

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 15th January, 1935.

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

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. P. W. King (Acting).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. A. Henderson, M.B., Ch. B., B.Sc. (P.H.), (Edin.), D.T.M. & H. (Edin.), Surgeon-General.

The Hon. N. Cannon (Georgetown North).

The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E. (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, 11th January, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICE.

BARTICA-POTARO ROAD.

Mr. CANNON gave notice of the following questions :—

1. What is the original estimate of the cost of construction of the road to Garraway Stream?
2. What is the estimated cost of erecting the bridge?
3. What is the actual cost of the said bridge?
4. What is the cost of the road from the 91 mile to Garraway Stream?
5. Has a road been extended to the Potaro River opposite to Tumatumari? If so, what is the cost?
6. Did Government consider the possibility of bridging the river at Tumatumari?

ORDER OF THE DAY.

FLOOD RELIEF GRANTS.

Mr. AUSTIN, on behalf of Mr. Peer Bacchus, asked the following questions :—

1. What sum of money has Government granted to date to Villages and Estates in Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice separately that have suffered by the recent floods under the following heads :—
 - (a) steps taken to meet present situation;
 - (b) preventive measures for the future;
2. Give the names of Villages and the amount of grants which have been given to them in Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice separately, and are under—
 - (a) Local Government Board;
 - (b) Polder Ordinance;
 - (c) Drainage Ordinance?

3. Give the names of Villages and the amounts of grants which have been given in Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice separately, and are not under—

- (a) Local Government Board ;
(b) Polder Ordinance ;
(c) Drainage Ordinance ; ?

4. If no grants were being given to Villages that are not under—

- (a) Local Government Board ;
(b) Polder Ordinance ;
(c) Drainage Ordinance.

5. Why ?

6. Is Government aware that all the Villages on the West Coast, Berbice, that are not under the Local Government Board have not received any grant though they have suffered to the same extent as Villages under the Local Government Board ?

7. If the answer to question 6 is in the affirmative, why ?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. P. W. King) replied as follows :—

1. (a) and (b) Emergency works were carried out during and immediately after the floods, including raising and repairing boundary and Crown dams, drainage, etc. The sums allocated to each County were as shown below :—

DEMERARA.	ESSEQUEBO.	BERBICE.
\$81,880	\$30,336	\$29,243

2. (a)

DEMERARA.	
Name of Village.	Amount
Sparendaam	...\$ 550
Plaisance	1,336
*Betervewagting and Triumph	2,200
Buxton and Friendship	1,750
Golden Grove and Nabaclis	1,450
*Victoria	1,470
Ann's Grove, Two Friends and Clonbrook	4,770
*Unity and Lancaster	708
*Mahaica, Helena and Supply	2,378
Central Mahaicony	1,027
Kitty and Alexanderville	500
Relief and Support	3,000
Stanleytown	6,500
Good Intent and Sisters Farm	2,000
Farm	500
Parika	500
Hyde Park and Grove	500
Salem	500
Canefield	500
Endeavour	500
La Bagatelle	500
Louisiana	500
Phoenix	1,000
Arthurville and Fredericksburg	500
Maria Johanna	500
Maria's Pleasure	500
Melville and Sans Souci	500
Noitgedacht	500

ESSEQUEBO	
Name of Village.	Amount.
Huis t'Dieren	...\$ 1,000
Queenstown	1,349
Henrietta and Richmond	400
Danielstown	300
Bush Lot	200
Aurora	100

BERBICE.

Name of Village.	Amount.
Belair	...\$ 1,782
Bush Lot	5,160
Beiladrum and Eldorado	3,300
Golden Grove	1,650
Kingelly	200
Lichfield	800
Golden Fleece and Paradise	1,350
Seafield	900
Hopetown	3,624
Fyri-h	400
Gibraltar	600
Limlair-Kildonan	343
Nos. 69-74, Corentyne	5,000

*In addition to the sums mentioned, the following allocations were made for expenditure on re-conditioning drainage and irrigation trenches :—

Betervewagting and Triumph	...\$9,376
Mahaica, Helena and Supply	8,000
Unity and Lancaster	500
Victoria	... 1,100

(b) Nil.

