

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL****THURSDAY, 20th MARCH, 1947.**

The Council met at 2.30 p.m., His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

**PRESENT.**

The President, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. D. J. Parkinson (acting).

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. F. W. Holder, K.C.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.

The Hon. C. V. Wight, O.B.E. (Western Essequibo).

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

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated).

The Hon. J. B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E. (Eastern Berbice).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E. (Georgetown South).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. C. P. Ferreira (Berbice River).

The Hon. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

The Hon. W. J. Raatgever (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 14th March, 1947, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

**ANNOUNCEMENT.****ERECTION OF NEW QUEEN'S COLLEGE.**

The PRESIDENT: I have a short announcement to make. Government has accepted the unanimous recommendation of the Main Development Committee that a new Queen's College for boys capable of accommodating 500 students should be given priority over all the other educational projects. I have submitted an application to the Secretary of State for a grant under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act and, if that application is approved, the matter will in due course come formally before this Council for ratification and to vote the necessary funds. The Main Development Committee unanimously recommended that priority be given to this scheme.

**X-RAY APPARATUS AND SCHOOL****MEDICAL SERVICE.**

There are two other schemes in a similar position, one for X-Ray apparatus and the other for the continuation of the School Health Medical Service. Both of these schemes have been approved by the Main Development Committee and forwarded to the Secretary of State but, of course, final ratification by this Council will be necessary and they will accordingly be put before the Council as soon as a reply from the Secretary of State has been received.

**PAPERS LAID.**

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. D. J. Parkinson (acting) laid on the table the following:—

Report on the Georgetown Fire Brigade for the year ended 31st December, 1946.

**ORDER OF THE DAY.****RENT RESTRICTION (AMENDMENT)****BILL, 1947.**

The PRESIDENT: I have a request to convey to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, and that is, I would be glad, subject to his concurrence, to take item 2

—the final stage of the Rent Restriction Bill. I understand that the hon. Nominated Member has no objection and, if that is so, we will start with item 2.

Mr. GONSALVES : Since this Council adjourned on the last occasion I had the opportunity of further considering a particular clause of this Bill—clause 8 (1)—7 (1)—and of discussing it with the hon. the Attorney-General. While I agree with the clause as originally printed and also with the views of the hon. the Attorney-General, I still feel that it will be in the best interest to have some slight amendment made for the purpose of clarification and taking the matter beyond dispute. I think I have succeeded in convincing the hon. the Attorney-General in that respect, and I have also discussed with him the proposed amendment submitted to me. It is not merely in keeping with what was submitted as carrying out the views of those persons interested, but it is felt that it would be in their best interest if the clause was made clear. I would suggest that before the third reading is taken the clause should be recommitted with a view to making the amendment I have indicated to the hon. the Attorney-General. The amendment reads as follows :—

“Clause 8 (1)—7 (1)—

Deleted — paragraphs (e), (f), (h) and the provisos to sub-section (1).

Substituted — new paragraphs (e), (f) and (h) as under :—

“(e) the premises being a dwelling-house or a public or commercial building, are reasonably required by the landlord for —

- (i) occupation as a residence for himself; or
- (ii) occupation as a residence for any member of his family, or for some person in his actual whole-time employment; or
- (iii) use by himself for business, trade or professional purposes; or
- (iv) a combination of the purposes in sub-paragraphs (i), (ii) and (iii) above :

Provided that an order or judgment shall not be made or given in respect of a dwelling-house on the ground specified in sub-paragraph (ii) of this paragraph unless the Court is also

satisfied that alternative accommodation is available which is reasonably suitable to the means of the tenant and to the needs of the tenant and his family as regards extent, character and proximity to place of work and which consists either of a dwelling-house to which this Ordinance applies, or of premises to be let as a separate dwelling on terms which will afford to the tenant security of tenure reasonably equivalent to the security afforded by this Ordinance in the case of a dwelling-house to which this Ordinance applies; and

Provided further that an order or judgment shall not be made or given in respect of a public or commercial building on the ground specified in sub-paragraph (ii) of this paragraph unless the Court is also satisfied that, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, less hardship would be caused by granting the order or judgment than by refusing to grant it, and such circumstances are hereby declared to include the question whether other accommodation is available for the landlord or the tenant; or

(f) the premises being building land, are reasonably required by the landlord for —

- (i) the erection of a building to be used for any of the purposes specified in paragraph (c) of this sub-section; or
- (ii) use by him for business trade or professional purposes not involving the erection of a dwelling;

Provided that an order or judgment shall not be made or given on the ground that the premises are reasonably required by the landlord for the erection of a building to be used for any of the purposes specified in sub-paragraph (ii) of paragraph (e) of this sub-section, unless the Court is also satisfied that, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, less hardship would be caused by granting the order or judgment than by refusing to grant it, and such circumstances are hereby declared to include the question whether other accommodation is available for the landlord or the tenant; or

(h) the premises, being a dwelling-house or a public or commercial building, are required for the

purpose of being repaired, improved or rebuilt :

Provided that an order or judgment shall not be made or given on any ground specified in this paragraph of this sub-section, unless the Court is also satisfied that, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, less hardship would be caused by granting the order or judgment than by refusing to grant it, and such circumstances are hereby declared to include the question whether other accommodation is available for the tenant; or"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : If hon. Members agree with what the last speaker has stated then, with their consent, I shall ask leave to recommit and move back into the Committee stage this particular clause of the Bill dealing with some of the provisos. It is only a question of rearrangement as the principle remains the same, but the hon. Member made representations to me in the matter yesterday and I have also received representations from a firm of Solicitors on behalf of interested parties. Consequently, I ask leave of the Council to move back into Committee and reconsider pars. (e), (f), and (h) of clause 7 (1), and the provisos which we considered at length on the last occasion.

There is one other point and that is, the hon. the Deputy President, (Mr. Woolford), as hon. Members will recollect, raised the question of boarding houses on the last occasion, and I told him that the matter will be met by way of some provision in relation to service premises. The Deputy President, as I understand him, is particularly concerned with premises let as boarding houses but, as I pointed out to him, hitherto the rental value of premises over \$40 per month did not include those buildings or any other building within the ambit of the operation of the Ordinance, but now that ceiling has been removed and dwelling houses—whatever be their nature or character—will now come within the operation of the Ordinance and be subject to consideration by the Rent Assessor. The effect is that in cases where a landlord lets a dwelling house to a tenant as a boarding house, then that will obviously come within the operation of the Ordinance. The fact that the tenant uses the premises for

the purpose of a boarding establishment will be a matter between the tenant and those persons who are boarders or lodgers as the case may be. I will emphasize the words "*or attendance*" which appear in clause 3 (2) (a) — the clause referred to by the hon. the Deputy President — because standing as they are they may open the door to possible abuse by way of landlords renting premises and attaching to them a condition that they are supplying a gardener or one or two other services and, consequently, it will be arguable that by reason of the fact he has supplied a limited amount of service his premises should be removed from the operation of the Ordinance.

The hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) discussed another point, and thought the difficulty might be overcome by substituting the word "*and*" for "*or*", so that if a person wants to carry on a boarding house as such he would not only be limited to "*attendance*" but would have to come within the question of "*boarding*" as well. I wish to remind hon. Members, however, that the question of service premises will receive consideration immediately after this Bill is passed. I now beg to move that the Council resolves itself into Committee for the purpose of considering the two matters to which I have referred.

Mr. GONSALVES seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

#### COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

*Clause 3 (2) (a).*

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : If I may turn to page 3 of the Bill — at clause 3 (2), par. (a) — I would ask leave to substitute the word "*and*" for the word "*or*", between the words "*board*" and "*attendance*".

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause as amended passed.

