do not know what is. It was never suggested that the number of officers is being increased. The proposal is that a Class I. officer should be made to do this work, and I am surprised at the admission of the hon. Member who has just spoken that he has a Class I. officer and could not tell him what work he should do because he was not an Assistant Commissioner. That is what I interpreted the hon. Member to say, and it was also what my hon. friend on my left understood. I do not envy any officer promotion, but I am opposed to promotion from a Class II. officer to an

Assistant District Commissioner. It has opened my eyes to the fact that it is the desire of Government to create assistant posts in every Department in order to provide leave arrangements for the Heads of those Departments. If that is so, I am against the whole thing on principle.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: As far as East Demerara is concerned I know a good deal about the work the District Commissioner has to do, but I would like him to say definitely whether, if an Assistant Commissioner is appointed, there is any likelihood of his having to ask in the near future for a Class I. officer as well. What is true of East Demerara is most probably true of Berbice. In Committee this matter was discussed very fully, and the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice and myself were in favour of having two Assistant Commissioners, but I would like it to be made clear whether it will be necessary to appoint a Class I. officer in addition to the Assistant Commissioner.

Mr. LAING: The Assistant Commissioner will do the work of a Class I. officer as well as assist the Commissioner. There is no idea of appointing an Assistant Commissioner and a Class I. officer.

Mr. WIGHT: May I ask whether the appointments have been already made? I am of the opinion that they have been already gazetted, and if that is so we are only flogging a dead horse.

THE CHAIRMAN: The appointments have been made. What the hon. Member for Georgetown Central has said gives me an opportunity of saying that it enhances the difficulty of the Administration if, when posts have been passed by the Legislative Council, they are then taken to task for filling them.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The Council that passed this thing with the cast-iron majority of Government is not the same Council that sits here to-day.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no such thing in this Council as a "cast-iron majority."

Mr. ELEAZAR: Very well, sir, we will call it by another name. The point we are making is that at the time this thing was mooted a junior officer was to be foisted into a higher position by a change of name.

The very same officer is to be made Assistant Commissioner. You call him by another name and give him more pay. If that is the case the officer was not doing his duty all the time because the Commissioner did not want him to do it. I am very well aware that the officer in Berbice deserves promotion. We are telling Your Excellency that this name is merely a blind for an officer from some other branch, who can get some backdoor influence, to be put into the job. When this Department was created a Third Class Commissary was doing the work very well. When the scheme came into vogue that officer's services were dispensed with; and to-day we are told that a man of that class cannot do the work any more and we must have Assistant Commissioners with more pay.

Mr. JACKSON: I take it, sir, that it is the wish of Government, and the wish of all the Members of this Council, that the District Administration Scheme should succeed and should march on towards greater efficiency. I listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks made yesterday in connection with this matter, and I was a little bit amused but none-the-less interested at the different viewpoints from which the hon. Member for Berbice River and the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice dealt with the matter. I then came to the conclusion that the difference was mainly due to two conditions. One condition was that the Member for Berbice River has no intimate connection with the District Administration Scheme, because that are no villages in the Berbice River; the second condition was that the Member for Berbice River theorises and depends upon book knowledge of what obtained in Africa. The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice, on the other hand, came in close contact with the working of the scheme. I have no doubt, sir, that the District Administration Scheme has come to remain, and I have every reason to believe that it will succeed and that the Colony will stand to gain a good deal by its successful operation.

I have been intimately associated with this scheme from its inception, and I say without fear of contradiction that the personal contact with the District Commissioners has very much more to be admired than the villages

being supervised from a distance. There are numerous instances which I need not reiterate in which the scheme has benefited the villagers to a very great extent. If the appointment of two Assistant District Commissioners would enhance the working of the scheme—and I believe the appointment would—Members of this Council would do well to support the item as it stands on the Estimates. Additional responsibilities are to be added to the office of Assistant District Commissioner, and I do not think anyone who has listened to the District Commissioner for East Demerara, unless that person has jaundiced eyes, can fail to see that the appointment urged by Government would have the most beneficial effect upon the working of the scheme. We have heard a good deal of the loss of revenue. The tightening up of collection of that revenue would be brought about, I think, if there is an additional member to the staff who could share more of the responsibility with the District Commissioner, and I for one will give my vote in favour of the item as it stands on the Estimates.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The hon. Member is a neophyte both in his knowledge of what transpired here and as regards politics generally. I was connected with village administration before he was and I was Chairman of the premier village. I am acquainted with what is transpiring in the villages, and the hon. Member must learn from me rather than teach me. I was fully *au fait* with village administration long before my hon. friend knew anything about it, and in addition to rising to the position of Chairman of my village I am connected with the Municipality, which again has given me some knowledge of what is going on. I come here and attempt to give Government the benefit of my knowledge and experience, and if they do not see eye to eye with me I cannot help it, but I deprecate the criticism of the hon. Member who has just come here.

Mr. LUCKHOO: With respect to the Assistant District Commissioner for Berbice, I think I can speak with great experience. I have represented the district for a number of years, and in the course of my professional duties I have to travel from one end of the coast to the other. When it is considered that the District

Commissioner for Berbice has to undertake duties over an area extending from Crabwood Creek to the extreme end of the Abary Creek, one would see the great necessity for appointing a deputy during his absence. Complaints are repeatedly coming in to me from the various Local Authorities with respect to village matters, and I often visited the District Commissioner and have been unable to carry out discussions with him on important matters on account of his unavoidable absence. Much to their disappointment the people have had to return to their villages after travelling great distances without having their grievances attended to.