(c) Certain of the Villages that have received grants are Declared Areas under the Drainage and Irrigation Ordinance, Chapter 165.

3. The following allocations were made in addition to those mentioned in answer to Question 2 :—

DEMERARA.	
Name of Village.	Amount.
Clearing of Mahaica Creek	...\$ 6,500
Improvement of drainage Bachelor's Adventure and Paradise area	7,500
Construction of culverts at Airy Hall, Mahaicony	2,600
Repairs to dam at Company Path, Plus. Bath and Fairfield	800

ESSEQUEBO.	
Name of Village.	Amount.
Repairs to Tapacooma Weir and Conservancy	\$17,589
Clearing Akiwini Creek	600
Digging Oena Creek	2,000
Relief Canal from Capoey Lake	3,000
Repairs to dam from Dartmouth to Mc Nabb Sand	1,752

BERBICE.

Name of Village.	Amount.
Repairs to koker at Lighttown	\$... 75

4 & 5. See answer to question 3.

6. Yes.

7. Village communities on the West Coast of Berbice which are not under the Administration of the Local Government Board are unable to give any undertaking as to future maintenance of any Flood Prevention works, which might be carried out, because they are not administered under any form of authority ; furthermore, even if such an undertaking were given, it would not be possible to enforce it because the villages concerned refuse to subject themselves to any form of Government control. In a certain instance assistance was requested and upon investigation the District Commissioners replied that such assistance, by way of free grant, would be recommended if those seeking assistance would agree to the area being declared a

Country District and Administered by a Local Authority under the Local Government Board; this proposal was however rejected and, as a result, no free grant was recommended and the applicants were so informed at the time.

In every case when a free grant has been made for the purpose of carrying out preventive measures for the future, the villages under the Administration of the Local Government Board have given an undertaking, in writing, that the works carried out will be properly maintained in the future.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1935.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION HEADQUARTERS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Before we proceed to the consideration of the items under this Head I wish to say that I had intended to reply to the criticisms of hon. Members on the District Administration, but I thought it better to put those replies in writing. That has been done and a copy of a Memorandum on the District Administration estimates has been supplied to each Member of this Council. I do not think I can usefully add anything more to what has been put in the Memorandum. I shall listen carefully to the criticisms which hon. Members will make on it, and I will endeavour to the best of my ability to reply to them. I think I have set out very fully in the Memorandum all the various points that will arise, and I have also given figures showing the progress of the District Administration Scheme from its inception in 1932, and the increases which it is proposed should be made in 1935 in order to enable the Scheme to work smoothly and successfully.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I am extremely obliged to the Colonial Secretary for having referred to the Memorandum which he has issued to this Council containing the various points from which criticism might be forthcoming. In speaking on the matter I think I may briefly review the history of the Scheme. During the *regime* of the late Sir Gordon Guggisberg steps were taken by him to evolve a District Administration Scheme for the Colony. That Scheme was really in skeleton form, and upon the

arrival of Sir Edward Denham in the Colony he gave various reasons for the adoption of that Scheme. He wrote a very elaborate Minute on the subject, but before putting the proposals before the Council his Minute was referred to a Committee which was appointed for the purpose of making recommendations on that Minute. I think the Attorney-General was Chairman of that Committee which issued a very exhaustive and important Report on the Scheme. In fact it has been described by Sir Edward Denham as a document of some historical value and importance.

The Scheme came into operation in 1932, and the question is whether it has been a failure or not; whether what was intended to be done under the Scheme has been accomplished by the re-grouping of the various offices under the Scheme. Speaking on the Scheme as a whole I think there has been ample progress made in the carrying out of certain works under the District Administration. My regret, however, is on this point, and I wish to say that it was a bit unfortunate that there was not an Annual Report issued by the District Administration in order to show the nature of the District Commissioners' duties and the scope of their activities. That would have informed Members of the Council on the various subjects dealt with by them but, unfortunately, no such Report has been presented to this Council. I cannot claim to have any knowledge of the working of the various districts other than the Berbice District, and the remarks I propose to make will be principally concerned with the work in that particular area. From reports I have heard it would appear that the Scheme has also worked satisfactorily on the East Demerara to the various villages and their communities.