*Clause 2.*

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : As regards the other point raised, as I have already suggested, it is only a question of rearrangement from the point of view of drafting. It is on page 13. I do not wish to have continued controversy or argument if the matter can be made

clearer and more satisfactory to hon. Members. The hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves), who has had an opportunity of perusing the Bill, has suggested an amendment, and the rearrangement is to delete pars. (e), (f) and (h) and the provisos at the bottom of the page and to substitute new pars. (e), (f) and (h). Par. (e) has been split up in order to make it clear that where the landlord requires a residence for himself he gets it without having to provide alternative accommodation. Instead of remaining at the bottom of the page the provisos come specifically after (e). The decision of the Council was that the landlord should still be required to provide alternative premises in cases where the residence was required for a member of his family or for any person in his actual whole-time employment. We have split up (e) and put two provisos after it. After (f) we have put one proviso and after (h) we have put another. The proviso on page 14 will be deleted and instead of having a proviso at the end of par. (m) one is put at the end of par. (h).

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to call attention to the fact that while in the draft the arrangement is not the same, the present amendment is the same in principle. In this case the exemption is being made specific, whereas the general proviso at the end of the clause relates to the whole group of exemptions. In other words, as regards this par. — (h) — there can be no doubt whatever. I, personally, would have preferred the wording as originally drafted to remain. The words to which I desire to call the attention of hon. Members as regards the new proviso after (h) are:—*“and such circumstances are hereby declared to include the question whether other accommodation is available for the tenant”*. There is no question that in each particular sub-section those words are going to bind the landlord. We have the words at the end of par. (h), and it means that there can be no question in this case that the landlord will be bound to consider the availability of other accommodation for himself or for the tenant. In this new proviso the onus is being placed on the landlord to prove availability or otherwise of other accommodation, but in the Bill as

originally printed it appears to me that the question of availability of other accommodation is one of proof at the instance of either the landlord or the tenant.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Oh no!

Mr. WIGHT: Apparently the Courts can construe the clause as meaning that the question—the availability of other accommodation—is to be proved by the landlord. It is a matter for the hon. the Attorney-General. I may be entirely wrong, but I prefer the wording of the clause as originally printed.

Mr. GONSALVES: The clause is still as originally printed, and when it comes to the landlord himself the same provision remains. My hon. Friend on my left (Mr. Humphrys) who is a K.C. agrees with that view. He knows a great deal about landlords, and he agrees with the amendment.

Mr. JACOB: I am still a little puzzled. On the last occasion the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) said the words were quite in order, but today he gives quite a different story and he thinks that putting the words at different places in the Bill makes the provision somewhat different. It is time that we get hon. Members of this Council to think clearly and speak clearly. I do not pretend to know anything about the matter, but here we have one hon. Member — a Barrister at Law at that — saying one thing one day and then a week after saying something else because the words have been differently arranged. I repeat that as a landlord I trust this new arrangement will give effect to what the Legislature has decided and, that is, that a landlord should get his premises when he wants it for his own use without any tags.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves), who made the representations to me, carefully analysed the matter and is satisfied that the principle remains the same except to remove it from any possible argument or any possible doubt or controversy. I do not think the hon. Member on my left (Mr. Jacob) intends to say that this does not carry out what was originally intended and what was originally requested by this Council. I beg

to move that the amendment to clause 8, which has already been circulated to hon. Members, be inserted as printed.

The CHAIRMAN : This is entirely a legal discussion and I do not intend to intervene. It is a matter for the Council, but I repeat that I would like to have this Bill passed as early as possible.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, passed.

Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : With the consent of Council I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### COLONIAL EXPENDITURE ENQUIRY.

Mr. RAATGEVER : I beg to move the following motion standing in my name—

“WHEREAS this Council views with grave concern the tremendous increase in Colonial expenditure and the heavy financial commitments in connection with Development Works also the subsequent annual recurrent expenditure for maintenance of the said works;

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Council urges on Government the desirability for the early appointment of a Committee of this Council to consider carefully and report to Government how expenditure can be reduced in 1948 and subsequent years.”

Since I tabled this motion, many responsible citizens have approached me and suggested that the Committee should include members of the public. If it is constitutional, with your permission, sir, and the approval of Members, I would like to make the necessary amendment to the motion.

The PRESIDENT : Cannot the hon Member bring forward the point in his argument on the motion, and then amend the motion afterwards ?

Mr. RAATGEVER : Very well, sir. I do not intend to speak at length on this motion

because the matter has been discussed in this Council on several occasions during the last three months. As Members are aware, the expenditure of Government in 1939 amounted approximately to \$6,500,000, and in 1946 it was two and a half times that figure. This year it will probably be increased further. As is customary in this Colony when expenditure increases taxation is also increased, and direct taxation in the period between 1939 and 1947 has been increased to over three times the 1939 figure. It seems to me that the limit of Expenditure and Taxation has been reached, and it is necessary to reduce this heavy expenditure if this Colony is to progress and to remain financially sound. I shall just like to quote from Colonel Spencer's memorandum on the financial position of the Colony. On page 89 he says :

“Unless and until there is a further increase in National Income and Production, the Colony is unlikely to be able to support an Ordinary and Extraordinary Budget much in excess of \$13,000,000; i.e., it should not from its own resources undertake any further significant expansion of recurrent commitments in the Transitional period.”

I think that speaks for itself. The expenditure approved for this year amounted to over \$14,000,000, and Colonel Spencer mentions a figure here of \$13,000,000 as being the amount this Colony can safely afford to spend. Colonel Spencer said, when he addressed Members of this Council on the Budget proposals, that the Colony has now reached the top of what the statistician may call an “S curve”, and ahead lies danger. Colonel Spencer also mentioned in his memorandum on page 86

“The possibility of effecting economies should be sought by a systematic departmental review of all increases in personnel and expenditure which have occurred during the war years, as well as of the existing measures relating to the purchase and control of stores and material and the organisation of work.

Note : (a) It is thought that this can best be done by appointing an officer or other persons to make a detailed review in 1947 of each Department's needs, reporting thereon to the Governor-in-Council.”

As will be seen, Colonel Spencer agrees that a Committee should be appointed to review the expenditure of the Colony. I am quite aware that there are three departmental committees—Public Works Department, Agriculture Department and Education Department—but their functions are not executive; they are only advisory, and Colonel Spencer must have been aware of the existence of those committees when he made his recommendation. I am also aware that since Colonel Spencer wrote his report and I tabled this motion, a Finance Committee of this Council has been appointed by Government, but in my opinion that Committee will not fulfil the functions of the committee I want appointed. It is too big and unwieldy. A smaller committee will do the work much better and will be able to probe into all the details of Government Departments and to recommend what can be done to reduce expenditure without impairing the efficiency of the Service in any way.

I shall now deal briefly with the grant of \$12,000,000 received under the 1945 Colonial Development and Welfare Act. On enquiry in the Main Development Committee I was shocked to discover that over \$9,000,000 of the amount was being spent on schemes initiated in 1940 with the amount allocated from the Colonial Development and Welfare Act then. In addition nearly \$500,000 will have to be added to the Budget of this Colony as Recurrent Expenditure on schemes at present carried out from Colonial Development and Welfare funds. This is very unsatisfactory, and in this connection I will also read an extract from a Circular by Colonel Spencer to the Main Development Committee dated 18th February, 1947 :

“The financial position with regard to the Colonial Development and Welfare schemes has been re-examined and owing to the increase in the estimate of Capital costs incurred or to be incurred on the Bonasika, Torani and other schemes, it looks as though existing schemes approved under the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act will consume over \$9,000,000 of the \$12,000,000 allocated from the 1945 Act. In addition the recurrent costs of the various schemes which, (unless they are dispensed with) will eventually fall on the Colony Budget

will amount to about \$440,000 a year. The members of the Development Committee present at the meeting on the 17th February therefore decided that I should bring this matter to the notice of all sub-committees. It was the decision of the members present that as far as existing C.D. and W. schemes of a recurrent nature were concerned, no existing scheme should be renewed as a C.D. and W. scheme on reaching its expiry date; it should be re-examined and either taken on the Colony Budget or dispensed with altogether.