If an Assistant District Commissioner is appointed it would give me an opportunity of consulting him on points which affect the villages. There has been very little increase in the salary, and the hon. Member for Berbice River has admitted the proved ability of Mr. Roberts, who has been appointed Assistant District Commissioner for Berbice. Mr. Roberts has also been appointed Chairman of several villages in the Berbice River, which is additional work thrown on him, and I think the appointment so far as he is concerned is a very happy one. On the last occasion when this matter was before the House I voted with the Electives. It was then thought that there was an attempt to railroad the appointment of certain officers and the Council deprecated it. Fortunately, no such appointment took place and the item was passed, but with respect to the merit of these particular offices and the necessity for them, I think there is very good reason why there should be these appointments of Assistant Commissioners. As a Class II. or Class I. officer the position would not carry the weight it would as Assistant Commissioner. From that standpoint I think the appointment of the officer in Berbice is a satisfactory one and he is justly entitled to the promotion he has been given in recognition of the services he has rendered.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I should like to support this officer's claim and I appeal to my colleague, the hon. Member for Berbice River, to waive his objection to the appointment of the officer at the increased pay. It is within my knowledge that this officer has been performing the duties for a very considerable time. He did so when

Mr. Essex was there, and I think it has been forgotten that Mr. Essex was Commissioner. On Mr. Essex's death the name applied to the post was abolished, yet the responsibility of the Commissioner continued and the duties were performed by Mr. Roberts. I think if Mr. Essex had been alive to-day his natural successor would have been Mr. Roberts, who would have been then Assistant District Commissioner, and by Mr. Essex's death he lost promotion to which he was entitled. In the ordinary course of things an officer in this position would have been given a personal allowance and you are only giving him now what should have been his long ago.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I have no desire to pursue the debate further, especially after hearing the hon. Member for New Amsterdam. I am becoming more and more convinced that this scheme is working wonders when certain Members have changed their opinions within the last few days. One Member in the Select Committee supported the reduction of one Assistant District Commissioner, and I merely rise to make that observation and to say that inside a few days he has changed his views to support the retention of this officer.

Mr. ELEAZAR: As regards what has fallen from the hon. Member for New Amsterdam, I strongly opposed the appointment because Mr. Roberts was being overlooked. If Mr. Roberts had been made a Class I. officer and given a personal allowance there would have been no objection. He is a worthy man and should have been a Commissioner himself. You are not creating a post when Mr. Roberts is likely to be appointed, but when Mr. Roberts is out of the way then the post will be created and another with fairy godfathers would get it.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I understand that these officers were confirmed in the post last year. I agree that both officers deserve the promotion they have missed in the past.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Waddington): There is really nothing for me to add to this discussion. Your Excellency has already pointed out that the appointments have been made, and the abolition of one of the posts would mean

the pensioning of the officer. The second point is that the speeches of hon. Members prove to my entire satisfaction, and I am sure to the satisfaction of the Council, that these two appointments are necessary from the point of view of efficiency of administration and the collection of Government revenue, and I am prepared to leave it at that.

The Committee divided on the item and voted :—

Ayes—Messrs. Jackson, Seymour, King, Jacob, Crum Ewing, Humphrys, Walcott, Peer Bacchus, Austin, Dr. Singh, Wight, Dr. De Freitas, Laing, Major Craig, D'Andrade, Seaford, Mullin, McDavid, Woolford, Luckhoo, Professor Dash, Major Bain Gray, Dias, Smellie, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—26.

Noes—Messrs. De Aguiar and Eleazar—2.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I ask that sub-head 2—(Other Charges, Travelling and Subsistence Allowances, \$10,202)—should be separated in future.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will have that taken into consideration.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the deletion of sub-head 15 (Maintenance of Kilmarnock-Springlands Empolder, \$2,000; and the substitution of a sub-head to read "15. Maintenance of the Kilmarnock ketting and sluices, \$600." In the Estimates as printed \$2,000 was included for the maintenance of the Kilmarnock-Springlands empolder. The matter has been recently investigated by Your Excellency's technical advisers and they recommended that such expenditure cannot be justified at this time. It has been found that there is no desire on the part of the farmers to take up land in the second and third depths, and it is decided therefore not to incur at this time any further expenditure. There is, however, a block of land—Macedonia-Phillipi block—which Government propose to be taken up by farmers, and it is necessary to maintain the Kilmarnock ketting and sluices at a cost of \$600.

MR. ELEAZAR: Although Members have no power to ask for an addition to

the Estimates, it is a matter for great regret that Government has been again ill-advised. Against the experience, knowledge and advice of others who are not Commissioners, this decision has been arrived at. It is not quite correct that farmers do not wish to take up land in this empolder. Certain restrictions were imposed and the people would not under those conditions take up the land. Some of the expenditure could have been saved but there was a division of opinion as to how it should be done. The Department did not seem to be quite in the know of what was transpiring, and between two fires they could give Government no information. But before very long Government will get concrete proposals which will assist them to redeem some of the expenditure from a certain section of the community who can carry out what is contemplated. At the present time I can give Government no more than an assurance that it will be done and to ask Government to leave the provision of \$2,000, which will not be spent if the proposal falls through.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would be only too glad to raise this question again if I could get a concrete proposal which would justify me putting the amount before the Council. I shall certainly give any development proposal of that kind my fullest consideration.

MR. SEYMOUR: I should like to sound a note of warning about the scheme. In Essequibo we spent over half a million dollars on schemes which have proved unproductive and are white elephants. I suggest that in all future schemes the people who have an interest at stake in the Colony should advise Government before they embark on spending huge sums of money. I hope Government will be advised by people who want to see the country developed and will give their experience to schemes which will be beneficial to the Colony.

MR. LUCKHOO: As one particularly interested in this part of the country I would like to make a few remarks on this question. It is true that a large sum was expended on the Kilmarnock-Springlands empolder. It was work undertaken for the relief of unemployment. Unfortunately, that scheme was not put before

all the Government experts, nor was the opinion of planters in the district invited on the estimate. It was a very commendable act on the part of the Imperial Government in trying to relieve unemployment, but it is very much to be regretted that that work has not been of a permanent nature. There seems to be some confusion with respect to this matter. We shall have to deal with it as two separate schemes—the Kilmarnock-Springlands empolder and the Phillipi-Macedonia empolder. From the assurance Your Excellency has given I hope the matter will be constantly kept in view by Government to see whether this land cannot be turned to good account. At the present time the land remains idle. There have been no applicants for that particular area, but I am not aware that Government specially invited people to occupy any portion of it. I think Government concentrated more on the lesser scheme of the Phillipi-Macedonia empolder. A couple years ago a notice appeared in the newspapers inviting a lease of that land on conditions which were so intolerable that people kept shy of the scheme.

