

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 8th September, 1932.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Hon. C. DOUGLAS-JONES, C.M.G., the Officer Administering the Government, President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Major W. Bain Gray, M.A., Ph.D. (Edin.), B. Litt. (Oxon), (Acting).

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. F. J. J. F. McDowell (Acting).

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

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

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

The Hon. E. F. Fredericks, LL.B. (Essequibo River).

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

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

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

The Hon. E. F. McDavid, Colonial Treasurer (Acting).

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

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

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

The Hon. W. Francis, F.I.C., F.C.S., Government Analyst.

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

The Hon. N. Cannon (Georgetown North).

The Hon. A. V. Crane, LL.B. (Lond.) (Demerara River),

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. C. Farrar (Nominated Unofficial Member).

MINUTES.

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

ORDER OF THE DAY.

THE SEWERAGE SCHEME.

The Council resumed discussion of the following motion by the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Cannon):—

Whereas the cost of the Georgetown Sewerage Scheme is greatly in excess of the original estimate of expenditure; and

Whereas the Georgetown Town Council and the ratepayers of Georgetown never contemplated that the sewerage scheme would cost practically five million dollars when they accepted liability for eighty per cent. of the expenditure, the Government to pay the remaining twenty per cent.; and

Whereas the imposition of excessive sewerage rates in Georgetown has created disastrous economic conditions in the City which have reacted adversely on the Colony as a whole; and

Whereas representations for a re-allocation of the cost of the scheme have been made by the Georgetown Town Council to Government and the Secretary of State for the Colonies continuously since 1927; and

Whereas in the opinion of this Council it is imperative in the interests of all classes in the community to arrive at an immediate, satisfactory settlement of this question of liability as between Government and the Georgetown Town Council; and

Whereas the Government's proposition of re-allocation of costs on a "fifty-fifty" basis will probably lead to further disputes and delay and will not afford the necessary measure of relief to property-owners in Georgetown; and

Whereas it is desirable in the opinion of this Council to deal with the cost of the scheme as a "Colonial Question" that is, to make the whole cost a charge on the general revenues of the Colony:

Be it Resolved,—That Government be requested to introduce legislation without delay for the purpose of making the whole cost of the Georgetown Sewerage Scheme a charge on the general revenues of the Colony as from January 1, 1933: and

Be it further Resolved,—That a separate and special landing or bill of entry tax be imposed as from January 1, 1933, at a rate calculated annually to provide the sum required for the Government's annual commitments in respect of the scheme: and

Be it further Resolved,—That for the purpose of a settlement in respect of the year 1932 the Georgetown Town Council be requested to pay to Government the difference between the amount collected by the existing three per cent. bill of entry tax and the total sum required to defray interest charges for this year: and

Be it further Resolved,—That a copy of this resolution be telegraphed forthwith to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Mr. FREDERICKS: I am supporting the motion particularly because I believe the sewerage question is not yet settled satisfactorily and that it is not beyond the means of expediency that a solution better than 50-50 can be arrived at. The 50-50 basis has a defect. It might be convenient for figures but it is not reasonable for the consideration of the whole subject. That basis relates to the present but there is a past to which it does not relate. I am heartily in accord with those Members who say that even if it is to be 50-50 it should be retrospective. I hate the sewerage question notwithstanding the fact that I have seen the good resulting from it so far as the City of Georgetown is concerned. It is a question I have never taken seriously to my mind. That is because there have been such egregious blunders that one pauses and dismisses it from thought so as to be at peace with one's self. From the moment it was ascertained that the sewerage cost had exceeded what the people of Georgetown had been told it would cost the duty was cast upon somebody to rid the community of that excess. No steps have been taken to relieve the community of that excess and the steps now being taken are inadequate. I support the motion with the view that there might be found something more reasonable for the final settlement of the question.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Government are aware of my views on this very vexed question. I have in and out of season supported the idea that it should be made a Colonial Question. I cannot understand the attitude of some of the country dis-