“It was clear that certain members of the main Development Committee were by no means satisfied that the money being spent on existing C.D. and W. schemes was being devoted to expenditure which could really be considered to be of an essential and top-priority nature.....”

I may mention I was one of those members who were not satisfied. I think this extract speaks for itself, and it shows the serious position that we are in, regarding this \$12,000,000 received for developing this country. It seems to me that not one penny of this money will be spent on any new development work. The interior of this Colony is crying out for development, roads and transportation. We will not have anything left to spend on any of those projects. It seems that taxpayers will have to put their hands further into their pockets to find the money to finish those schemes on which Colonel Spencer says \$9,000,000 more is being spent at the present time. It seems we will have nothing left from that \$12,000,000. We are thinking now in millions and not thousands as in pre-war years. I certainly think the time has come when a very strong committee of this Council should be appointed to go into the estimates of every Department of Government and see where economies can be effected and bring the expenditure down within the limit fixed by Colonel Spencer --\$13,000,000—until this Colony can increase its productivity and national income.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I second the motion, but desire to reserve my remarks for a later stage.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am going to adopt an unusual course right

away in this debate, because I feel there are several aspects of the situation which Members ought to address their minds to before even considering the motion and much moreso before they come to a conclusion on it. This motion asks for the appointment of a Committee of the Council. It says, "*to consider carefully and report to Government how expenditure can be reduced in 1948 and subsequent years.*" As a preamble to the motion there are these words: "*Whereas this Council views with grave concern the tremendous increase in Colonial expenditure and the heavy financial commitments in connection with Development Works also the subsequent annual recurrent expenditure for maintenance of the said works.*" So the first point that Members have to consider is whether or not it is true to say that there has been a tremendous increase in public expenditure which is either unjustified or completely unwarranted by the circumstances in which we in this Colony find ourselves today.

In the year 1939 we spent under what I may call the Ordinary Budget of the Colony—Annually Recurrent Works and Extraordinary Works,—\$6,393,000. I hope not to worry Members with too many figures, but I am obliged to. On the same Budget in 1947 we have approved of the expenditure of \$11,924,000. I am talking of the ordinary Budget for annually recurrent and extraordinary works. I exclude for the time being the Emergency Expenditure, i.e., Temporary War Bonus, Subsidisation and the small amount of War expenditure still remaining. The increase in 1947 over 1939 is accordingly 87 per cent. If we include all the War Emergency expenditure, the increase is 122 per cent. That is an absolute comparison. I am not at the moment going to deal with the direction in which this increase has taken place or the cause of this increase. I will just give the actual figures. I can of course argue right away that the impact of the war, the fall in the value of money, the introduction of Development and Welfare schemes and the administrative burden which those schemes place on this Colony would fully justify an increase of 87 per cent. in our Budget or 122 per cent. on our total Budget. But I am not going to do

just that. I want to find a yard-stick from which to put really before you a comparison of what the percentage of expenditure increase may reasonably have been expected to be. The yard-stick, I am inclined to take, is one which will be very well appreciated by the commercial community, and especially by the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever, who is of course a distinguished ornament of that community.

Let us take the figures which I have, and I know he is at a disadvantage because he does not possess them. We will begin with the Imports. He does not have that. The imports of the year 1939 in value amounted to \$10,000,000 roughly—not quite \$10,500,000. For the year 1945 the imports went up to \$20,000,000, just about double and that notwithstanding the severe restriction on getting goods. That is, the volume had dropped but the money value had doubled. Let us go a little further. The profit of trade and commercial business in this Colony—and by commercial business I mean just the activity of buying goods from abroad, bringing them into this Colony and selling them at a profit. I exclude altogether the profit of industry, like sugar or bauxite. I take only the profits of trade and commerce—in 1939 in the aggregate was \$803,000 gross. If that profit had been subjected to taxation, the total left in the hands of the people who made the profit would have been \$675,000. Let us follow that up. By 1945 the profits of commerce had doubled themselves and nearly trebled themselves. That \$803,000 of which I spoke had become \$2,013,000 in 1941, in 1942 it had become \$2,676,000 and in 1945 it had become \$2,773,000. In other words, it had more than trebled itself between 1939 and 1945. The hon. Member may stop me to say that Government had stepped in and taken away the bulk of it in taxation. That may be a good answer, but it is not because, as I said before, the net amount remaining in the hands of the commercial traders in 1939 was \$675,000. In 1945 or before 1945 the taxation was \$1,200,000—collected in 1946—which left in the hands of the traders \$1,507,000; that is, profits after taxation—Excess Profits Tax and Income Tax—had been deducted. If one likes percentage, again that shows an increase in profits retained of 130 per cent.

Mr. RAATGEVER: To a point of order! I do not know what the hon. the Colonial Treasurer is speaking about. We are discussing a motion on Colonial Expenditure, and I fail to see what he is driving at. The figures I have given you are figures Colonel Spencer gave in his memorandum. Colonel Spencer said there: "*The total expenditure in 1945 was \$16,275,000 or two and a half times the \$6,500,000 recorded in 1939.*" Apparently Colonel Spencer's memorandum contains incorrect information, in which case his services are valueless to this Colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I did not interrupt the hon. Member when he spoke, and I hope he will not interrupt me again. I was trying to show him what he ought to know himself and, that is, that the percentage of increase between 1939 and 1947 in public expenditure is 122 per cent.; and I am trying to show by using the yardstick of commercial profits that 122 per cent. is smaller than the increase in the profits which have accrued to the commercial traders. I am not going to labour the point. If the hon. Member would listen he would see what I mean. If the commercial trader in his profits received an increase of 170 per cent., then surely the interests whom those traders represent should not throw in the teeth of Government that public expenditure is extravagant and amazingly high. So much for that.

I want to pass on now to a more detailed examination of how this increase has arisen. In other words, I shall examine the direction in which the increases have taken place. We have always used in analysing public expenditure certain groupings which are fairly common to them. We talk about Administration, Law and Order, Economic Development, Social Services, etc. Those are things which we usually take for analysis and, if the hon. Member would turn to Colonel Spencer's Report which he has just spoken of, he would see in so far as 1946 is concerned the comparison between the percentages of increases under those various Heads. It is very clearly stated that expenditure has increased in connection with Social Services: that is to say, in connection with the expenditure on Medical, Education, Poor

Law, Pensions, etc. In the year 1939, 21 per cent. of this Colony's expenditure went on Social Services; in the year 1946, 30 per cent. of it went on Social Services; in the year 1939, 32 per cent. of our expenditure went on administration; in the year 1946 only 27 per cent. has gone on Administration. I do not want to weary Council with any more figures. On the whole the point is this: We have kept our expenditure along a line of policy which has developed on account of the West India Royal Commission Report and, unless this Council is prepared to reverse that policy, turn the hands of the clock back and spend less on Social Services, it is not possible to make any major reduction in our gross total of expenditure.