I am aware of Government's desire to put into beneficial occupation that particular empoldered area, which comprises 3,000 acres, but the price must be such as to be attractive to the people to cultivate that area. The idea of Government was to make it an agricultural settlement, but they started in the wrong way. They should have got the opinion of the Medical Officers in regard to sanitation. Government are making an attempt to get people settled in that area and when the terms are made public they will appreciate the action taken in that direction, but in order to ensure settlement and development a nominal rental must be charged to attract renters. With respect to the bigger scheme, that is another matter. I endorse the principle laid down by Your Excellency that projects of this nature should be considered from an economic standpoint before they are embarked upon. I hope in future, in the light of the experience gained, that guiding principle will be observed by those who are responsible for the conduct of Government affairs. If that care had been taken in the first instance there would not have been this mishap. The people think that schemes of drainage and irrigation have been thrown over by Government,

but there is every hope of the matter being reconsidered in a favourable light if the circumstances justify the expenditure being undertaken. I shall visit the people and tell them that fresh proposals will be submitted to them so that they will be attracted to the scheme.

Mr. AUSTIN: I feel somewhat perturbed over the remarks of the last three speakers. Some of them were on the Committee which dealt with the Kilmarnock scheme and also the scheme on Essequibo trying to push water up a hill. The Director of Education was Chairman of that Committee, because he happened to be acting as Colonial Secretary. When these two schemes came forward the entire Committee were against them. We had reports from independent parties, and from the Director of Agriculture and the District Commissioner in Berbice, that it was a very precarious speculation. The Governor of that day ruled otherwise and \$84,000 was spent at Kilmarnock and \$50,000 in Essequibo. We protested and the Committee was dissolved, and the money has been lost to the Colony and the taxpayers.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to speak on this item owing to the fact that the hon. Colonial Secretary has stated that Government has been advised to reduce the proposed expenditure. I heartily support the recommendation of the hon. Member for Western Essequibo that in future schemes in this nature should be absolutely approved by the parties whom they are intended to benefit. When the Essequibo scheme was being executed I took the trouble to go on the dredge and inspect the work, and I wondered what all this money was being spent for and what would be the result. I hope not only that Your Excellency will profit by the experience of your predecessors but that in future no money will be spent without the advice of the people on the spot. I would like to emphasise that the Canals Polder scheme was approved by the people of that district on the distinct understanding that they would benefit from the expenditure.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid I must ask the hon. Member to raise this question on a motion. I do not want to stop the hon. Member, but he must speak on the item before the Committee.

Mr. JACOB: I feel very strongly on this question, sir, because unless the Colony is developed by schemes of a progressive nature it would be very greatly hampered. I urge on Government that when the opportunity presents itself concrete schemes be brought forward for other areas.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Your Excellency, when this scheme was before the Council I told your predecessor that the money was being wrongly spent and wasted. I do not blame anybody, but I don't want it to go forward that I sat here and allowed it to pass and come here today and say other people are to blame.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I made a suggestion in the Select Committee, and also wrote Government on the subject, that the left bank of the Abary Creek should be included in the Berbice Administration District. It will be found that 99 per cent of the lease-holders are resident on the left bank of the Abary Creek, and I am making the suggestion for the purpose of effecting economy in the District Administration Scheme. Only last week the District Commissioner had to send an officer on the West Coast to collect rents for the left bank of the Abary Creek, and two days later the District Commissioner in Berbice had to send another officer to collect from others. By carrying out my suggestion Government would save not only travelling allowances but also confer a benefit on the lease-holders on the left bank of the Creek. I think there is a dividing line between the right bank of the Mahaicony Creek and the right bank of the Abary Creek, and the left bank of the Abary Creek might be included not only in the Berbice Administration District but also in the Magisterial District.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: In my own district I am up against a similar difficulty. The Commissioner for East Coast Demerara comes to Georgetown to transact business, but the Commissioner for Georgetown has to look after a portion of that district which comes within my constituency. I make the suggestion that a re-arrangement of the districts might be considered by Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will give the point consideration.

Mr. WALCOTT: I desire to take this opportunity to call attention to the very unsatisfactory telephone service on the East Coast. Before the advent of the District Commissioners the service was bad enough, but since their advent it has become very much worse.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would rather consider that point under the Post Office estimates if the hon. Member has no objection.

Mr. WALCOTT: Very well, sir.

EDUCATION.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It is very difficult on this head for one to find any particular item to ask that it be deleted or increased. One always feels that as much money as possible should be spent on education, and for that reason whenever this vote comes before the House it always receives very sympathetic consideration. I hope that the day is very far distant when I will so far forget my duty to posterity as to do anything that would curb the educational progress of the children of this Colony. But the quality of the pudding of education is in the eating. We look to education for results. I have heard over and over again that we are wasting money on education, but that is not correct. The results are not what one would expect. The Department requires deep and serious investigation. Last year I moved a motion for an enquiry into primary education, and, after a full discussion, it was accepted by Government, but for some reason or other that Committee has yet to be appointed. The money spent on education has given rise to no little confusion all round. The reason for that one must try to find out. When one attempts to apportion responsibility nobody is responsible. The schoolmasters say "We do not know who is our employer," the school managers say "We are supposed to be the employers but we are not permitted to employ," and the Director of Education says the managers are the employers.

