

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 8th December, 1932.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR EDWARD DENHAM, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. C. Douglas-Jones, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. Hector Josephs, K.C., B.A., LL.M. (Cantab.), LL.B. (Lond.).

The Hon. T. T. Smellie (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

The Hon. T. Millard, C.M.G., Colonial Treasurer.

Major the Hon. W. Bain Gray, M.A., Ph.D. (Edin.), B. Litt. (Oxon), Director of Education.

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

The Hon. R. E. Brassington (Western Essequibo).

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

The Hon. B. R. Wood, M.A., Dip. For. (Cantab.), Conservator of Forests.

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

The Hon. Q. B. De Freitas, M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.), Surgeon-General (Acting).

The Hon. J. Mullin, M.I.M.M., F.S.I., Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

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

The Hon. N. Cannon (Georgetown North).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

The Hon. A. E. Seeram (Eastern Demerara).

The Hon. G. E. Anderson (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

The Hon. F. J. Seaford (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 7th December, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

Notice was given that at the next meeting of the Council leave would be asked to introduce and have read the first time the following Bills :—

A Bill to make provision for the payment to Government by the Georgetown Town Council of the amount for which the Council is liable in respect of loan charges for moneys expended in construction of improvement works—(*Attorney-General*).

A Bill to authorise the making of Orders-in-Council for the purpose of effecting economies in expenditure with respect to the remuneration of persons in the Public Service—(*Mr. Millard*).

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESSEQUEBO LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

Mr. CANNON asked the following questions :—

1. What is the total amount spent on the purchase of land for the Essequibo Land Settlement Scheme? Also give the purchase price of each estate separately.

2. If any of these lands were formerly owned and sold by the Government and then repurchased for the purpose of the Land Settlement Scheme, will the Government state (a) the original purchase price (if not Crown or Colony lands); (b) the sale price and year of sale; (c) the repurchase price and year of repurchase?

3. What is the total expenditure, from the inception of the scheme to date, in respect of the following items :—

- (a) Erection of model cottages for settlers;
- (b) Other buildings;

- (c) Drainage, including the erection of all "internal" and "external" sluices;
 (d) Irrigation;
 (e) Breaking down and levelling land for rice cultivation;
 (f) Maintenance;
 (g) Management,—apportioning part of the salaries of officers who are responsible for the supervision of the settlement;
 (h) Advances to settlers.

4. What is the actual aggregate expenditure under all heads from the inception of the scheme to date? Specify any large items in addition to those listed above.

5. How much of this is held to be recoverable, and under what heads?

6. Is it true that the capital expenditure has been "written down"; and if so, for what reasons, under what heads and to what extent?

7. What is the actual revenue from the inception of the scheme to date, specifying the main items?

8. When was the last report and balance sheet issued, and when is the next to be expected?

9. Are any special works in connection with the scheme now being constructed, or contemplated; if so, out of what vote will the funds be provided?

10. What is (a) the total area under cultivation, and (b) the number of settlers, classified first as families and secondly as men, women and children?

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture) replied as follows:—

1. Please see the item "Purchase price of Properties" in the Financial Statement at page 8 of the Report on the Bush Lot Land Settlement Scheme for the year 1931 printed as an Appendix to the Administration Report of the Director of Agriculture for the year 1931. The prices paid as shown therein included purchase of the land with all buildings and appurtenances.

2.—(a) The price paid by Government to Messrs. Curtis, Campbell & Co. for the property known as "Anna Regina cum annexis" was \$100,000 at which figure the property was transferred by Government to the Essequibo Land Settlement, Limited.

(b) In 1928 the Essequibo Land Settlement, Limited (In Liquidation) sold:—

Plantation Anna Regina for	\$ 51,000
Do. Richmond for	8,450
Do. La Belle Alliance for ...	34,000
Do. Bush Lot for	11,850

the last named being re-purchased by Government.

(c) Please see answer to question 1 above.

3. Attention is invited to the analysis of the expenditure and revenue to 31st December, 1931, provided in the Financial Statement referred to in the reply to question 1. If any amplification of this analysis is desired it will be convenient if it is indicated in relationship to any items therein. A statement (unaudited) of expenditure and revenue for 1932 (to 15th November) similarly analysed is appended hereto.

Regarding advances to settlers, the total amount advanced is \$11,482.12. The balance of advances outstanding at 15th November, 1932, is \$2,110.54, the whole of which is considered to be good and recoverable.