tricts in not wanting to bear a portion of the cost of the scheme. When drainage and irrigation schemes for the benefit of the country districts are brought forward the people of Georgetown bear their share of the cost. Members of this Council have always willingly voted for the good of the Colony as a whole and not for a particular part of it. Leaving that out of the argument to my mind the question is: Can the people pay? One has only to drive around the City or, better still, to walk around it and see the number of empty houses and the condition of many occupied houses the owners of which are waiting until something is done to help them before they put a coat of paint on them or do much needed improvements. I am not accusing Government of any lack of sympathy with the ratepayers and tenants in Georgetown. I know Government has the greatest sympathy for them and is doing all it can from its point of view, but I plead with Your Excellency that the burden of the scheme be placed on the Colony as a whole. It is going to react on the big landed interests in the country districts, on the coastlands and on the riverlands. The attitude of Government and some of the Nominated Unofficial Members is unwise and shortsighted. I know it is immaterial to Your Excellency personally whether the Colony as a whole or Georgetown pays for this scheme. Your Excellency has no ulterior motives whatever and Government should yield to the wishes of the majority of the people of the Colony. The Colony as a whole will stand to lose if the people of Georgetown or half of them are ruined.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I beg to move the following amendment to the motion:—

That this Council is of opinion that the final re-allocation of costs of the Georgetown Sewerage Scheme should be made forthwith on the basis of the distribution of the said costs between the Government and the Municipality in equal shares, the said costs to include the whole sum of money paid by the Government and the Municipality as and for interest from the commencement of the scheme up to the date of final adjustment and that the Georgetown Town Council be given credit for the whole sum paid to Government by that Council as and for interest during the said period.

And this Council respectfully requests His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government to communicate the decision of this motion to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies with the expression of its opinion that this mode of settlement should be authorised immediately.

The amendment itself, sir, is not really in conflict with the motion, and it would be possible for Members who feel so disposed to vote for the motion as well as for the amendment. During the debate it has occurred that Members hold different views, and while I myself am in favour of the motion I am equally in favour of the amendment. I am in a difficult position in relation to my constituents. I have not heard directly from them or been told in any way that I should oppose the motion, but I gather from what has been said by the hon. Mr. Farrar that the Berbice Chamber of Commerce arrived at such a decision. I have also noticed that in the Press. I cannot overlook the fact that my colleague, the hon. Member for Berbice River, has seconded the motion, and I am unaware at the moment of the opinion of the hon. Member, who is absent to-day. My view is this. The subject is wide enough for one to be persuaded to take his own opinion even if that opinion differs from that of his constituents. I do so on the ground that I can see that the day is not far distant when the town of New Amsterdam will have to be sewered, and I am paving the way, I hope, for the same consideration being shown to the town of New Amsterdam (Laughter). I am prepared to anticipate any objection of my constituents by some such excuse. I also anticipate that before I submit myself for re-election there the town will commence to be sewered (Laughter). I am not going to speak on the motion itself, but I would like to ask the hon. Mr. Seaford to draw a distinction between the position of the Life Assurance Companies and the Fire Insurance Companies. The Fire Insurance Companies are dependent for the maintenance of their incomes on the existence of properties, upon which they may or may not hold mortgages but certainly in respect of which they have issued fire policies against the risks. I cannot conceive that there is not any divergence of interest between the Insurance Company and the individual. My opinion is that the owner of property should have his views respected before the mortgagee who, after all, only holds a hypothec upon it. Even assuming that different views can be taken, I cannot conceive that there is any other view in the mind of the Insurance Company than the protection of the capital invested. The owner of property says in effect to the Insurance Company

“With the incumbrance in the way of mortgage and the further incumbrances in the shape of taxes and special rate for sewerage I will be unable to meet your interest and therefore ask you to support the view that the entire cost of the scheme be made a Colonial Question.” It seems to me that the Insurance Companies really reflect the opinions of the individuals who own property. I rather fancy that the hon. Member was referring to the Demerara Mutual Life Assurance Company. The existence of that Company depends upon the maintenance of life and not the maintenance of property.

Mr. SEAFORD: I drew a distinction between the two and said I quite appreciated that Fire Insurance Companies were naturally doing the best for themselves and were perfectly right in doing so.

Mr. WOOLFORD: There appears to me to be a lack of unanimity between the opinion arrived at by the Fire Insurance Companies against that of the Life Assurance Companies and I cannot see that their interests should be allowed to clash. My object is not to have any conflict—Members have their own opinion—but to move the amendment, and I hope it will be supported. I ask that in putting the motion and the amendment to the Council the operative portions be put separately. If it is going to be a separate motion that suggestion is not tenable.