In so far as Public Administration is concerned, I am satisfied myself that the cost of administration has not gone up at all. Take my own Department, the Treasury. In 1936 the Treasury cost the Colony \$36,000; in 1947 it is costing \$50,000, which is not a very great increase, less than 50 per cent. If this Council really wants to go in for retrenchment on a large scale, it is quite obvious what you have to do. You will have to reduce the Police Force back to the strength it was in pre-war years; we will have to go in for less extravagant public services—have our public offices more scattered and less concentrated, get rid of our Labour Department which is new, give up certain expenditure on economic development, forestry, agriculture, etc. We have just during this period put up a very magnificent Girls' School which we can give up. If we want to reduce expenditure that is the sort of thing we have to do, but I am quite sure this Council does not want that.

I now come to the point of the Committee on which the hon. Member himself touched. I must remind the Council what the position would be. We have first of all a Finance Committee, which is a creature of this Council. Its members are not appointed by the Governor.

The PRESIDENT: "Creature" is not an attractive word. It is a Committee of the Council. I do not like anyone being called a creature.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Then we have various Advisory Committees—one for the Education Department, one for the Public Works Department, one for the Agriculture Department, and we are now about to have an advisory committee for the Medical Department. The function of those advisory committees is to advise on expenditure. Then over and above all we have the vast, I may almost say, Main Development Committee with its eleven sub-committees, the function of which is to advise and plan for the development of the economic resources and social welfare of this Colony. It goes without saying that what these committees are doing is to advise on the spending of money within the limits of our resources. So if we superimpose on all these committees another committee, and worse still a committee including non-Members of this Council who are going to try and show the Council how it can reduce expenditure in 1948, I do not know where we are going.

I seriously suggest to this Council, if it goes on record by resolution approving a motion on these terms it would be completely stultifying itself. I should stop just there, but so far I have been speaking rather destructively of this motion and I want to speak constructively on it. Let me say, I admire the enthusiasm and energy which the hon. Nominated Member puts in all his work on this Council. Since he has been here, he has done much more than many of us who have been here five, or ten, or fifteen years. I also share his concern about lack of economy in public departments. I think he is quite right when he suggests that we ought to go very carefully into the question of the rise of expenditure on public departments, but I am not in favour of the method he chooses.

Therefore, I am going to make a suggestion not only to the hon. Member himself but also to you, sir, as a means of improving this situation, and it is that we should in Finance Committee appoint what I may call a working sub-committee of the Finance Committee—a sub-committee comprised of Members who are prepared to give of their time and energy—I do not say to the same degree as the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, does, but

nevertheless a great deal of time and energy—to the consideration of the question. I think that you, sir, can give an undertaking that so far as the drafting of the Estimates for 1948 is concerned you will instruct Departments to have the drafts prepared some two months before the ordinary time, and that those drafts which have to be sent to the Treasury should go to the sub-committee of the Finance Committee which should be empowered to call on Heads of Departments to come before it and have the drafts completely and thoroughly examined. Recommendations of the sub-committee should then go back to the Treasury for consideration. The Treasury, of course, would say if there is any action required.

The PRESIDENT : What size would you suggest for the membership of the sub-committee ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : From three to five.

The PRESIDENT : And I would suggest that there be no Officials at all on it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Except myself.

The PRESIDENT : Do you wish to be on it ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Yes, sir; and I would suggest that the members of that Committee should join in the final examination of the Estimates. It is quite clear that the final draft of the Estimates for 1948 can reach the sub-committee for examination long before it reaches the stage of being introduced into this Council.

The PRESIDENT : May I intervene ? I think your idea is a good one but, personally, I do not think you ought to be on the sub-committee because you will have to review its recommendations. I think the sub-committee should be entirely Unofficial, and I am putting it to you that that will be more acceptable. The sub-committee will review the working of each Department.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : The difficulty as regards the sub-committee being entirely Unofficial is—and I say it without any conceit—that the direction of

the inquiry should come from the Treasurer. It is quite true that the Unofficial Members of a Committee would have ideas which might never come to the Official mind but, nevertheless, an Unofficial Committee working by itself may leave certain important things aside.

The PRESIDENT : I do not think so. The anxiety of the Unofficials, is to have their own power to probe. It is their own wish—not Government's—and personally I think you will be wise to let them form their own sub-Committee in Finance Committee. I think it is an important point and, if Members agree with the suggestion I think you should meet them on it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I have already heard them on the matter, but it must be remembered that it is the function of the Treasurer to make this preliminary probe, and what I am inviting them to do is to give some assistance. I have made this suggestion because I think it is a constructive one. I agree in principle—and I think the hon. Member is perfectly right—that the time has come when we must examine our expenditure very carefully indeed. I am not going to talk about the Development Committee except for those items that have to be met from the Budget. It is true that some of the recommendations of the Committee will come in the form of annually recurrent items, but they are dealing with capital schemes so I will not touch them. I was hoping, however, that if the hon. Member accepts the suggestion I have thrown out, he would see his way to withdraw the motion which is before the Council.

Mr. EDUN : After listening to the hon. Mover of this motion I have come to only one conclusion, and that is that he is suffering from a business inferiority complex. Being a member of the business community—a member of the Chamber of Commerce—no one expects him to see things beyond the scope of his vision, but it is expected that he would be business-like and would endeavour to make two ends meet in order to let his business go on without running into bankruptcy. Nobody would quarrel with him, sir, for having his own views but, certainly, I, as an intelligent

Member of this Council and a citizen of British Guiana, do take exception to his bringing a motion like this—one which will tend to arrest the development of this country. Now, let me read the motion in order to bring certain things to the serious attention of hon. Members. It says :—

“Whereas this Council views with grave concern the tremendous increase in Colonial expenditure and the heavy financial commitments in connection with Developmental Works.....”

And it goes on in the resolve clause to show how expenditure can be reduced in 1948 and subsequent years in order to arrest these development works. In passing through Water Street recently I had a look into the business being carried on by the hon. Member and found that he is engaged in buying and selling things like garlic, pork, rum, salt fish, and gouda cheese, so that he sees the affairs of British Guiana in a very limited way, and with his very limited perspective he is trying to bring within that focus the development of this great Colony with an area of 83,000 square miles and a population of only 375,000 people. I sympathize with the hon. Member because he sees things from his own angle and wants to bring his ideas here in order to arrest the development works which this honourable Council has sanctioned in the past. I should like to remind him that the problems of British Guiana are vast indeed. It is a big country which is in need of more population, more roads and better transportation services, as he says. Yet he wants to come to this Council and say “reduce expenditure in order to stop development”. How can we hope to succeed in this manner ?

All along — during a long period of years this country was being governed in the interest of these very people in Water Street and the absentee proprietors in England, along with a couple of satellites revolving around the absentee proprietors. The whole thing—on both sides—was motivated from the Colonial Office by a Colonial economy. And today, after Members of this Council have agreed with that great Administrator who has left us just a few months ago after bringing to us a national economy—an economy based on progress and development spread out over a long number of years to come—

we are being asked to adopt a policy of curtailing expenditure and arresting development.

Let me ask the Water Street merchants—the Chamber of Commerce—what they have done in order to bring about development and expansion of industries in British Guiana. They have made a tremendous amount of profits out of the blood of the people in this Colony, but have they invested one cent of that money in order to give more employment and better conditions to these people? Everywhere around this City what do I see—a multitude of drug stores, cookshops, Poor Man shops, cake-shops and so on, all of them thriving off the blood of the poor people in this Colony; and yet we are being told here about reducing expenditure — expenditure which has been the hope of progress to those who produce from the land.

Now, sir, it is admitted that our Colonial expenditure is high, especially when considered in the light of our population, but we want to ask people to come here—to go into the interior and live there—and produce more and more in order to increase the revenue of the country and bring prosperity. In order to do these things we must have vision and statesmanship, and if this is the vision that is being exercised by the head of the Chamber of Commerce then I am terribly disappointed. I expect members of that body to do something more than talking; I want them to put their hands deep down into their pockets and create industries. Even now with our small population of 375,000 people there are people who are in need of work, and I expect the lead to come from the Chamber of Commerce in this respect. The merchants have made tremendous profits out of the poor people and, except for the building up of more and more parasitical businesses, I see no sign of a lead from them.