4.—(a) From the Colonization Fund to 15th November, 1932, \$164,832.54 being expenditure \$190,951.02 less receipts \$26,118.48. (Please see the Financial Statement to 31st December, 1931, and the statement for 1932 appended hereto).

(b) From the Colonial Development Fund, \$8,885.

(c) From Unemployment Relief Grants, \$33,100.

(Please see the reply to question 9).

5. The whole. The properties in their present condition are considered to have a realisable value in excess of the amounts expended and are now yielding a return in revenue which is in excess of current expenditure.

6. The answer is in the negative.

7. \$26,118.48 being \$15,201.10 from current revenue receipts and \$10,917.38 from sales of realisable assets. (Please see the Financial Statement to 31st December, 1931, referred to in the reply to question 1 and the statement for 1932 appended hereto).

8. The last report and financial statement was that for the year 1931 referred to in the reply to question 1. This report was laid on the Table of the Legislative Council on 30th August, 1932. The next report may be expected for the succeeding year ending 31st December, 1932.

9. The following special works have recently been completed, the expenditure being met from the provision in the Annual Estimates indicated in each case:—

(a) Erection of Paddy Barn at Anna Regina	\$ 1,255
from Head LII.—Colonial Development Fund Schemes, Sub-head 2 (2)—Erection of Paddy Barns	
(b) New Rice Mill Machinery at Anna Regina	8,885
from Head LII.—Colonial Development Fund Schemes, Sub-head 2 (4)—Rice Machinery, Anna Regina	
(c) Breaking down and levelling land at Anna Regina for cultivation	33,100
from Head LIII.—Imperial Grant Unemployment Relief Works, 5, Development of Country Areas	

10.—(a) Total area under cultivation—

Bush Lot Land Settlement—	
paddy land	246 acres.
Bush Lot Land Settlement—provision and pasture land	50 "
Anna Regina and Estate Sections—	
paddy land (approx.)	970 "
Anna Regina and Estate Sections—	
provision and pasture land	700 "

1,966 acres.

(b) Bush Lot Land Settlement—				120 families comprising—			
82 tenant families comprising—							
Males.	Females.	Boys.	Girls.	Males.	Females.	Boys.	Girls.
103	89	74	52	120	77	141	110
Anna Regina Estate Yard.				Estate sections accommodate 319 families.			

ESSEQUEBO LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEMES.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JANUARY, 1932,
TO 15TH NOVEMBER, 1932.

RECEIPTS.

BUSH LOT SETTLEMENT SCHEME—							
Bush Lot Rents	...	...	...	...	\$	1,863	18
Interest on Advances	...	...	...	...	4	97	\$ 1,868 15
ANNA REGINA ESTATE—							
General Revenue	...	...	...	...	\$	628	75
Rice Bed Rents	...	...	...	...	2,158	98	
Pasture and Provision Farm Rents	...	...	...	...	857	96	
Interest on Advances	...	...	...	...	77		3,646 46
						\$	5,514 61
Sale of Scrap—Capital Account	...	...	...	...			713 74
Total Receipts	...	...	...	...			\$ 6,228 35
EXPENDITURE.							
CAPITAL ACCOUNT.							
SUNDRY WORKS—							
Erection of Rice Mill, Anna Regina	...	...	...	...	\$	1,355	00
Adapting Building for Rice Mill	...	...	...	...	44	76	... \$ 1,399 76
CURRENT EXPENDITURE.							
ADMINISTRATION—							
Salary, Steno-Typist	...	...	...	...	\$	159	68
Stationery and Printing	...	...	...	...	42	45	\$ 202 13
SETTLEMENT SCHEMES—							
Bush Lot Land Settlement Scheme—upkeep of	...	...	...	...			144 20
ANNA REGINA ESTATE—							
Staff at Anna Regina	...	...	...	...	\$	1,530	40
Maintenance and Contingencies	...	...	...	...	1,997	23	
Drainage and Irrigation Assessment	...	...	...	...	361	23	3,888 86 4,235 19
Total Expenditure	...	...	...	...			\$ 5,634 95

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the draft Estimates of expenditure to be defrayed from revenue for year 1933 under the head "Education Department."

THE CHAIRMAN: The item under this head that has been deferred is "Elementary Education—Grants to Schools, \$321,500." That was done in order that hon. Members might have an opportunity of discussing it, but I observe that there are only two hon. Elected Members present (*Messrs. Cannon and Bacchus*). I want to give the Council an opportunity of fully discussing this item as there are points hon. Members will like to bring forward.