THE PRESIDENT: The procedure is that unless the mover of the motion withdraws his motion in favour of the amendment the original motion is put. If that is carried all amendments fall to the ground. If the motion is not carried the amendment is then put as a substantive motion. I want to consider the amendment with the hon. Member who has moved it and other Members. I adjourn the Council for a quarter of an hour to consider the wording of it.

The Council adjourned accordingly.

Mr. WOOLFORD (on the Council resuming): With your permission, sir, I beg leave to withdraw the amendment and to move another in its stead. I also ask that a statement be made by Your Excellency as to what the relative effect of the motion might be and the apparent difference be-

tween the Council and Government in arriving at the method. The new amendment will now read :—

That this Council is of opinion that the final re-allocation of costs of the Georgetown Sewerage Scheme should be made forthwith on the basis of the distribution of the said costs between the Government and the Municipality in equal shares and that the Georgetown Town Council be given credit for any sum paid by that Council to Government in excess of an equal contribution as and for interest from the commencement of the Scheme up to and including 31st December, 1931.

And this Council respectfully requests His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government to communicate a copy of this motion to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies with the expression of its opinion that this mode of settlement should be authorised immediately.

THE PRESIDENT: This amendment gives an opportunity for discussion and a decision as to the exact method of arriving at the excess, and I will ask the hon. Colonial Secretary to read figures of two methods and the result of those two methods. Those calculations will be laid on the table so that Members could see them at their leisure. The difference between the two methods is very small and it is simply a question as to which method should be adopted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Major Bain Gray): The first method, which may be described as the Town Council method, is as follows:—

Town Council's proposal modified to allow credit for amount paid by them for interest to end of 1931, over the whole period of the loan.

Capital cost of Scheme=	
approximately	... \$ 5,000,000
Interest paid by Town Council to 31st December, 1931 (excluding interest on overdue account)	... \$1,013,726
Total interest charges applicable to Schemes (Add one-quarter to above) ...	1,267,158
	<u>\$ 6,267,158</u>

Assuming interest had been capitalised, annual Loan charges at 5% interest and 1% Sinking Fund on above would be ... \$ 376,029

Town Council's proportion at 50% 188,014

The Town Council are claiming refund of the total sum paid by them for interest to 31st

December, 1931, i.e., \$1,013,726 plus \$33,447.32 for overdue interest charges = \$1,047,173. Assume that credit is allowed the Council in respect of this payment as being a Capital contribution involving annual Interest and Sinking Fund charges on the same basis as the Loan. Annual charges at 6% in respect of this sum = ... \$ 62,830 which would reduce the Council's proportion from \$188,014 to 125,184 Under present arrangements, i.e., 50-50 basis from 1932, Town Council pays per annum ... 150,000 so that saving to Council would approximately be \$25,000 per annum over the whole period.

The other proposal, which may be described as the Government method of calculation, is as follows:—

Alternative proposal to allow credit to Town Council for difference between contributions due from them during 1923-1931 on 50-50 basis and amounts actually paid.

Interest charges on accounts rendered to Town Council during 1923-1931—V. Statement in M.P. 514/32, i.e., on 80-20 basis	... \$ 1,013,726
Interest charges on 50-50 basis =	50
$\frac{80}{80}$ of above =	= 633,578
Difference in favour of Town Council if 50-50 basis made retrospective =	380,148
Assume that credit is allowed for this amount as a capital contribution involving Interest and Sinking Fund charges on the same basis as the Loan.	
Annual charges at 6% on \$380,148 =	22,808
so that the saving to the Council would approximately be \$23,000 per annum over the whole period.	

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I beg to second the amendment. The first method suggested by the Colonial Secretary is one that would perhaps meet with the approval of the Council. Perhaps it would be better if the position is made a bit clearer by making the statement that the idea is that the Council should not be refunded 30 per cent. of what they have paid, but that the actual amount of the cost of the scheme in the first instance should be arrived at and that amount be divided between Government and the Town Council and any amount paid in excess by the Town Council should be refunded to them. By that I mean that the mere method of refunding to the Town Council of 30 per cent. of what they have paid will not be at all equitable.

Mr. CRANE: I understand that there has not been time enough to enable Govern-

ment to have the statement typewritten and circulated among Members. I would prefer to have it before me in considering what my attitude should be on the amendment as worded. I understand the Colonial Secretary to say that under the present basis certain annual commitments amounted to \$188,000. I wanted to find out what that was. Then on the 50-50 basis \$150,000 per annum, then on credit being given \$125,000 per annum. I would like to know in what position the Council would have stood when its liability was \$188,000.