The hon. Mover states that the Finance Committee has not got the power to act in these matters, but I had the privilege of discussing a very important problem at the Colonial Office with Mr. Thomas on October 18 last, and when I told him that a very important measure was passed here recently and that it was the cause of most of the

unemployment in the Colony he replied "What were you all doing there?" I told him that I had opposed the measure, and he said that the people in British Guiana have the power to go into the Legislative Council and move anything in their interest by a majority vote. This is the supreme body for legislative action in this Colony, and no Secretary of State can stop what we do here. But, we cannot or will not act, and if we give away our birthright we cannot expect anybody from abroad to help us. Salvation comes from within and, therefore, it must come from us. The whole country is disgusted with the attitude of certain Members of the Legislative Council, but that does not stand to reason that after the next General Election we will not have the power to do whatever we choose here.

I see in this motion nothing but that static policy which will land us back into the throes of Colonial economy and put us at the mercy of vested absentee interests and their satellites in Water Street. I feel strongly about this matter, and I must oppose this motion with all my being because this is my country. During my last visit abroad I saw things that made me weep when I considered how backward we are in British Guiana, and to come back and meet a motion like this—requesting us to curtail expenditure and arrest development—is something which I cannot entertain. Further, I say that it would be a sorry day for British Guiana if this motion succeeds. It is not necessary for me to speak very much since the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has smashed into smithereens the argument put forward by the hon. Mover. I would be ashamed, as a businessman, to know that I made 240 per cent. profit on my goods and because certain items have gone up in the expenditure of Government I object very strongly to it.

I am going to ask Government very soon to increase the wages of the Public Works employees, because it is obvious that the cost of living has gone up tremendously. We are asking for increased expenditure on certain schemes, but because it touches more or less the pockets of the businessmen they feel that we should go backwards—turn the hands of the clock back and lose faith in ourselves. I do think, sir, that the

hon. Mover ought to accept the suggestion of the hon. Colonial Treasurer, although I do not like the formation of these multiple committees. You know, sir, what has been at the back of my objection to the Spencer Committee? A rank outsider is coming here to tell us what we know ourselves. These multiple committees result in a waste of time. The people of this Colony are looking forward to the Members of the next Council to be true to their interest and not true to the interest of the firms in Water Street. It is a well-known fact that commercial people have made money during the last few years, but I have seen the tendency of the businesses created in this Colony is to last for five years and then suddenly deteriorate. We all had great hopes in one particularly promising business—the Guiana Match Factory. It has enjoyed a monopoly for a long number of years, but now what do I see? I see that its production is deteriorating and I want to say that I am glad it will be rectified. I want to see this concern become one in which we can take some pride—doing some research work and endeavouring to see whether they can find the chemicals they want in British Guiana—but we find them still engaged in endeavouring to import materials from abroad, except the wood that is being used. What else can that industry say it has done except making money? It is true that Government is receiving some money from it, but the whole economy of British Guiana depends on productivity.

There must be more production of sugar, bauxite, rum, rice, diamonds and timber for export in order that we can have a greater buying capacity for imports, as the policy in the past has been based on an economy of imports. That is why nobody cares to create a new industry and add to the wealth of the Colony. When a man with a capital of about \$5,000 starts a grocery business and in the course of a few years makes a handsome profit and finds that his business is worth \$10,000, he does not add one penny to the wealth of the community. He is simply a distributor of imported foodstuffs; he buys them and sells them but does not produce anything. He is a non-essential. (Laughter). The man who produces, however—taking one

bag of padi and producing 40 bags—adds to the wealth of the community and is more valuable than the Water Street and other men who set up businesses round about them without producing anything. I would ask permission, sir, to quote from the last speech made by His Excellency Sir Gordon Lethem, in order to give this Council an idea of what I mean. This is what that great Administrator said:—

“I would warn you moreover most sincerely, to heed the lesson of the flaw in your past and present economy, which has led to that very strong statement made about all these Caribbean countries that I once quoted, that in such a country as this, which should above all be a producing country, there is too large a class which has fattened .....in spite of the mass of poverty-stricken citizens ..... existing on imports from which the merchant importers have gleaned an easy harvest through percentage, commission and profits.....”

Are we going, sir, to continue an economy like that? That is what I want to ask the hon. Member who has moved this motion. Do we expect to have any progress simply by importing goods from abroad and distributing them without production on our part? The whole economy of this country, I repeat, is based on production. If there is no production we cannot pay for our imports, but the businessmen do not see the situation in that light. Their idea is merely to do business, and when the hon. Mover comes here and wants to inject that idea into this Council then, I think, it ought to be rejected because the economy of British Guiana is one which needs services and statesmanship. And, if we need services we have to pay for them because we have stretched our administration right into the interior, and we are going right through the rural districts in order to encourage more production. The hon. Member wants at a flash to curtail the whole expenditure for administrative purposes in order to bring us back to the days when we had no production enough for export.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I think the hon. Member is out of order and has been so for half an hour. He is wandering all over the scene.

The PRESIDENT : The President is to decide whether a Member is out of order or not.

Mr. EDUN : I am speaking on a subject which is so broad. It is a question of economics. The hon. Mover is questioning a principle of economics. It is Colonial economics which had this country in its grip for the last one hundred years, the economics of vested interest, and now that the Colonial Office and the Government have seen it fit to expand their policy in order that the people of the Colony should get more out of the Colony we find the same tendency coming back. It is like the Roosevelt policy of the U.S.A. which was one of expansion for the poor man, development for the working-class people, but now the Truman Administration aims at destroying the policy of that great administrator. That is what is creeping in here now. The businessman wants to come in and rule here, and it is the duty of every commoner who has to live and work in this Colony to endeavour not to give him a chance to come here and boss the show. If he is doing it in his interest and the interest of the Colony I would agree to give him a chance to do all he can, but in this case he is simply the instrument of the absentee proprietor who has the economic reputation of holding huge plantations for himself. That should not be tolerated at all. I ask Members to reject the motion because, even if it goes to the vote, can the Committee which may be appointed do anything to override the Legislative Council? Can such a committee hope to come here and tell us anything which we do not want done? No committee can override the Legislature of British Guiana. The final issue is here, therefore, it is just a waste of time, a waste of energy, to think of bringing in outsiders. They have been doing business and maybe have prospered by making 240 per cent. profits, and they want to tell us something about this. Oh, no; I think this motion should be rejected, and I shall oppose it.

Mr. JACOB : Sir, I am supporting this motion and I trust that it will be carried. I am not going to quibble about the wording of it. Perhaps it may be worded in a different way. I think, Your Excellency, on hearing that it is the sug-

gestion of the Unofficial Members to form themselves into a Party, made an announcement from the Chair that an Economic Committee will be appointed. I am pressing that such a committee be appointed. I may be told that a Finance Committee has been substituted for the Economic Committee. Finance Committees have been appointed in the past and have all failed, and the present one has started off half-failing, and at a certain stage of the last meeting of that Committee there was no quorum and the business that Government chose to call "Public Business" was left unattended to. I want to see something practical and businesslike done by this Government. Looking at the Rules of the Finance Committee what do I find? Rule 5 says :

*"Except in cases of proposals which have been considered by any ad hoc committee of the Council, all proposals involving expenditure from public funds for which the sanction of the Council is necessary shall be considered by the Committee before it is submitted for consideration and approval."*

That is the scope of the Committee—to consider proposals—and the executive responsibility rests with Government Officers. That is what it is. With the Advisory Committees—Agriculture, Public Works and Education—that is the same principle too. You just look at the Estimates before they are printed, come here and pass them and your responsibility ends. We have gone on too long with that system. That system has failed, and I want to see a new system adopted. The Advisory Committee was appointed on the recommendation of the West India Royal Commission so as to give Members of this Council—to use their own words—"Elected representatives an insight into the practical details of Government." Whether that term includes Nominated Members, I do not know. How far these Advisory Committees function in regard to that recommendation, I do not know. I am 100 per cent. satisfied that the Education Advisory Committee on which I have the honour to be a member is not doing its work at all in that direction. I have represented the matter to Government and have discussed it with the hon. the Colonial Secretary and made suggestions as to how we

can make progress. Whether those suggestions are acceptable or not, I do not know. The whole idea of my suggestions is just to meet Government half way so as to let us have some kind of progress.