Mr. CANNON: Are we likely to be here this afternoon? If so I may be permitted to ask that we take it then.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not want to adjourn the Council to this afternoon, the hottest part of the day, as I am not sure that we will have a better attendance than this morning. We may postpone consideration until to-morrow but we cannot postpone it indefinitely.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. C. Douglas-Jones): I may explain Government's position in this matter. It is always the desire of Government to meet the convenience of the hon. Elected Members as far as possible, but after all Government business must be transacted. Hon. Members themselves have referred to what they call the waste of time in the Heads of

Departments sitting in this Council. There may be something in that, but when the business of the Council is delayed it does to some extent dislocate the business of several Departments. Although Government are never anxious to hasten the business of the Council or to put it through with undue haste, at the same time hon. Members must bear in mind that Government have always to bear in mind the effect of this Council on the business of the Administration generally. I think, sir, we can always assume that if hon. Members had any particular points to raise in regard to these estimates, knowing that these estimates had been held over and would come up to-day—notice of that having already been given in the Press—they would have been present. At the same time one does always want to meet the convenience of hon. Members as far as possible. I think, sir, what we may do is to proceed with the estimate and if any hon. Members later on desires to refer to any particular item he may do so before the Estimates are finally disposed of.

Mr. CANNON: I have no desire to keep back the Council. I wish to withdraw my application that the item be taken later on. We may go on with it, but I desire to point out that the answers to my questions which were asked several months ago have only been laid to-day.

THE CHAIRMAN: As a matter of fact the Council have gone through all the items of the Estimates except those which have been put back for consideration. It is obvious that these items involve very important points and we are willing to defer them for further consideration. I do not think there is any further object in going on now with the estimates which have been considered as a whole except in regard to these various deferred items. It is very important that the Education Department estimates, as far as the grants to schools are concerned, should be discussed by the Council as a whole. I saw the hon. Member for New Amsterdam this morning and he expressed the desire that the Education estimates may be allowed to stand over if possible, because he intends to give notice of the introduction of the proposals in regard to this item which he is anxious to bring forward and will not be able to attend to-day. I told him that I cannot make him a promise

but the Council will be glad to hear his proposals which may have some far-reaching effect. I am therefore quite prepared to allow the Education estimates to stand over. We then come to the Agricultural estimates but are consequently bound to take cognisance of what the hon. Member for Georgetown North has said. Government are fully prepared and anxious that there should be a full discussion with regard to the Anna Regina and Bush Lot Settlements. As the hon. Member has only now received replies to his questions I think in the circumstances consideration may be deferred.

Mr. CANNON: I will endeavour to get those interested to attend either to-morrow or next week.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it certainly should be put back. That deals with education and agriculture so far. The only other estimates I am aware of requiring consideration are those in respect of District Administration for the Berbice District, which had been put back for the attendance of the hon. Member for Berbice River on account of questions too. He must get the answers to his questions and those items must be disposed of in any case as soon as possible. Then there are the estimates of the Colonial Secretariat, which I understand the Colonial Secretary desires should not be taken to-day. There is the Audit Office. I think we may take that.

PUBLIC WORKS—EXTRAORDINARY.

THE CHAIRMAN: The items of "Public Works—Extraordinary" were finished yesterday, but I understand the Director of Public Works has some item he wishes to insert.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): I beg to move that an item "Repairs to Electric Lighting Installation at Central Station, New Amsterdam, \$700" be inserted as item 31. There has been a report on the installation by the Government Electrical Engineer which was not at all satisfactory, and it is recommended that the installation be repaired at an estimated cost of \$700.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE CHAIRMAN (to Mr. Woolford

who had just arrived): Do you desire to bring your proposal forward now?

MR. WOOLFORD: I can be more or less very informal about it; I would have later to make a formal motion on it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you prefer to deal with it under the Estimates or as a separate motion?

MR. WOOLFORD: If I move a motion I should have to reply, and I could then amplify the arguments I wish to advance but which at the moment I may lose sight of.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the hon. Member that after having discussed the matter with the Director of Education it will not remain a mystery very long. It would be better if the hon. Member give notice of motion, and it would be accepted as such and discussed on Members' motion day next week.

MR. WOOLFORD: I have not yet framed the motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: That will give you time to do that. I do not think we need hold up the Education estimates for 1933.

MR. WOOLFORD: No, Your Excellency.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we may take the Education estimates now.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Item 2—Elementary Education—Grants to Schools, \$321,500.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does any hon. Member wish to say anything on the item? He can do so now, if not I would ask the hon. Director of Education to make a statement as to what Government propose to do with regard to the reduction of the maintenance grant.