Outside of what Your Excellency had the pleasure of hearing on Education Day, all I wish to say is that every word uttered by the gentleman who spoke on the subject was absolutely true. When large sums of money are being expended on any

Department, and a person in the responsible position of the gentleman who spoke on that occasion can put before Government the facts enunciated and those facts could find witnesses to substantiate them, Government must see whether it is doing its duty to the community to permit these large sums to be expended without possible results. I see very little in the Estimates to ask Your Excellency to delete, still I say there is the necessity for investigation, not on the estimates but on my motion. We are not getting what we expect from the expenditure every year. I think the money can be spent in other directions with better results all round. Confusion is worse confounded with what is carried out by this Department. If you were to enquire, for example, from a schoolmaster how it is that a motor car cannot pass the road without children throwing stones at it or without a stick scratching the body of the car, he would tell you he cannot flog children to-day because there is trouble behind it. That is only one instance. That shows that a screw is loose somewhere. I ask Government to ascertain for itself at no distant date whether the money is being well spent. Investigation is necessary and long overdue and I ask Government to probe it to the bottom.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the hon. Member will give me an opportunity to reply before the adjournment? I feel it may shorten the discussion under this head of the Estimates if I speak now on the motion which the hon. Member for Berbice River has put forward asking for a Committee to be appointed to investigate the whole question of education. I am not averse to granting that request. Although I have not had an opportunity of consulting the Executive Council yet on the subject, my own personal view is that the reply to the hon. Member's appeal is as follows: A Departmental Committee has completed the draft of a new Education Code. It has to come before the Education Board for their consideration and will then come out into public view. I think that when that new Code has been published and has been considered the opportune moment will come to appoint the Committee which the hon. Member has suggested. It would be, I think, a waste of time and an overlap of business if two Committees were to be sitting at

the same time, aiming perhaps at the same object. Subject to anything I may be advised in Executive Council, my reply to the hon. Member's motion will be "Yes, I will appoint such a Committee, but I propose to defer such appointment until the new draft Code has been made public." I think that would be in the interest of education and in the interest of this Council.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I suggested that when the Code was drafted it should be put before the Committee while it is sitting and it is because I heard nothing about the matter I gave notice of motion.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon recess.

Item 1 (2)—Personal allowance to Major Bain Gray, Director of Education, \$240.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I was under the impression that these personal allowances were things of the past, and I must confess that I find myself a little embarrassed to find this item on the Estimates to-day. This item was before the Council last year and the Council threw it out. What reason Government has for putting it on again this year one cannot tell. When one looks at the reason assigned, (*e.g.* Major Bain Gray has had 11 years service in this Colony as Director of Education), it is no good reason for giving a man a personal allowance. Has he suffered any disadvantage in his office? He has not had any additional work to do on behalf of this country. There are officers who have been in the Service longer than Major Bain Gray and Government has not thought fit to give them a personal allowance. As a matter of fact I have known officers who have served without an increase of salary for more than 12 years and that was not considered a reason why they should get even promotion. One officer was for 16 years in one position and it is only now Government thinks it proper to give him similar consideration.

There are other officers who are occasioning a considerable saving and Government has not thought it fit to give them a personal allowance. One wonders why Government finds it necessary to be continually bringing this item before the Council. At one time Government expli-

citly pronounced that it was wrong in principle and no more personal allowances, were to be granted. A Committee who specially considered the question also said there were to be no personal allowances, yet we have these items as a recurring decimal when in a depleted House Government would force them through. Within twelve months after this item has been thrown out by the Council it is brought back. So long as we have the Constitution we have, so long as Government has the power to govern even to the detriment of the community, and to give largesse when the country is on the verge of bankruptcy, so long shall we have our noses to the grindstone. Government gives one the trouble to find language that will not hurt unnecessarily, and Government should not put people in that position. I am asking that this item be deleted.

Mr. AUSTIN: I rise to support this item and to correct the statement of the hon. Member that it was thrown out last year. The item was deferred until this year at the request of Elected and Nominated Members, who asked that it be brought up for consideration again. I refer the hon. Member to the Report on the financial situation of British Guiana by the Financial Commissioners who were sent out here in 1931. The Commissioners recommended that the salary of the Director of Education should be increased from £900 to £1,000. That was practically the only increase they did recommend and the salary has not yet been raised to the amount suggested. We are only now moving it up to the extent of £50. Those of us who live in Georgetown and come into contact with the Director of Education, in the many duties he has performed as acting Colonial Secretary and as Chairman of various Committees, realise the hard work and statistical work he has had to perform and has performed in a very able way. I have sat on many Committees of which he was Chairman, and, personally, I cannot think of any official who has helped members of Committees as much as Major Bain Gray has done. I welcome this small addition to him as a personal allowance for the duties he has so well performed.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: As one of the Elected Members, and I hope not the only one, I certainly intend to support this

item. I have known Major Bain Gray and his work ever since he has been in this Colony, and he has served 11 years without any promotion. I happened to have had a great deal to do with him when acting as Colonial Secretary and I know the value of his work. I know that he is an extremely hard-working officer, and if we are not going to reward merit when we get it, then we do not deserve to get it. When we get an officer of the quality of Major Bain Gray we should do our best to retain him. It may be that he is not popular in certain quarters or popular with certain people in the Colony. We have nothing to do with that; he happens to be a good officer of Government and has done his work well. I have never yet heard any complaint of his efficiency and he is undoubtedly a capable officer. I ask my colleagues not to be influenced by any prejudice. This is an allowance which the Elected Members can afford, and, if they do not see their way to support this particular allowance, I do not see how they can support the other allowances which will come before the Council at this session. I hope this item will not even go to the vote but will be carried without a division.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I have a very open mind on this question. I know that there is a lot of heart-burning over personal allowances and free houses from the point of view that some have them and others have not. There are so many anomalies that, as a matter of principle, I am not going to support any personal allowance. If an officer is given extra work his salary should be increased. That is right and just, but to ask whether we should pay personal allowances and grant concessions to some officers and not to others is most embarrassing to all concerned. I shall take a very firm stand and not vote for any of these allowances.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Perhaps the hon. Member may not be aware that if the salary of the Director of Education is increased and he left this Colony that salary would go to his successor, while, on the other hand, the personal to Major Bain Gray would not necessarily go to the next Director of Education.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the position.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I am fully aware of that.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I would be the last person to deprive any officer of additional remuneration, but up to the present the Members who have spoken have said nothing to convince me that either this officer or the other officers who are slated for personal allowances are entitled to them. One of those speakers referred to the Report of the Financial Commissioners, and I think he was correct in saying that the only increase of salary recommended by the Commissioners was that of the Director of Education. Reductions were suggested in the salaries of various posts, however, but I have no recollection of those recommendations having been given effect to. I would have thought that personal allowances would have been dealt with in one debate, otherwise it would mean too much individualism and, as one hon. Member indicated, open those Members in opposition to the charge of personal pique or personal feeling. I am quite prepared at all times to assume responsibility for any utterance I make in this Council, whether it meets with the approval or not of any officer in the Service. All I have to say is that I am against personal allowances on principle. If it is Government's view that a post should carry a certain salary—not that an officer is entitled to additional remuneration for services rendered—it should be put to the Council in that way, but I am strongly opposed to personal allowances being given to any officer unless they are for special services or for some special reason.