With respect to the justification for embarking on such a Scheme I think I may be permitted to make some general remarks on the Scheme as a whole. The Berbice District, which extends from the Abary to the upper reaches of the Corentyne, has been administered by a District Commissioner and several officers under him. I should like to say at this stage that with regard to representations being made by the various village authorities it would appear that those representations have always received at the hands

of the Commissioner full and adequate consideration. In fact, speaking for myself, whenever the opportunity has arisen for me to make any special representations to that officer the matters represented have always received prompt attention. I think both the Berbice and the East Demerara Districts have demonstrated the feasibility and practicability of the Scheme, but I think that on the estimates that have been placed before us serious differences of opinion might arise as to the additional staff required for the District Administration Scheme.

First of all, with regard to the position of the District Commissioner or District Administrator, there is now a proposal on the part of Government to increase the salaries of the District Commissioners as a whole. With reference to the Berbice District and the East Demerara District, according to the Colonial Secretary's Memorandum there is an appreciable increase asked for with respect to those officers. I am not prepared to support Government entirely as far as increases of salary are concerned. In fact I think we might well adopt the recommendation of the Committee by advancing the salaries of those officers to £650 rising to £750. In the Draft Estimate it is proposed to ask the Council to vote £800 as the maximum salary under this Head. I think we must hasten a bit slowly in this matter, for while it is very desirable that officers should receive adequate salaries in respect of their services, one has to consider the general economic situation at the present time.

It is true that when those officers were appointed there was a sort of promise held out to them that their salaries would be revised at a later stage when sufficient opportunity was given for trying out the Scheme. They were drafted into the Scheme at the salaries they then received, and it is only right, if there have been added duties and responsibilities, that their salaries should be proportionately increased. I do not think the maximum I have suggested should meet with any serious opposition from this Council. The Committee's findings were the result of a very lengthy conference, and I think the decision arrived at was a proper one and might well be adopted by the Council. I think it is only fair that where officers

have been promised additional remuneration if the Scheme shaped well, after a trial of two years some equitable arrangement should now be made with respect to those officers' salaries. A maximum salary of £750 after four years is not too high a salary for that responsible and onerous position. While I am in agreement with Government that there should be an increase in salary I suggest that the maximum salary should be kept within that recommended by the Committee.

Mr. ELEAZAR: May I be enlightened about that Committee? I have never heard of such a Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hasn't the hon. Member read the Report of the Committee?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Hector Josephs): Perhaps I may assist the hon. Member by reminding him that in the early stages he was a member of the Committee (laughter) and attended three or four meetings out of 27. He also said at an early stage that he would write his own report.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I did, but I do not recollect the Committee recommending anything. There is nothing in that Report.

Mr. LUCKHOO: This Scheme, I take it, was introduced, as stated in the Minute by Sir Edward Denham, on the grounds of Administrative efficiency, good Government and public economy. In making the appointments Government had to take into account the responsible nature of those officers' duties, and having secured the right type of individuals for those positions Government might well expect the support of this Council in respect of some increase in their salaries. After all I take it that a person appointed to such an important position must be one who has shown some capacity for work, one of some local experience and general knowledge of the district which he is called upon to Administer. If the right type of officer is secured for the carrying out of this Scheme I feel sure that eventually the Scheme will prove a success, but it all depends upon the officer who is placed in charge of the Scheme. In considering the proposal to increase the salaries of the District Commissioners one has to take

into consideration the various duties now assigned to them. There has been a regrouping of several Departments, and the work in respect of those Departments is now carried out under the Scheme.

In addition to that I think the District Commissioners have the oversight of all the Village Authorities and the Country Districts within their area. In Berbice I think we have no less than three villages and about 30 Country Districts. There can be no doubt that a great deal of work is involved in going through the reports and the estimates of expenditure of those Village Authorities. It is very necessary under the Scheme to see that the village accounts are being properly made up, and that all the revenue derivable from that locality is received by Government. I observed from a remark by the Colonial Secretary that there has been an appreciable increase in the collection of the rates and other obligations in those districts, which he attributes to the fact of their being a proper organisation to look after the collection of those accounts. With respect to the other districts I can speak with no first-hand knowledge as to their working, but the Berbice District is one which has amply demonstrated the feasibility of the Scheme.