Major BAIN GRAY (Director of Education): The principal point in connection with this item is set out on the opposite page. Hon. Members will remember that in the 1930 Estimates a reduction of approximately \$30,000 was made in the grants to primary schools. That was an arbitrary economy—simply a round figure taken and it had to be carried

out. No considerable reduction on education expenditure can be carried out without reducing the staff. Ninety per cent. of the education expenditure goes to the teaching staff, and the result of that reduction was that the teaching staff of the schools had to be very considerably reduced by, I think, 272 teachers when the retrenchment was completed. During 1930, 1931 and the part of 1932 just completed we have been carrying on with this reduced staff in the schools, while in the meantime the number of children attending the schools has been steadily increasing. While it has been possible just to carry on during these years, we have now reached the point where it is essential that additional teachers should be appointed. The number really required is in the neighbourhood of 90. Such an expenditure is quite beyond our capacity, and we have cut that number down to 10 assistant teachers and 40 pupil teachers. The Government have taken the view that the total expenditure under this head cannot be increased and therefore the expenditure to provide for these teachers has to be met within the vote. The only source of expenditure which can bear all or a very substantial part of it is the expenditure on maintenance—a head which provides for the maintenance of buildings and equipment and furniture in the schools. The Government have with some reluctance come to the conclusion that it is necessary to reduce that vote by approximately one-half of the expenditure, \$7,500. Even the diversion of this sum will not meet all the requirements in the way of teachers but will help us to provide teachers for the schools where they are most needed. The maintenance grant paid to the Churches for the school buildings will be ended practically, except that we will continue to pay the grant and will provide a small grant for the cleaning of the larger schools in town which have to pay a regular janitor.

The decision of Government, as contained in this note to the vote, was conveyed to the Governing Bodies of the schools as soon as it was arrived at not long ago in connection with the annual estimates, and the Governing Bodies have made representations direct to the Government and the Education Committee who in general have supported the recommendations. In view, however, of the very short notice that has been given to the Govern-

ing Bodies, it is necessary to diminish the cut, as it were, to make it less severe than had been originally contemplated. One element in the discussion of the subject is this: For the past two years the Governing Bodies have been working on an approved programme. The Governing Bodies and the Department have agreed as to which buildings are to be repaired and which schools are to be supplied with new furniture, etc. A very strong point was made by the Governing Bodies to the effect that under that system certain schools which have waited their turn have been put on the programme for 1933 and that during 1931 and 1932 the grants they earned had been used for the benefit of others schools. Government realise that the notice has been short and a hardship may be inflicted on particular schools, and to meet that difficulty as far as possible Government are now prepared to increase the vote by the sum of \$5,000 which will be allotted to the denominations after an agreement with the Department for the particular purpose that they put up. They would be expected to put up a very strongly supported request for the needs of the particular schools in regard to buildings. These proposals will be examined by the Department and when agreed upon grants will be made to them out of this \$5,000. I move that this item be increased by \$5,000, thus making it \$326,500.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it should be further explained before I put it to the vote that this proposed increase in the vote is beyond what was approved by the Secretary of State as regards this particular item. I think a case has been made out for the increase. It is obvious that the increase in teachers is necessary, but at the same time the position must be realised that we cannot continue increasing the number of teachers in the schools and the maintenance of buildings without increasing the Education Vote. The time has now been reached when we have to consider what proportion of assistance can be rendered to the country with regard to the education of the children, and whether Government are under an obligation both to provide teachers whenever people want a school and also to provide and maintain the building. In the past the condi-

tion of supplying teachers was that a building was put up by the Missions who originally started the schools. A great deal is owed by this country to these Missions. Immediately the school was started Government undertook the payment of the teachers. Government now find themselves faced not only with the provision of all the teachers whenever required, but also with the maintenance of those schools which are erected by the Missions and which in some cases are used not only as schools but for other purposes. I will not labour that point as the Missions have done a great deal in regard to the provision of buildings. It is felt that in view of the Colony's financial position Government are not in a position to continue meeting all demands in regard to education, and irrespective of any other points we know that the Missions cannot pay much more. I am not suggesting that the Missions are not doing their duty in the matter; I think they are doing as much as they possibly can. They are not getting any funds at the present time. It is obvious from the financial state of the country that local subscriptions cannot be as much as in the past, and therefore it follows that the Missions are not able to meet their liabilities or such liabilities as they had previously undertaken in the matter. However, in most countries in the world it is a condition in regard to a new school that the people themselves should provide the building and maintain the school or undertake something in connection with the school. We are rather drifting into the position where Government provide everything in respect of every school, not only the teachers but also the building. It is therefore felt this year that it must be pointed out to the schools that there must be some counter-balancing saving to meet the increased cost of teachers. It is quite obvious that teachers are needed as more children are going to school.