THE PRESIDENT: With the permission of the Council the Treasurer will explain the matter further.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): The cost of the scheme at present is approximately \$5,000,000. What the hon. Member wants is that the whole of the interest paid both by the Town Council and Government should be added to the cost of the scheme and capitalised. The total interest charge to the end of 1931 is \$1,267,158. Adding that on to the cost of the scheme makes the total \$6,267,158. If that is taken to be the capital cost of the scheme then the total interest and sinking fund charge would be \$376,029 of which the Town Council's proportion would be \$188,014. The hon. Member also claims that the Town Council are entitled to be given credit for the total sum of money they have paid as interest. That total sum is \$1,047,173. To give the Council credit for this sum you have got to assume an annual charge at the same ratio, namely, 5 per cent. interest and 1 per cent. sinking fund. That annual charge is \$62,830; therefore Government would have to give credit against the \$188,014 for \$62,830, which leaves the Town Council's share at \$125,184. In order to find out what gain will accrue to the Town Council from adopting a retrospective basis one must subtract the \$125,184 from the charge to the Town Council (at present \$150,000), so that it is obvious that \$25,000 is the saving to the Town Council through adopting the retrospective method. The other method of making the calculation is to say that the Town Council have paid \$1,013,726 on the 80-20 basis, but they should have paid on the 50-50 basis. The sum they should have paid on the 50-50 basis is

\$633,578, therefore the sum due to them is \$380,148. If that credit is spread over the same period of years the Council would be allowed 6 per cent. thereon which amounts to \$22,808, or approximately \$23,000; so the difference between the two schemes is approximately \$2,000.

Mr. CRANE: What I gathered from discussions we have had outside the Council is that Government is not desirous of taking advantage of the benefit of the annual difference of \$2,000. If Government gives us that assurance it would serve our purpose to a very great extent in supporting the amendment. My view is not the method as long as we arrive at a satisfactory solution of this matter and the Town Council gets a re-adjustment from the beginning of 50 per cent. and also gets credit for the amount paid. If Government is willing to give the benefit of the \$2,000 a year to the ratepayers I am going to support the amendment.

THE PRESIDENT: The position as regards the two methods is that Government will submit them for the consideration of the Secretary of State, who has, after all, to decide whether Government can accept a further liability whether it be \$23,000 or \$25,000. I think he will give the ratepayers the full advantage of the \$25,000.

Mr. CANNON: I wish, sir, to refer to a remark made by my esteemed friend the Colonial Secretary yesterday before the Council adjourned. I do not think he meant to be at all sarcastic when he suggested that if at any time a new Order of decoration was introduced in the British list I might be afforded one of them. I do not think he meant it sarcastically, but it affords me the opportunity of saying that I am not likely to accept it if even I was offered it. I am not disposed to give up my manhood even for an O.B.E. I wish to say that "common-garden" Nelson Cannon is good enough for me. I have served the people here for 23 years, I think faithfully, and I look upon it as an insult to be offered any such recognition. I do not agree with what the Colonial Secretary said yesterday when he made the statement that an item once appearing in the revenue could not possibly be earmarked for any particular scheme. That is wrong and is not what we have been

accustomed to. We have had various accounts, such as the Immigration Fund, the Harbour Board and others, that have been earmarked for their respective purposes until the new Administration took charge of them. It is quite a simple matter to levy a tax of 4 per cent. to defray this extraordinary expenditure, which should be reduced from year to year as the country restores a little bit of its prosperity. It is quite competent for this Council to deal with funds in that way. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farrar, told us yesterday that he represented the responsible people of Berbice.

Mr. FARRAR: I rise to a point of correction. I said I had the opportunity of hearing the opinions of the responsible people of New Amsterdam.

Mr. CANNON: Perhaps I misinterpreted what the hon. Member intended, in which case I can only say I am sorry; but I feel that the Constitution, if in no other form, might be amended to give the people of Berbice another representative in the person of the Nominated Member. I cannot understand the wisdom of those responsible people in Berbice, because the hon. Member for New Amsterdam told us this morning he hopes that at no distant date the town of New Amsterdam will be severed. It may be that New Amsterdam is a wealthy town and there will be no necessity to ask this Council or Government to contribute any portion of its cost, and therefore there will be no necessity for Berbice or the people in that County to come to this Council and ask for any assistance. Until that time arrives there is no necessity for me to comment any further upon it. I think it comes with very bad grace from any Member of the County of Berbice to question the settlement of the sewerage impasse. The time is going to come when they are going to regret it. They will find opposition in this Council, may be without success, but that opposition will be there, and very rightly too, when they want their wharf extended or something done to their hospital. It must be expected that that opposition is bound to follow. Possibly it will not affect them until it reaches that stage. There are some of us who cannot see further than our nose or until it affects our pockets.