Mr. JACOB: As the last speaker has said, one finds himself embarrassed on questions like this one. To my mind the Education Vote should be increased. Ten years ago the salary of the Director of Education was \$3,960; to-day it is \$4,320 per annum. Ten years ago the cost of living was higher than it is to-day. Teachers to my mind are underpaid, yet we do nothing for them. I appeal to Government to consider the matter in that light. The Colony is not in a financial position to increase salaries, and, bearing in mind that the lower grades of officers are underpaid, on the question of principle I cannot support this item.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to dispel from

the mind of anybody, although I need make no apology, that I have any personal feeling against this officer. What I say is that this officer from the time he came here has been getting advances on his salary until now, and that he has served the Department for 11 years is no reason for increasing his salary by a personal allowance.

THE CHAIRMAN. The hon. Member has already said all this.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I want to say that I take exception to the idea that anyone who objects to this item must have some reason other than the public interest. I think it is reprehensible for any Member to make a statement which will bear such an interpretation. If the hon. Member would refer to Hansard he would find that when this item was previously before the Council the Officer Administering the Government found it was doomed and got into tantrums and withdrew it from sheer pique. I discuss all questions here dispassionately regardless of the officers. No man here respects the attainments of the Director of Education more than I do. He is one of the ablest men in the Colony, but, unfortunately, he is very unpopular. I am going to vote against the item and leave Members to think what they please.

The Committee divided on the item and voted:—

Ayes—Messrs Jackson, Humphrys, Austin, Dr. De Freitas, Laing, Major Craig, D'Andrade, Seaford, Mullin, McDavid, Woolford, Luckhoo, Professor Dash, Dias, Smellie, and the Colonial Secretary—16.

Noes—Messrs. Seymour, King, Jacob, Peer Bacchus, Dr. Singh, De Aguiar and Eleazar—7.

Item 1 (11)—Attendance Officer.

Mr. JACOB—Complaints have reached me that the Attendance Officers are not seeing that children go to school regularly.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a question I took up with the Director of Education two days ago. I had heard the same thing. I think much more attention is being paid to it now.

Major BAIN GRAY (Director of Educa-

tion): Every effort is made to check the attendance in the schools both by the School Managers and by the District Administration staff. The Managers are required to give a monthly certificate of the date they visit the school and the date on which they check the register.

Item 2—Grants to Primary Schools, \$350,619.

Dr. SINGH: Looking through the Estimates, sir, I observe that these grants have been increasing year after year. I feel that it is the foremost duty of every Government to encourage the education of its population, and, although our finances are meagre, we are doing our utmost to give our population a fair amount of general education to fit them for their future responsibilities, as citizens and parents of the future generation. But that is only one side of the question. We have a number of boys and girls leaving the schools to-day, and Government cannot employ them neither do firms in Water Street. What are they to do? Are they to drift about the streets? Or are they to come into contact with unwholesome environments? I am told that crimes among juveniles are on the increase. Government as the custodian of these young people should endeavour to give them suitable employment. I think it is a good opportunity for the Department of Agriculture to evolve a scheme by means of which these young people can be trained to take up farming. I do hope Government will take this important question into consideration.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I am strongly in favour of education. At the same time we are turning out of the schools every year thousands of children who are unfitted for the life they have to live. I know of children leaving school in Essequibo at the age of 14 who never know what it means to have steady employment. It is a crime to see people drifting as they are drifting, and Government must try to bring about employment no matter where the money comes from.

Mr. SMELLIE: I rise to oppose any increase of this vote. The increase in two years has been \$25,000. I have expressed my opinion on various occasions about the increase of this vote. I think

the time has arrived when we have to stop. A previous Governor told me that if it went up to \$500,000 or \$600,000 it would not surprise him because there is no limit to it, and on one occasion when we objected very strongly the Secretary of State replied that it must be put back. But where is it going to end? The Colony cannot afford this enormous amount for education. There are three heads of expenditure that take up a tremendous amount of money. On Loans over \$1,000,000 is used for interest and sinking fund; then we have the Education Vote and the Medical Vote. They are far too high for the Colony in the present state of things. Government is borrowing money every year for the purpose of making up the deficit. Next year the deficit is going to be something like \$400,000 and for the next year it will be half-a-million. The Colony cannot possibly go on like that. How will that money be paid? There will have to be reduction somewhere in expenditure because I cannot see where the revenue is to be increased to quadruple expenditure.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I cannot allow the remarks of the hon. Member to pass unchallenged. What we have to regret is that we cannot afford to spend more on the education of the children. It is most regrettable that we have to take them out of school at the age of 14 and in the country at the age of 12 to swell the labour market. We do them an injustice and an injury in taking them out of school and having nothing for them to do. If we reduce the vote we shall have to increase the age. I am surprised to hear a Member who just a while ago voted for a personal allowance asking Your Excellency to reduce the grant for primary education where schoolmasters have to be paid for additional work thrown upon them. The schoolmaster has to teach more children, yet he is told the amount is too much. Curtail the amount and get more work from him without paying for it. That is the sort of justice we are asked to give. I regret we cannot increase the school age to 16 because it would increase the vote still higher. Leave the children uneducated and you will have a worse case than at present. Reduction of the vote will be a menace to the community.