Another point I wish to deal with in connection with the estimates under this Head is the proposed appointment of Assistant District Commissioners. I do not think we should embark at this juncture on the creation of any new offices under this Scheme, which has been under trial for two years and might be continued for another two years before attempting to add to the expenditure. I suggest instead that the status of the Class II. Officer in the Berbice District might be raised to Class I., which would give him an increase in his pay and reward him for the energies he has exerted. I do not wish to be personal, but I cannot help thinking that that particular senior officer is one who is deserving of some promotion in the Service. During the *regime* of the late District Commissioner, Mr. Essex, the senior officer in the Department was Mr. Roberts, and when Mr. Essex went on leave the whole responsibility was thrust upon Mr. Roberts who administered the affairs of the District during that period with success. I therefore think that if any

recognition is to be given him for his services one would at least expect that his status would be raised.

But with respect to the Assistant District Commissioners I do not think there is any necessity at this stage for such appointments. It is contended by the Colonial Secretary that it would enable the District Commissioners to go on leave, or when absent from duty the Assistant Commissioners would take charge of operations. But I think the senior officer attached to the Department should be able to carry on in the absence of the District Commissioner. If such an officer is not competent to do the work then Government might draft from some other Department of the Service a capable and sufficiently well-informed officer to act as District Commissioner during the absence on leave or otherwise of the District Commissioner. But to burden the Scheme now with the appointment of Assistant District Commissioners while retaining the full strength of the Department, would be a very unwise step at the present time.

With regard to the staffing of the various Districts I think Government would be well advised to increase the subordinate officers in the Berbice District. I claim to have some knowledge of the work of that Department. I have often visited the District Commissioner while at work, on representations being made to me by the various village communities, and I can say that the staff is very hard-worked, and their responsibilities are very great indeed. I therefore think that the proposed addition to that staff might be allowed to go through, but my principal objection, so far as the Berbice District is concerned, is in respect of the appointment of an Assistant District Commissioner.

With respect to the amount of \$2,500 which it is proposed should be voted for the acquisition of a launch to be used in connection with the Scheme, I think it is very necessary and essential expenditure. We have at present a very derelict launch on the Corentyne river, and if Government is alive to its interests and wants to protect the revenue of the Colony there should be efficient con

trol by the Officers of the Department in order to prevent any breach of the Excise Regulations. I think that expenditure is justifiable and that Government should be able to carry that particular measure.

I think the proposed increase of Rangers is also very necessary. On account of curtailment of that service there has not been proper supervision over the grants or proper collection of revenues in those outlying districts. I think the addition to the staff would enable the Rangers to go about their business more expeditiously and be able to collect from those parties, who have been immune for some time, their just dues to Government. I think it is very necessary for the proper supervision of the Crown lands of the Colony that there should be effective patrol in those various rivers where craft bring down heavy loads of timber and other commodities.

My remarks about the Assistant District Commissioners also apply to the East Demerara District. The officer in charge there is about to retire. The status of the office might be increased to Class I, without the necessity for the appointment of an Assistant District Commissioner for that particular district. The Colonial Secretary in his Memorandum stated:—

“I would like to emphasise the fact that by the appointment of these two Assistant Commissioners, it is not proposed to create new posts, but rather to increase the status of the senior posts in the two districts referred to.”

I have not been able to follow that part of the recommendation, and probably in the course of his reply the Colonial Secretary may be able to enlighten me whether new posts will be created under that particular Head. The Colonial Secretary further states in his Memorandum:—

“Coming now to the general staffing of the district service, this is a matter that has been under consideration for some time, and Government is satisfied that the work of the Districts is considerably hampered through lack of staff.”

That is, I think, a very reasonable proposition to put up. The Colonial Secretary in his Memorandum also referred to the very great service rendered by the District Commissioners during the floods which took place not many months ago, but I think other organisations were responsible too for the work in that direction, and in addition public-spirited men

and women worked quite cheerfully and unobtrusively in helping to relieve the situation. It is true that the District Service was of some help, but not such as to preclude the help of other organisations. I think Government has recognised the services rendered by those public-spirited individuals who took on that work, and I think a great measure of praise is due to them for their successful efforts in that direction. I cannot help drawing Government's attention to the following statement in the last paragraph of Sir Edward Denham's Minute No. 2:—

“The success of these proposals lies in the energy and zeal of the Officers appointed to carry them out, and I shall have no hesitation in making changes in personnel should it be found necessary. Officers have to realise at this time that there is no place in the Government Service for those who are not prepared to give of their utmost and to assist Government to the best of their ability in effecting economies in staff while increasing revenue by greater zeal and efficiency in its collection.”