Neither can Government nor the hon. the Colonial Treasurer say these committees are working in a really practical way. I challenge the Chairmen of these Committees to say they have done anything practical in regard to expenditure on the Estimates. Since we have to pass the Estimates, I want to see the estimates on the salaries of Officers—whether the Officers are efficient or inefficient those salaries have to be paid—are not just estimated on so many names. As regards the purchase of materials and stores, I want to see that those materials and stores are received and properly applied. That is what I want this Committee to examine. I was surprised to hear the last speaker speak in the strain he did. Unless we have business principles co-ordinated with Government principles we will have a bankrupt government all the time. Business has copied Government in many ways and *vice versa*. You must have a sort of co-ordination all the time. You have to raise revenue, but you have to see that it is properly raised. This Committee can go into that and see that it is done in a proper manner. We want to see the money that is voted on the Estimates is properly and profitably spent, so that it becomes productive. There is the intention in the Colony to fit in with this proposal at the moment, though I doubt we are in agreement with the wording of the motion. I think Government at one time had the idea that such a thing was necessary, and then it backed down. Now this thing is being pressed.

The suggestion is made to have a child of the Finance Committee. Well I have said what I think about the Finance Committee. Perhaps Members have the time to attend there and then return here and speak. Members will agree there to spend money and authorize Government to spend it, and the expenditure will just formally be passed in this Council. I do not know, but I reserve the right to examine every item of expenditure and to speak on it, if necessary, in this Council. I believe that

several hon. Members were of the view after the first meeting that we want a Committee to examine the details of expenditure weekly. Some Members have not the time, but we must make a start somewhere. We know Members are not independent people and cannot afford the time, but we want to co-operate with Government and to go thoroughly into this business. But Members are mere figure-heads; we are not partners in the scheme of things. We must become active partners in this business and very soon, I hope, we will run it ourselves. I think the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, has that in view too, but I think he was imbued with something else when he spoke on the motion. I trust he will support it before the division is taken. This is a step in the right direction, and I cannot stress it too much. I think I have made my point. I am sorry the hon. the Colonial Treasurer had to go into all those figures that he gave us, but I do not think that has helped Government's case. Government cannot afford to back down on it. Government made a promise.

The PRESIDENT : What promise ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : I was just about to ask that !

The PRESIDENT : I said nothing from the Chair that an Economic Committee will be appointed. On the contrary, I suggested to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, that an Economic Committee may be useful, but my suggestion was not accepted at the time by hon. Members of the Council. It was made very early in the debate when Members, I think, were considering before the adjournment of this Council whether the Colonial Treasurer should sit with the Unofficial Members in their unofficial committee on the Estimates. It was made as an honest suggestion to tie this Council with Government in considering the Estimates, but it was not acceptable to the hon. Nominated Member.

Mr. EDUN : To a point of correction ! The hon. the last speaker said I actually moved a motion in this Council about a committee of this kind. For his information, what I moved was a Vigilance

Committee and not a Committee to assess development works.

Mr. JACOB : I did not mean that, but the hon. Member had himself suggested some such committee and now he is opposed to this one. That makes my point stronger. The hon. Member may change his mind and vote for this motion. Perhaps the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, did not press there and then, but I think this motion shows that this is what is wanted now. I think there can be no doubt about that, and the principle is that Unofficial Members will carry on the investigation assisted by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and the Heads of Departments, but the whole thing has been reversed. The Treasurer is to initiate and do all these things. If this is to be a creature of the Finance Committee the hon. the Colonial Treasurer is going to be there and, as Your Excellency stated, it is better to have no person as Chairman or Head of this committee. This idea of officialdom must go.

Mr. EDUN : Is the hon. Member still speaking or is he just making a correction ?

The PRESIDENT : He is still speaking !

Mr. JACOB : This idea of Officials being at the head of everything and initiating everything will have to go and, I think, the sooner the better. In Trinidad there is great unrest about it. In Barbados the system has been changed. In Jamaica the system has been changed. Why not in this Colony ? I do not know. If Government wants to have co-operation and Government approves of the principle of Elected Members assisting as partners in this Government, we would then be on the straight road to progress. I am not too happy about the last few words in this motion—*“to consider carefully and report to Government how expenditure can be reduced in 1948 and subsequent years”*. That may cause certain hon. Members to believe that the idea is to reduce expenditure on Social Services or expenditure that may be of a productive nature. I wonder whether the hon. Mover has considered that. I take it, his intention is not to reduce expenditure on Social Services or schemes approved but just to see that the money is well spent.

Mr. RAATGEVER : That is what I said time and again in this Council. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, was not here and should have familiarized himself with what was said.

The PRESIDENT : You do not wish to put a stop to any scheme !

Mr. RAATGEVER : This Council is aware of that. It is reported in Hansard, and it is the duty of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, to find out that.

The PRESIDENT : I do not think the hon. Member has answered my question. The hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) has introduced the point very well. He says he does not like the wording of your motion, as he does not want expenditure reduced on development schemes. I would like to ask the hon. Mover of the motion, having regard to how it stands, is it also your opinion that you are not moving this motion with the view of stopping schemes ? It is a most important point. Would you like to answer that ?

Mr. RAATGEVER : I am not in favour of stopping schemes which are economical and will increase productivity in this Colony. But the uneconomical schemes are wasteful, and we may just as well take the money spent on them to the end of the town and leave it there for the tide to take it away.

Mr. JACOB : I think the hon. Member has made the point very clear. For instance, I went to see this Cattle Experiment Station at Ebini Downs and I am 100 per cent. satisfied that scheme should be stopped immediately. Things like those we want to see. I have been to Torani, and while I am satisfied the design is good, I am not at all sure we are not wasting money there and likewise on the Bonasika Scheme. But Members should have the right and be facilitated to visit these places from time to time not always. We know that something is going on, and we have information that certain things are not going on in a proper way —

The PRESIDENT : I must assure the hon. Member that it is not necessary to appoint a Committee to give hon. Members

the right to visit the schemes. I personally will welcome it. I have invited the hon. Mover to visit the Bonasika Scheme and his answer was "I already know all about it and I am not prepared to go". If hon. Members wish to visit the schemes, I welcome it because it will be most useful.

Mr. JACOB : This brings me to this point: We want to have status. We want to be a Committee so that certain Members will take on the responsibility to report to other Members. We do not want any halfway things but it is Government's policy to have people divided and not to have them co-operating. We want to co-operate. We want to be able to say, as I was trying to say just now, "We have certain information about certain things going on at, say Ebini, will you care to accompany me there next week?" We can then ask Government and go right away and look at the things we heard about and return. But we have never had that opportunity. As a matter of fact the hon. Member on my left (Mr. Lee) and I approached Sir Wilfrid Jackson on something similar to this and he was as cold as ice.

The PRESIDENT : Have you ever approached me ?