Mr. SEAFORD: This vote for grants

to primary schools is no doubt increasing from year to year, but from figures I gathered I do not think it is due to increased birth-rate. I think it is due really to better attendance at the schools, and chiefly among East Indians who are now taking advantage of the schools, which they did not do previously. I have no objection to money spent on education. I look upon education in any country as an investment. But are we getting a return on this expenditure? I would like to see a better return on the money spent, but I do not know how to advise Government to improve matters. How many of the children coming out of school with a knowledge of Latin and Mathematics are going to help this Colony? Not only in this Colony but throughout the world the question exercising the minds of people is: what is the correct education to fit the youths for the problem before them? It is no good appointing a Committee. The hon. Member for Berbice River asked for several Committees, but that does not seem to take us any further. I ask Government to consider whether better results cannot be obtained by some other means.

Mr. JACKSON: In regard to the increase of the expenditure on primary education, Members of this Council will doubtless remember that propaganda work was started during last year with a view to getting into the schools all children of school age, and along with them a number of East Indian girls who did not attend school at all. Following on the withdrawal of the Swettenham Circular, which provided that parents of East Indian girls were not to be prosecuted for not sending their children to school, the Director of Education and a number of other prominent educationists visited the sugar estates and leading places where East Indians were located and endeavoured to induce them to send their children out to school. That attempt met with very favourable results, and to-day it is a pleasure to see the large number of East Indian girls attending these schools. Increased attendance must of necessity demand increased staff and increased equipment, and the increase on the primary education vote is primarily due to this large influx of children. Apart from that Government has certain obligations which Government must honour. The system of education

provides for the grading of schools, and the salaries of head teachers depend on the grades in which their schools are placed together with the certificates they hold. Increase of salary depends on increased grades and, as a matter of fact, the natural increase of head teachers coming under this head also contributes to the increase of the grant for primary education. For those reasons alone I think the grant ought to stand.

I should like to say a few words on the statement that we are not receiving the results that we should have from the amount expended on education. There are certain things which show their results immediately, but there are other things upon which labour and money are expended that do not permit of results being seen at a glance. I cannot for the life of me believe that Members of the Council will seriously contend that the education given to the boys and girls of our schools is lost upon them and lost to the country. I do not subscribe to the idea that the more ignorant a man is the better he will be adapted to agriculture and handicraft work in general, and I for myself feel that the better informed people may be the better they would be able to discharge the duties devolving upon them. Hon. Members need not fear that the instruction received by the children is of no effect. To my mind there is a distinct improvement in the conduct of children generally. One hon. Member referred to children about the streets, but there is the knowledge of that Member and of other Members of this Council that some 10 or 15 years ago there was distinct hooliganism in this City among the young boys and girls let out of school, which does not occur at the present time. I think a very great mistake is frequently made of expecting the primary school to be a vocational school. The primary school may give a bias to certain vocations by paying particular attention to handicrafts, agriculture and such like, but it is not the work of the elementary school to provide education in the line of fitting children for any particular vocation.

What I do think is necessary in this Colony—and until we can get it I am positive that nobody will be satisfied with the results of education in the Colony—is something in the nature of industrial or farm schools for children after they have

completed their term in the primary school. If Government were in a position to provide such organisations it would be a very good thing for the Colony and the cry that the money spent on education is lost would be dissipated. Members frequently refer to what occurs in other countries better placed than we are. They talk of great institutions in the United States of America for giving vocational education and to the noble organisation there; but Members seem to forget that most of those institutions are endowed. But for the fact that we never have any rich people in this Colony to give us endowments for the benefit of education we might be placed in a similar position, but I do not think it could reasonably be said that the money spent on primary education does not fit the children for the work they have to perform. It is not the work of the elementary school. The fitting of them for a vocation in life is work which must go on when the elementary school age is passed. I had half-a-mind to refer to the cost of education in the West Indian Colonies, but I do not think it is necessary. I would just say that the cost of education in this Colony is considerably lower than the cost of education in Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica. I do not think that we should regard the cost as high here when it is understood that the cost per scholar per year is just a little over \$7. I just ask Members before pronouncing the cost of primary education prohibitory to compare the cost per pupil of primary education with the cost per pupil of secondary education, and they will agree with me that the cost of primary education is far too low.

Mr. JACOB: I support in the main everything that has been said by the last speaker, and I desire to go a little further and suggest one or two reasons why something should be done. There is a statement going around for some time that the people do not like to work on the land because they have a little too much education. The statement has also been made today that the primary schools turn out scholars equipped in Mathematics and Latin who want white collar jobs. These statements go a long way. If anything can be done to dispel that idea from the minds of Your Excellency's advisers, and others who are placed in a responsible

position, there would be a better understanding throughout the Colony. As has been pointed out by the last speaker, primary education is not costing anything like secondary education, and Latin and Mathematics are only taught in the secondary and not in the primary schools. I want to deny, with all the emphasis I can, that the people will not work because they have too much education, or because they want white collar jobs. I find the people do not work because they cannot get work, and the problem is one of Government finding work for children leaving school.

Something should be done by organising model farms in the villages where there is land. I suggest that on some area on the East Bank a sum of \$100,000 or \$200,000 be spent to drain and irrigate it, even if it cost half a-million dollars spread over two or three years. Sooner or later on the East Bank the people would find hardly anything to do other than at certain recognised places. Sir Edward Denhan told me that Government had in mind a scheme to drain and irrigate lands on the East Bank. I am suggesting that small blocks be laid out in particular areas so that when children leave school they would have somewhere to go to. If there is a programme for the establishment of small areas well irrigated and drained either on the East Bank, East Coast or West Coast, or even on the Corentyne Coast, Government would find young people going on those lands so long as they are sure of crops. I wish to emphasise as much as I possibly can that that would be one of the steps in the right direction.

Major BAIN GRAY: I have no intention of apologising for the increase of this vote. I am entirely unrepentant; in fact, I am surprised at my own moderation. This vote does not concern a few figures in a book or any imaginary idea, but it does concern the welfare of 50,000 children in the Colony. That is what we are asking you to consider. The financial aspect, of course, naturally attracts attention to it at first sight, but I can assure Members of the Council that they are getting the best possible results for the money spent in rather difficult circumstances. We can challenge comparison with any part of the West Indies where the conditions are comparable with

ours. We have the smallest fraction of colonial revenue compared with the West Indian Colonies and the smallest capitation expenditure, excepting perhaps Jamaica, where the school population is very nearly double ours and where naturally it is possible to have larger organisation. Many Members have suggested, and have in their minds, that there should be a strengthening of the practical element in the primary school curriculum. We all would like to do that, especially in the later stages when the boys and girls have reached at least the age of 12, but no individual and no country has been able to emphasise and extend that form of education with very little increased expenditure. At the present moment, I am sorry to say, our total expenditure on vocational expenditure is under \$10,000. That is not from the lack of any desire to spend more, but the primary school is not concerned with vocational education of any kind.