The Council adjourned for the luncheon recess.

Mr. CANNON (resuming): If not by words by inference I gather that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farrar, represents the people of Berbice. That being so I might reasonably be expected to ask the hon. Mr. Seaford what part of this beautiful country does he represent. He may reply that he represents those merchants who want this matter settled on a 50-50 basis. He has given this House no indication as to whom he represents. I was somewhat astonished yesterday at the astounding statement that hon. Member made in his opening remarks on the motion. It would perhaps be well to read the letter which led up to my statement and I presume is responsible for his remarks. The letter is dated 12th February and reads:—

Dear Sir,—My Directors have had under consideration your letter of 5th instant asking their opinion on the suggestion put forward by you, adopted by a meeting of ratepayers assembled in the Town Hall and also approved by the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, that the liability for Sewerage, Main Drainage and House Connections, should be made a Colonial question and should be met by a 4 per cent. landing tax on all goods landed in Georgetown.

I am instructed to reply that my Directors have, by a majority, endorsed the suggestion, feeling convinced that that is the only practical solution to the question.

This Society in previous years did not have to face to such an extent unpaid interest on mortgages, as at present, while repayments of instalments on account of mortgages have also been considerably reduced. This can only be attributed to inability to pay, and the Society is rather diffident about foreclosing mortgages on account of the obvious fact that there are no buyers, and no one can deny that this is largely due to the increased imposts on property in Georgetown, present and threatened, resulting from the Sewerage question.

The amount invested by this Society in mortgages in Georgetown at 31st December last approximates \$1,000,000.

My Board sincerely hopes that your suggestion will find favour with and be accepted by Government.

(Sgd.) GEO. J. EVELYN,
Secretary.

I say it was an astounding statement because I gathered that at the time that letter was written the hon. Member was a Director of the Society and must have known of it. I am of opinion that the only member of his Board who opposed that letter being sent to me is also the Nominated Member of this Council. That is the reason why I feel so hurt. That is

the only kind of assistance that the Elected Members can depend on from that type of Members in this Assembly.

Mr. SEAFORD : To a point of correction. The supposition about a Nominated Member is not correct. After that letter had been sent the Board unanimously decided in favour of a 50-50 allocation. It was not known at the time that that letter had been sent.

Mr. CANNON : I suppose the hon. Member has been authorised to make that statement. Assuming that he is so authorised, I ask whether there was not ample time since the 12th February for the Society to withdraw that letter, or, at any rate, write and say they had since changed their minds and their position then was for the allocation of 50-50. For fear that there should be any misunderstanding about it I shall also refer to the letters by the other bodies. I should have done so in my opening remarks in moving the motion, but I was fighting against time and wanted to meet the wishes of the seconder of the motion, because it was rather important that I should secure his co-operation. I would have craved the indulgence of the House to read the correspondence but I do not want to labour the point. All the correspondence is here. It has been in Government's possession and also in the hands of the Colonial Office. The basis of settlement proposed in the motion has been acquiesced in by all the big corporations and endorsed by two public meetings, all the religious denominations and the Labour Union. That is the position and I cannot understand the hon. Member when he takes up that position.

I am now brought to the question of the 4 per cent. bill of entry tax as being the best and most equitable means of settling this sewerage impasse. I visited the Colonial Office at the request of certain merchants and I had the pleasure of an interview with the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies. I was also very pleased to be able to secure the services of one of the principals of the leading house in the Colony—Sir Alfred Sherlock. He attended the conference with me and I am pleased to tell the Council that Sir Alfred agreed with me that the best course of settling this matter was by means of

its being made a Colonial Question. He made one little proviso: that machinery should not come under the tax because it would hamper the sugar industry. Willing as I have always been in this House to support sugar, I willingly acceded to Sir Alfred's view on that point. I agreed that we should recommend to Government that the tax should be collectable on everything save and except sugar machinery. Sir Alfred Sherlock has almost the controlling interest of Water Street, and I presume that when he spoke he spoke for Water Street, therefore I am at a loss to be told by the hon. Member that it is not the wish of Water Street that the matter should be settled in that way.