Mr. JACOB : I do not want to bring in the personal element. I am talking about the Governor, the Head of the Administration. I have just mentioned that we went to another Governor and had very little response and co-operation. Perhaps Your Excellency would agree, but I do not want to put myself in that position nor to put you in any false position. We want to have as a right the privilege to go anywhere at any time.

The PRESIDENT : You have it now !

Mr. JACOB : But we have been hindered and obstructed in every way, perhaps not recently. That is my feeling after having been in this Council twelve years. That is what lives in my mind. Perhaps you may appoint this Committee as a sub-committee of the Finance Committee. I am opposed to the Finance Committee, but I do not know in what way you are going to do it. I trust that you will find some way in which to give

hon. Members of this Council, who have the inclination and the time, who can assist you and who can be partners in this business of administration, to help you and to help you effectively.

Mr. LEE : With all due respect to the right of the Administrator in respect of the Finance Committee, I do not agree with the hon. the Colonial Treasurer that any Official Member should be there. After all, if we are going to lead ourselves to the goal of self-government, certain of us must assume the responsibility of carefully examining every expenditure in all the Departments. I do admit that Advisory Committees have been created for that purpose and they are carrying on. It may be a little redundant in having another committee appointed to deal with finance, but it can be so arranged that the members be elected and not appointed. We know what each other can do, and we will certainly in the interest of the Colony try and elect those Members who can look after expenditure when the Budget is being prepared. I did not intend to speak on the motion as I was supporting it all the time. I know there must be some careful supervision of expenditure as put forward to this Council. That is why I totally agree with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, that no supplementary expenditure must be just voted by this Council.

If this sub-committee is elected from among the Members of this Council it would be responsible to us for these supplementary votes, having scrutinized them. If other Members care to question them they can do so and, if necessary, as the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) says, they should have the prerogative, with or without asking Government, to go and examine the works related to those votes. Do you know why the hon. Member for North Western District is pressing that point? It is because we put ourselves to the trouble to go and see certain works and are satisfied that public money is not being properly spent. We had certain little hints about the Ebini Downs Scheme not being a success from people who passed through there, but we took no notice of them because we were disappointed at Government's attitude. Government does not want us to co-operate,

otherwise when we send in suggestions they will be acted upon. I can assure Government that Mr. Boyce, the Director of Public Works, is very approachable. I was told certain things once and I phoned him at his house and we went and stopped them. Your Excellency does not know the many things which go on, but, if we are given the prerogative of electing a sub-committee from among ourselves and to visit schemes, much economy can be effected. I am in favour of an elected sub-committee because, if the Members do not work, we can call on them to get out without interfering with the machinery of government. Let us have workers on that committee. If I am elected to serve on it and my time is occupied in looking after my own business, I can be made to give place to someone else.

I would certainly ask you, sir, to consider with the question of nomination the right of Unofficial Members to sit by themselves in Select Committee. I think a Committee of seven members will have a very difficult task, especially if they have to go through certain items of expenditure with the Chairman. If such a Committee is appointed the Estimates can be passed in two days when they come before this Council. We will have some guarantee that the Committee has done its duty to the public and to itself.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I would like to speak briefly on the motion as it strikes me. In analysing the motion I agree that this Council should view with grave concern the increase in Colonial expenditure. The motion goes on to suggest that there should be a Committee of this Council to consider carefully and report to Government how expenditure can be reduced in 1948 and subsequent years, yet when logical suggestions are made by hon. Members here we find others getting up and opposing them. One hon. Member has just insulted this Council and the Government by saying that this body does not represent the people, yet he suggests rather illogically that there should be a Committee of this Council to decide what should be the expenditure of the Colony not for this year but for 1948 and subsequent years. That, it seems to me, knocks the bottom

out of the argument by any hon. Member in support of the motion.

Mr. JACOB : May I just correct my hon. friend by saying that the Council has to be prorogued and it will reassemble. That is the natural order of things.

Mr. WIGHT : I thank the hon. Member for his constitutional lesson. I, fortunately, learnt it when I was studying for the Bar, although I may not have learnt much. The first point which strikes one is, what is the intent and the purpose of this motion? I agree that we should check the rising tide of Colonial expenditure because it necessarily means that there will have to be a rising tide of revenue, and I am going to state here that I think we are reaching saturation point when it comes to taxation. Our economic structure cannot stand the weight that the United Kingdom structure can stand and even that, to my mind, is cracking heavily. Do not let us get to the stage where we will have to appear hat in hand to the Imperial Government. There is a part of the motion with which I agree but, as I have already stated, I do not see that, as it stands, it can meet with the success that some Members anticipate. Another part of the motion speaks about development works, but what is the purpose of the sub-Committees of the Main Development Committee headed by the Economic Adviser? One would have thought that that is the very purpose of these sub-Committees whose work will flow into that of the Main Development Committee and whose reports will also be considered by the hon. Mover of the motion. I do not know that that particular matter is one within the purview of this Council at the moment.

Let me say for the purpose of argument that I agree with the hon. Member when he says we are on the eve of the General Elections — we anticipate that they will take place in August or September and that we will have a new Body — but why should this Council sit and go into expenditure which is not before it? Must I take it that we are an all-powerful Legislative body and can override the wishes of the community as regards any expenditure they may desire in the future? I submit that

it would serve no useful purpose if we sit down here and consider what a new Legislative Assembly will have before it in October or November, or even next year, when none of us, perhaps, will be here. If we submit a report as to what should be the future policy of Government as regards expenditure, the new Council — with none of us on it perhaps—might very well say "that report is so much pegass—it is so much a waste of time—and we do not agree with what those hon. gentlemen did." I can imagine one hon. Member saying "Those fellows did not represent the people; we represent the people, we want our own report." The motion has a very laudable object — a very good idea — to curb expenditure as we see it at the moment, but I do not think any useful purpose will be served by adopting it now. We have, at the moment, three Committees—I may say four because one was elicited in reply to a question — and there are three sub-Committees.

The PRESIDENT: There are five Committees; what about Publicity?

Mr. WIGHT: I thought Publicity was on the verge of disappearing.

The PRESIDENT: No.

Mr. WIGHT: It is true that these Committees are merely advisory; they have no executive functions—no administrative functions; they merely advise on policy and scrutinize the Budget as placed before them. The members are only to advise; they cannot actually say "We want this or we do not want that." It is quite true—one has to admit it—that in spite of that Government can say "We are spending this without permission." I can only speak as a member of one sub-Committee, but I can speak as a member of several Advisory Committees. I know also that the Committee of which I am privileged to be Chairman gets along — thank Heavens — without any wrangling and without any personalities, and we get through our business expeditiously every fortnight. No member of the Committee can say that our methods are ever lax; and when we cannot see eye to eye with the Director of Public Works we do not approve of his policy. As a matter

of fact, the other day we were scared when an announcement was made in a certain matter which was not put before us. We felt, however, that the reason why it was not put before us, perhaps, was because it was thought we would not have agreed. That Committee advises and the advice comes up to Government. We meet fortnightly, but how we are expected to stop an Officer or anybody else from committing a fraud or a theft, I do not know. That is impossible. So long as human nature remains what it is, it will be impossible to stop fraud or theft in any department or business however small it may be.

We are told there is waste in that Department—the Public Works Department—and we admit that there is waste, but we have not yet been told how to stop it. We make rules and we order work to be done, and after all we have to trust somebody. We must put trust in human nature; we cannot go on suspecting everybody of being a thief. We are told to put men who are going to be responsible to this Council in certain positions in this Department. The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) says "Put somebody from this Council," but the next thing we find is that when Government nominates somebody he says Government has nominated the wrong man and that if the Committees are elected they would be differently composed.

Mr. LEE: To a point of correction! I did not say they would be differently composed.