The function of the primary school, to state it as briefly as possible, is to turn out decent, well-behaved and useful citizens, and, within the limits imposed by our finances, I think the schools of the Colony can honestly say they are doing their best in that direction. We wish to improve them, and they are improving. We have more qualified teachers in the schools than ever we had before. There is a serious lack in nearly all the schools of a pure water supply, except in a few fortunate schools which are near artesian wells, but in that direction we are also improving. We would like to have better and bigger buildings, but there again we are handicapped by finance, and I must admit that we have not increased grants to the Governing Bodies in proportion to the increased number of children in the schools. There we are a bit behind. But a few years ago we accepted the principle that our first interest was to provide more teachers, and better teachers, and that is what we are trying to do at present. Sometimes the schools are blamed—and it is suggested here—for unemployment among young people, but I do not think that would stand investigation at all. Unemployment follows the general course of economic conditions in the Colony. We are turning children out of the schools who are willing to work, and that is borne out by the fact that as soon as

there is a job open to a boy or girl the number of applicants is twice the number of jobs to be had. We all know the seriousness of this problem, but I suggest to hon. Members that the remedy is not to be found in any hasty condemnation of the primary school. The problem does not exist there at all, but it exists in much more fundamental causes than education itself.

It is hardly necessary, and it should not be necessary to refer to it, but one hon. Member has drawn attention to it. The primary schools are not endeavouring to displace secondary schools at all. I have been rung up on the telephone on more than one occasion and asked why we are teaching boys Greek. There is not a single boy at Queen's College learning Greek; and there is a curious misapprehension of what goes on in the primary school. I suggest that each hon. Member who has not recently been in a primary school should go to the nearest one next week, and when the votes come before the Legislative Council he would be really in a position to discuss them. He would then really know what is going on in the primary school and be able to decide what is best for the school and what we hope is best for the Colony as a whole.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It is as much a risk to criticise the primary schools as it is to criticise the Department of Agriculture. It is a fallacy to say that the boys want white collar jobs, and it is a fallacy that has long ago been exploded.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I did not intend to speak on this subject but I would like to tell the Director of Education this. While we know that they do not teach Greek in the primary schools, a boy was punished because his mother did not have the money to give him to buy a copy of "Tom Brown's School Days." What such a book is wanted in a primary school for I do not know.

Mr. ELEAZAR: In view of what has fallen from the lips of several Members, I think those Members will readily agree to Government giving a grant to the local Tuskegee movement. Members have charged the primary schools with not doing what this institution is doing. Your Excellency will observe that last year

Government showed sympathy with the movement by giving it a grant of \$168 for a particular purpose. At that time the institution had not been launched. To-day the institution is there, the Master is there, and there are eight boys on the spot engaged in agricultural pursuits. This institution from private sources has spent no less a sum than \$10,532.80 so far. That is very commendable indeed. Here is an institution providing what Members feel Government should provide, and, having helped themselves to the extent they have done, I am asking Government to show their sympathy by means of a grant of £100. I was asked in another quarter to ask Government to make it £200, but I am grateful for small mercies. If I can get the support of other Members and Government's sympathy, Government might later on be able to give a larger vote. Here is tangible proof of an effort of the people to help themselves when \$10,000 has been raised and spent on this project, and I ask Government to show how much appreciation they have of the movement by the grant of £100.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I do not think it is necessary but, if it is, I support heartily what the hon. Member has suggested. I have followed with a great deal of interest the activities of this organisation from the very beginning when the students were sent to the United States of America. Now that the students are back we ought to look upon the movement as an investment. I venture to suggest that it would be a step in the right direction in affording whatever assistance we can to this organisation. I know there are boys and girls who are willing to learn to do something to help themselves, but owing to the inability of the organisation at present to assist them they must of necessity wait their chance. If Government can see their way to lend them a helping hand, seeing that by themselves they are doing all they possibly can, they would be assisting a very worthy cause.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Government cannot at this stage agree to any amount being put on the Estimate to cover something of which Government has not full information. If the people concerned wish to approach Government in the proper manner they should refer the matter to the Education Committee and ask

the Committee to consider it and to forward a recommendation to Government. Government will then be quite prepared to consider the matter, and favourably, if the Education Committee so recommend.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is a further point. Before putting on the Estimate a new item, such as this, it would have to be referred to the Secretary of State, and I think hon. Members will find they are more likely to obtain their request if they follow the Colonial Secretary's suggestion.

FOREST DEPARTMENT.

MR. ELEAZAR: When I had the pleasure of addressing this House a few days ago I particularly mentioned that a progressive Government under conditions such as we are experiencing now would, among other things, abolish all luxury Departments, and when I made that remark I had in mind no other than the Forest Department. This Department Members of this House have been cajoled into accepting by means which one need not now refer to, but I remember that an officer was seconded from somewhere in India to make an inventory of our forest products. That officer came here for a period of three years and he made an excellent inventory and valuation. We were told that we had \$2,500,000 worth of greenheart in a specified area of the interior, not to mention crabwood and other wood. At that time, while we thought that we had very large areas of different kinds of wood, we did not know where they were actually located and what was their money value, and that was the reason for getting that officer appointed. When the officer had done the work for which we had brought him out and paid him, a request was made to the House to keep him for all time and what is known as the Forest Department was inaugurated. That is how the Department came into being. Members protested for all they were worth. We were told that we had very little hope of selling any of our woods except greenheart for several reasons, among them that these woods although very beautiful could not be utilised because manufacturers would have to change all their machinery which is not adapted to such woods. The price of greenheart was prohibitive.