That brings me to the proposition of 50-50. That proposition has been put up to the Municipality in the form of a letter purporting to have been received from the Secretary of State that that is the form in which this matter should be settled. The hon. Member for Demerara River was not quite clear on the point and I promised him to say exactly what transpired. When the conference was arranged and we met I took up what I may call a very reasonable attitude and submitted a proposition that the Imperial Government should make us a gift of the \$5,000,000, the supposed cost of the scheme. From what I was able to gather was happening in Parliament and certain conversations I had with Members of that House, I saw at once that there was not much use pursuing that line of action, at any rate for the present. I, however, put it forward. I thought it was well to have it there and withdraw it rather than not have it at all. Realising that it was no use pursuing that aspect I asked to be permitted not to pursue that suggestion any further. The Under Secretary of State said as things stand at present he did not think there was much chance of success on those lines. I then suggested that the Colonial question be adopted. We discussed that at great length and I pointed out that it was the only reasonable way that the matter could be settled. I went on to point out that an alternative proposal was that the Municipality should be responsible for the entire duty. I made it quite clear that the people of Georgetown had no intention to evade their responsibility or that it should be thought that they wanted

to do anything that was not right but that the mode in which it was suggested that the tax should be paid was quite outside the people's ability to pay. I said if that were done it would mean that the Municipality would have to get Government to pass the necessary legislation to enable us to collect the amount, and that it was preferable that Government should do it as they had the machinery for its collection.

I also put up the proposition of 50-50 that has been suggested by Government. I pointed out how it would give no relief to the people and if accepted the sewerage rate would only be increased $\frac{1}{3}$ of 1 per cent. this year and all succeeding years. The figures showed that it would be actually .36 per cent. That is no relief to afford the people of Georgetown in connection with this scheme. I pointed out that even if that were done the Municipality would be forced to go back to Government and accept the 50-50 basis but would require the necessary legislation to levy that money. We went on to discuss the ability of the people to pay. To my great surprise and astonishment the Governor told the conference that the people could afford to pay. We got to grips over that and I had to deny it. I do not think there is a single Member around this table who would have the audacity or the effrontery to get up and say that the people can afford to pay. I challenge any Member to get up and say that is not the true position. That seemed to bring our labours practically to an end. The hon. Member for Demerara River wanted to know what were the determining results of that conference. The determining results were that I was told that the matter would be submitted to the Secretary of State—who was otherwise engaged, as he always is when anybody seeks an interview with him—and the Lords High Executioners of the Treasury. I asked when I could expect an answer and they said the wheels of Government work very slowly. I said I appreciated that and if it were likely to be shortly I would wait over, but they could not give me any promise when it was likely to be. I then asked if they would be good enough to supply a reply to me through the Government of British Guiana. That was agreed to. I told them I was leaving the next day. I took a fast boat and as soon as I got to New York I got a

telegram that the Secretary of State had agreed to 50-50. It was such a rapid despatch. On this occasion the wheels were well greased and they worked very rapidly. When I returned here I notified Your Excellency and received a similar document to the one the Municipality received stating that it had been suggested that the settlement should be 50-50.

There has been to-day an amendment to my motion. I am going to appeal to you, sir, not to accept that amendment but to accept the motion. I am appealing to you because I honestly and sincerely believe that the amendment, if accepted, is not going to solve the question. You have been six weary years at it and you will be another six years trying to give effect to this amendment. It is all very well for the Council to pass a resolution for the 50-50, but it is not the last point of resistance. Unless Government are prepared to give this House an undertaking to consider any reasonable legislation submitted by the Town Council for the method of collecting this 50-50 we shall be only wasting time by accepting the amendment. It is not going to work and will be only a slow process of killing the people of Georgetown. Throw the onus on the British Government and the Secretary of State who say this matter must be settled on a 50-50 basis and the wishes of the people denied. Government with the Nominated Unofficial Members have opposed the motion and I do not see the good of wasting any more time and energy. All I wish to say is that my words will be remembered when the time comes: that it is impossible to arrive at a solution in any other way than as suggested in the motion. I have done my duty and I am finished. I heard one Nominated Member say that the people who attend public meetings are not representative. I do not think he actually said that public demonstrations are preferable, but if I could only get the slightest indication that that is what Government want you can have a quiver full of them. My matter remains unheard in the Law Courts. If this 50-50 is persisted in and the Municipality are forced to levy on any ratepayer I shall be in duty bound to move the law in that direction. I have not done so at the present moment for the simple reason that the gentleman who was assigned to take the case happens to be