Mr. WIGHT: With all due respect to the hon. Member I did understand him to mean that, and if they are not going to be different then what is the difference between Elected and Nominated? He says that Members are here for a period of five years and he believes that the people would be able to call upon them to resign if necessary. It is amusing to hear a statement like that from a member of my profession. How can you call upon a man to resign if he does not want to resign?

Mr. LEE: To a point of correction! The late Mr. Seymour when he was Member for Western Essequibo was called upon by the people to resign, and he resigned.

Mr. WIGHT : He had a contract with Government and he resigned because of that. I take it that other people would have acted in a similar manner. The Finance Committee is a body of this Council and, as I have already indicated, that Committee has a right to suggest anything. It seems to me, however, that there is a growing fear in the minds of one or two hon. Members that Government is going to differ from everything the Committee suggests. I take it, however, that if that Committee does not approve of any particular expenditure, it has the right to come into this Council and call upon Government to discuss the particular item that will appear in the Supplementary Estimates and warn Government that the Council will not pass it. I do not think we need to bring our minds to bear on every Department, but if we are going to have a general review of the numerical strength of each Department that would be a different thing. That would be a departmental probe, but then that would be for the Finance Committee and the balance for the sub-Committee of the Finance Committee. I was rather surprised to hear from the hon. Member—I do not know whether he said so seriously — that some thing unsatisfactory is occurring in the Finance Committee. If that is not so, then we might have to disagree with him on the ground that he had not gone into the matter entirely. I will not subscribe to the view that, as stated by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee), when a Member of this Council knows of something going on in any Department in this Colony he cannot bring it to the notice of Your Excellency. I take it that as a Member of this Council if anything comes to my knowledge that is not in the interest of the community, I have an absolute right to bring it to Your Excellency's notice.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I regret I was not in my seat earlier this afternoon to listen to the speeches on this motion, but the discussion that has taken place since my arrival here leaves me in very great doubt as to what is actually required. It is obvious, of course, that the motion in its present form cannot be accepted by this Council, because I entirely agree with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, that

this Council has to be extremely careful in delegating its powers to Members of the Council in Committee or, as I understand it to have been suggested by the hon. Mover, to persons outside this Council. I would be the last person to permit such a course being taken. I agree, however, that in so far as this Legislature is concerned it is the supreme authority, and my only quarrel with Government has always been — and always will be — whenever Government takes it upon itself to incur any expenditure without the prior approval of this Council. Government will always find me strongly opposed to such a course. On the other hand, sir, I am not going to accuse the hon. Mover of this motion of not having the courage of his conviction in trying to bring forcibly before Government the urgent need for combing carefully all Government expenditure. That is the object which the motion has in view, and the hon. Member is not alone in that respect.

There are several of us in this Chamber and there are several members of the Finance Committee who feel that the time has come when a very strong hand should be used in the expenditure of public funds. The difficulty, as I see it, sir, is how such a problem will be solved. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer suggests a sub-Committee of the Finance Committee, but I have told him, sir, that I do not agree with that. I want more than that. In view of what I have just stated about the powers of the Legislative Council I am not at all enamoured of such a Committee and, in fact, I am afraid of it. If we are going to talk about Committees in order to supervise Government expenditure or adopt the suggestion made by the hon. Member for North Western District —

The COLONIAL TREASURER : May I rise to a point of correction ? I hope the hon. Member will not place my suggestion with that of the hon. Member for North Western District. My suggestion was for a working sub-Committee of the Finance Committee to examine in very great detail the draft Estimates for the year 1948 before they are presented to the Government and finally brought before this Council.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I understand the hon. the Colonial Treasurer's point, but what I was going to say is this : He has been appealing for the appointment of a sub-Committee of the Finance Committee, and in the course of the discussion that has taken place this afternoon the word Committee has been freely used. I want to use a comparison in order to make the point that the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) was trying to make. If this Committee is to do the things the hon. Member was trying to suggest, it seems to me that we do not need one Committee at all; we would probably need a Committee for every single Government Department. I cannot see how a single Committee, even if it has five or more members, or even if it was sub-divided, will be able to do all the things suggested by the hon. Member for North Western District. So far as I am concerned, I have promised to serve the people but, I think, it is asking of a Member too much—to expect him to walk into a Government Department and enquire into the details of this and that in order to check every farthing spent on any particular public work. If I have reason to suspect that a fraud has been perpetrated, then I shall be quite prepared to do everything within my power to see that it is brought to light, but it will be expecting too much of a Member to ask him to walk around to the various Government Departments asking this question and that question on every matter arising out of the expenditure of public money.

Some hon. Members are fond of saying that the Departments are not being properly run and that there should be more economy, but whether they are competent to say that is another matter. It is very easy to say that certain works have not been carried out economically, but it is another thing to do them on your own when called upon to do so within the amount allocated to you. Of course, that does not destroy the criticism that has just been made, nor do I intend to destroy the criticism made from time to time against the high rate of expenditure on any particular work. This Council has had more than once to criticize Government Departments for coming back not

once or twice but very often for more funds than those originally voted, as a result of increased expenditure on a particular work. I am going to admit that in some cases there were very good reasons for the application, but at the same time I must admit that there were several occasions when the reasons were regarded as unsatisfactory to Members of this Council.

Let us be practical, however, and while I admit that the time has come when the expenditure of Government Departments should be carefully scrutinized with a view to effecting economy, I certainly cannot agree with the method in which it is proposed that it should be done. We have a number of Committees already. We have the Finance Committee, for example, which I think has been given a fair trial and has worked well. In that Committee, unlike this Council, hon. Members are given information from across the table, as it were, when they want to go into the details of any question, and it seems to me that if we want to do any probing at all of Government expenditure that is one of the places where we can try it out and see what progress we can make with the idea. But, to go and appoint yet another Committee and, perhaps, later appoint yet another, we will only be adopting a half-measure and, perhaps losing the object which we have in view. There will be certain people going around trying to get information, and then we will find that information will be duplicated and there will be very much waste of time. I think, sir, that perhaps we cannot do very much more than to give this Finance Committee a very fair trial. I was very glad to hear some reference being made by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer in regard to recurrent expenditure on development works, but as far as I am concerned that warning is too late. That warning was given many many years ago but Members, of course, paid no heed to it then. Now, however, that the Annual Estimates are to be prepared and the shoe is going to pinch, we are beginning to see the folly of having undertaken works which we cannot properly carry through to finality.

This gives me the opportunity of saying right here and now that I am very much concerned about the powers of what is

commonly known as the Spencer Development Committee, and I wish to remind hon. Members again that the Spencer Development Committee is unlike, perhaps, any other Committee that was formed by this Government. Whilst it is true that it has not got power behind it in one sense, it must not be overlooked that the personnel of that Committee, comprising as it does the entire membership of this Council, is likely to bring about some very peculiar results. To explain what I mean, it is this: It is going to be an extremely difficult matter, if a proposal is put forward in the Spencer Committee and adopted there, for it to be rejected by this Council. I can hardly see the possibility of that proposal when it reaches this Council not being accepted, unless in the meantime the constitution of this Council changes and fresh Members with fresh ideas join in the

discussion. That is one of the dangers I see so far as the Spencer Development Committee is concerned, and that is the one occasion that this Council has delegated its powers outside its proper functions.

Mr. LEE: May I enquire from the hon. Member how long he will be speaking?

The PRESIDENT: If the hon. Member does not want to finish his speech this afternoon we may adjourn the Council.

Mr. de AGUIAR: No, sir.

The PRESIDENT: The Council stands adjourned to tomorrow. We have no other business than the conclusion of this debate and, if it suits Members, we will meet at 3 p.m.

The Council adjourned until 3 p.m. tomorrow.