We have not yet sold \$500,000 of the

\$2,500,000 value of timber, and I assert that this is a luxury Department. Can a man who cannot balance his budget maintain a Department which is likely to benefit him 100 years hence? We have forests which, so far as anybody can see, we will not be able to touch for a century. The British Government has had this Colony for 100 years now and we have not touched the fringe of it yet. If there is a Department that can be considered a luxury Department it is this one. We have no idea that in the immediate or even in the distant future we will get any return from this Department. If the Department is to be maintained and it is for Empire purposes, then we might strike it out and leave it for the Secretary of State to say, if it is an Empire product, he can finance it from the other end. If we are to continue as we are doing—and I hope we will not—I hope the day is not far distant when we shall be able to get out of the veritable slough of despond into which we have fallen. Can Government give us a guarantee that in the next 3, 5 or 10 years we would be able to recoup the money spent on this Department? If not, why are we to keep this Department up? We are doing it merely because we are being governed and we have very little voice in the government, and merely because we are powerless to resist and cannot prevent this thing from being done, but we do say that Government should not force this Department on the community.

Mr. JACOB: The Select Committee discussed this Department with the Conservator of Forests and I am agreed that this is a step in the right direction, provided that Government is prepared to put some more money into it. The Forest Department has not got the funds to lay in a stock and cure it so that capitalists can see scope for development and investment of capital in this Colony. We should be able to produce crabwood, deterna and other woods suitable for export, and to have the West Indies looking to us to provide them with their requirements. We should also have woods for making packages. I think trade with the West Indies is within our scope. Some little time ago a motion was moved by the hon. Member for Georgetown North in respect of a Customs Union, but like most things that are brought forward it was carried no further.

I appeal to hon. Members to support this Department so that at some future date we may have one other new industry. The Secretary of State having pressed it upon us, he may now see the advisability of giving us £100,000 or even \$100,000 to save it. If it becomes necessary tax imported lumber to compel people to use local lumber; but in the first instance I ask Government to approach the Secretary of State for assistance to further the activities of the Department.

Mr. SEAFORD: My views of this Department are well known as I repeat them here year after year. With regard to crabwood, deterna and other woods for building purposes, the Conservator of Forests told the Select Committee that there was no chance for them whatever. In this Colony it is very difficult for us to compete with imported wood as the Department charges for local wood the same price at which imported wood is sold. As far as I can gather from Conservator of Forests, the export of crabwood would be purely for furniture purposes, and that is about the only type of wood we may export. Greenheart, I am informed, has been superseded by other kinds of wood and by concrete which is very much more lasting. Beyond that there is a very big Trust which has all its money invested in the East and operates in the United Kingdom, and that Trust will do its utmost to keep our woods out even if they were suitable for its purposes. We are spending now \$30,000. What is that going to bring in? I cannot see any return on this expenditure for generations, if then. Like the donkey and the grass a promise is always dangled before us to no purpose. I have read a report on the timbers of the Colony which is the most condemnatory report I have ever seen. That report coupled with things I have heard induce me to think that the expenditure on this Department is of no benefit to the Colony. I can see no return on it for centuries, and, in view of our finances at the present time, I think Government would be well advised to reduce the expenditure. I do not advocate the deletion of the whole of the expenditure, because one officer should be retained to carry out examinations of timber for export, but most of it can be wiped out with advantage to the Colony.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hon.

Members who are objecting to this vote are doing so on the grounds of seeing no visible returns and fearing they will have to wait too long for the timber industry to bring in revenue. On the other hand one hon. Member has suggested that further money should be put in the hands of the Forest Department in order that they should have a larger stock for sale. I want to answer him first because I have the figures here. As hon. Members know, an amount of \$35,000 was placed in a revolving fund. Of that amount \$23,000 still remains in cash and timber. One of the main duties of the Forest Department during the last year has been to prove to the local builders that local wood properly cured can take the place of imported wood at competitive prices. For a successful industry two things are necessary. One is local demand and the other is export trade, and the first essential in a country such as this is local demand. Admittedly it is a little difficult to break down prejudice. I suggest that if people in this country would give a little more co-operation, and there were a little more determination that our own trade should be supplied by our own local product, we would progress a great deal more rapidly to the desired end.

In the Select Committee the Conservator of Forests certainly satisfied me, and I am glad to hear to-day that he satisfied other hon. Members that the wood he supplied to local builders was entirely satisfactory and could be produced at competitive prices, and that it was only the prejudice of local people that prevented that wood from being used. He told us, for instance, that one builder went to him and said the wood was entirely satisfactory and just what he wanted. The price quoted for the local wood was exactly the same as for imported wood, and the builder then said "The wood is very good, but why should you want so much when I can get pitch-pine at the same price." Local builders have refused in a great measure to accept the local wood. The quantity that the Forest

Department has disposed of, however, has increased considerably. Last year the figures were \$104,000 and this year they are over \$200,000. I think that is a very fair indication that the prejudice to which I have referred is beginning to break down, and if one can only get the co-operation of the local builders local timbers will oust imported timbers entirely from the market.

Mr. JACOB : If I understand the Colonial Secretary to say that the revolving fund of \$35,000 is not enough, we should get more money to enable the operations of the Department to be carried on and extended.

Mr. SEAFORD : I did not mean to say that local wood should not be used locally. I am entirely in favour of that, and I think it will be in course of time. My point is : is it necessary to spend \$31,000 a year to prove that ?

Mr. DE AGUIAR : My views on this Department are well known. I was afforded an opportunity of discussing the matter with the Conservator of Forests in the Select Committee, and I also expressed my views on the Department. I went one step further and asked that my vote should be recorded against the expenditure of every item under this head. In doing that I would like to make my position perfectly clear. It is not because I desire to baulk any new industries of benefit to the Colony. My reason for doing so is because progress in this direction has been exceedingly slow up to the present time and from all indications it is evident that it is likely to continue. From 1925 to 1934 the expenditure on this Department has been \$414,000. The figures for 1935-36 will carry the expenditure to nearly half a million dollars. I venture to say—

The Council resumed on effluxion of time and adjourned until the following day at 11 o'clock.