the defendant in the matter and I did not see how the defendant in the matter could act as judge. I appreciate the position and have done nothing to aggravate the situation, but if I am driven to it I shall have no alternative. I mention that because I do not want it to be said that I have done anything to incite the people. I desire to have it on record that I have done everything in my power to prevent the matter taking the legal turn it is bound to take unless Government take a reasonable view of it. For the last time I appeal to Your Excellency to accept the motion. I presume that every Elected Member present will support it. Let it go to the Secretary of State and be discussed with the Governor while he is still there. Let the Governor see that the very men whom he told the Under Secretary of State were opposed to the matter being made a Colonial Question have supported the motion. The hon. Member for Berbice River has come to his senses and seconded it. That is why I was anxious yesterday to give him an opportunity to second it, I appeal to my brother Electives to vote solidly for the motion and leave it to the Secretary of State to decide.

THE PRESIDENT: I think we are approaching the solution or the conclusion of a matter which has been engaging the attention of Government and the Town Council and the people of the Colony for six years. It is quite impossible for Government to accept the motion as proposed because in the opinion of Government, and I think in the opinion of a great many people in the Colony, it would not be an equitable one in that the people of the Colony will be expected to pay for the house connections of property-owners in Georgetown. That is what it amounts to. I need not labour the point. We have an amendment to the motion which Government can accept because it leaves the door open for further investigation on the particular point that has been stressed here, that the allocation on an equal basis should be regarded as including the cost of the whole scheme from the commencement of its operations. That Government is prepared to recommend to the Secretary of State who will have to decide whether the Colony as a whole can bear the extra payment each year which will amount to between

\$23,000 and \$25,000. The hon. Member, I take it, is not prepared to withdraw his motion (Mr. Cannon—No, sir). I shall have to put the motion and if it is negatived it will fall to the ground and the amendment will be put. I proceed to put the motion as moved and seconded.

The Council divided on the motion and voted:—

Ayes—Messrs. De Aguiar, Gonsalves, Crane, Cannon, Woolford, Fredericks and Brassington—7.

Noes—Messrs. Farrar, Seaford, Anderson, Francis, Dr. De Freitas, Mullin, Wood, McDavid, Major Craig, Austin, D'Andrade, Professor Dash, Dias, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—15.

The Council divided on the amendment and voted:—

Ayes—Messrs. Farrar, Seaford, Anderson, De Aguiar, Woolford, Francis, Dr. De Freitas, Mullin, Wood, McDavid, Major Craig, Austin, D'Andrade, Professor Dash, Dias, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—17.

Noes—Messrs. Gonsalves, Cannon and Brassington—3.

Did not vote—Messrs. Crane and Fredericks—2.

MR. CANNON: Permit me, sir, to ask whether it is your intention to give effect to the last paragraph of my motion and telegraph the Secretary of State that the Elected Members present are unanimous on the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: I shall inform the Secretary of State that the Elected Members present were unanimous, but I do not feel justified in wasting public money in telegraphing it. A despatch will reach the Secretary of State in a couple of weeks.

MR. CANNON: I can only do my duty in asking you. I have done my duty in making the request.

THE MOTOR BILL.

THE PRESIDENT: I propose to adjourn the Council until Tuesday next week. By that time we will be able to go on with

the Motor Bill which Government and, I know, members of the public are anxious should be disposed of.

Mr. WOOLFORD: A Bill defeated cannot be re-introduced in the same session. The question is whether this is the same session or not. If the Council is adjourned *sine die* it is possible to proceed with the Bill, but I do not think you can adjourn until Tuesday and call it a new session.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. McDowell): What hon. Members wanted to do was not to object to the Bill altogether but to be assured that all the

recommendations of the Committee had been put in. The ordinary notice is generally waived when the motion is for the Bill to be read the second time.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think that the fact that we adjourn *sine die* or fix a day next week makes any difference. We do not start our new session until the Council is prorogued. This is a meeting of the Council and not a session. To allay any doubt I will adjourn the Council *sine die*.

The Council accordingly adjourned *sine die*.