Another point is that there is a large class of people in the Colony who have been trained to become school-teachers. I am afraid there are too many of them, but still I do not want to close the door altogether. I want to give them a chance of occupation where there is an opening for them. There is an opening for them and there is every need for them. I think these young men and women should have a

chance of recruitment, not merely because they are trained to be teachers and want to come in, not because it is that profession they have chosen, but because there is actual need for more teachers. Those men and women are the people who have been trained for the purpose of becoming teachers and therefore they should be given occupation fit for them and be paid for the work they are made to do. That is reasonable in view of the fact that we are short of teachers and have more pupils. The schools in the Colony have far more pupils than in most parts of the world and the classes are far larger than the numbers allotted by the Education Code in this country.

We have to provide teachers, but where is the money to come from? I think a case can be made out to show that an excess vote may be allowed under this vote. We have effected savings on the Estimates elsewhere which would cover this increase. The reason for putting it is not because we are departing from the policy indicated to the Missions, but because by peremptorily cutting down the grant, as the Director of Education has pointed out, it interfered with the programme the Missions undertook with regard to the repair of their buildings.

I think the Missions should be informed by the Director of Education, and in no uncertain terms, that Government cannot go on indefinitely meeting a bill of this kind. A sum has been provided this year in order to help them to finish the work and to enable them to complete their programme in respect of the schools which they have started to put in a better condition. This sum that has been put in for that purpose is less than the amount which was usually provided, and I understand from the Director of Education it would meet the urgent needs of the Missions. At the same time I would suggest that it is a matter in which the Council should counsel the Government, and there is every reason why the Education estimates should be fully debated in this Council, but it is essential that the Council should consider what we are going to do in respect of education. We have not the required number of teachers in the schools. The buildings are not as good as they should be. We have not got the money to put everything right and the time has

come when we have to consider how that money is to be provided in respect of education, whether it is to come out of the Budget. I know that some Members of the Council consider the Education Vote is in excess of what it should be. I do not hold that view. I consider that education is one of the most important items on the Estimates, but at the same time we cannot always go on increasing the vote irrespective of the financial position of the Colony. It is true that there have been cuts, as the Director of Education has said, but those cuts are now being turned into relief granted to the extent of the cuts and every year we are getting back to the point where we considered the amount spent on education was too great. I do not think we will ever escape heavy expenditure on education, and increasing expenditure, but at the same time we have to consider the basis on which we will give assistance to the Missions and the basis on which Government should contribute, whenever there are demands for a school—whether we should provide a school building and teachers or everything or have some basis of self-help on the part of the villages themselves. I do not suggest that the subject be debated to-day because the hon. Member for New Amsterdam has a proposal to put forward with regard to which the hon. Members will be afforded ample opportunity for debate on the motion which will be put before the Council. I think the Council will be prepared to give the increase this year, on the distinct understanding that it is put in to enable the Missions to pass through this period between being deprived of the grant for maintenance and of assistance towards the schools for which they are responsible.

Mr. CANNON: I should like to say that I am one of those who think the amount spent on education is far in excess of what we can afford, and I have no hesitation in saying so. I have no desire to make the individuals who are likely to benefit by this vote suffer, but I would ask Government whether it is not possible that the amount might be paid out of the gift that we have been given to keep Government buildings in order, or whether there is no vote elsewhere from which this sum can be taken.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the one need

is as great as the other. We do not accept the position that these schools are Government buildings.

Mr. CANNON: Pardon me, I do not wish to convey that impression. What I think is this. An amount has been offered to the country for repairs to Government buildings. The person charged with administering that vote may find it convenient to spare \$5,000 for this purpose and so save the general taxpayer from having to pay that amount. That is the view I take of it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not suggest that course to the Council because this money has been given for repairs to Gov-

ernment buildings. It has been given for the relief of unemployment generally. These small village schools will not relieve unemployment with an expenditure of \$5,000 to the full extent as if the amount has been spent out of the original grant. I think we may be able to put it in subject to the approval of the Secretary of State. It means that it is coming out of the assistance we are getting.

Major BAIN GRAY: I move that this item be increased to \$326,500.

Question put, and agreed to.

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