Those remarks should be carefully borne in mind by those who are entrusted with the working of the Scheme. In making appointments to those responsible positions care must be taken that the officer appointed is of the right type, one who is sympathetic in village affairs, and one who would be easily accessible when his help is required. The officers, too, should move freely in the village communities, and should also take part in the Village Council meetings. I have known of one or two cases in which the District Commissioner was present at Village Council meetings and actually took part in the deliberations. Such an officer is very helpful to the smooth working of these village communities, and I think his appointment would be perfectly justified even on that particular ground. But I wish to emphasise that the position should be held by an individual who will make it his business at all times to consult those Local Authorities, to direct them in the carrying on of their business, and to listen to their representations.

It is a bit unfortunate that we have not had all this time the establishment of County Councils and District Councils which was promised with the Scheme. Those Councils, together with the District Commissioners, would certainly be of immense service in the successful working of the Scheme. I do hope that the time

is not far distant when Government will carry out the proposals in that respect. One great advantage of the Scheme is the expeditious manner in which grievances have been redressed. Therefore it is very necessary that Government should have in those communities a responsible officer to whom the people should look for some protection and guidance. The Commissioners must not consider themselves autocrats but as holding their positions in the interest of the people and the welfare of the community. The men who have been appointed to the two Districts I have mentioned I know personally. They have had good administrative experience and are very zealous and energetic officers, and I think the increases of their salaries could be justified on the ground that there has been increased responsibility thrust upon them, and in the discharge of their duties they have given satisfaction to the various Village Authorities. It is really on that ground that I am supporting an increase under that particular Head. The Village Authorities have always had the help, advice and assistance of those Commissioners.

I do not think I can say anything more on the Scheme itself, except to say that with respect to the appointment of the Assistant Commissioner my vote will be against any such appointment. I am rather inclined to the view that the status of the present senior officers should be increased so as to allow them the opportunity of getting the increase which was promised them when the Scheme was introduced.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I regret I cannot find in this Scheme all the roses which have been scattered around the Commissioners, but I do not blame them. They were put in impossible positions, and I have nothing but praise for the way in which they have acquitted themselves in those untenable positions. No advocate of this Scheme can attempt truthfully to say that it has come up to what was expected of it. That is nothing to be surprised at, for the simple reason that the Scheme was promulgated in a district which was absolutely unsuitable for it. District Administration in the West originated in the Bahama Islands which, in the early days of slavery, had Travelling Justices

who went from island to island looking after the interests of the newly emancipated slaves. It was discovered by one of the best Governors, Governor Gregory, that that system did not give the people sufficient supervision, and so he decided to have those Justices located in the several islands because they were all some distance from headquarters. This system continued until 1907 when District Administration came into force. Accordingly, when it was thought necessary, that system was transferred from West to East. Therefore, in India as well as in Africa and the Malay States the same system obtained. Those places were far from headquarters and the conditions warranted it. But I cannot see how in British Guiana, where one can travel to the Corentyne and get back to headquarters in time for dinner, District Commissioners were warranted at all. In achieving as much as they have I say they have done well. When that is said for them all that could be said has been said.

The late Sir Gordon Guggisberg adumbrated the Scheme shortly after his arrival in this Colony, following upon some remarks by Sir Harry Moorhouse. I am not sure whether Your Excellency was present at the very last meeting of the Members of this Council with Sir Gordon Guggisberg. If you were you should have a recollection of his having stated that he had found that the Scheme he had adumbrated could not work in British Guiana, that he had revised the whole thing but had not had time to put it in writing. He was satisfied that he had made a mistake and had revised the Scheme, but had not the opportunity to put it in writing. Therefore what was in his head remained there and has gone with him to his grave. The present Scheme has been promulgated by Sir Edward Denham who was very positive in stating that it would not cost one penny more, because the officers to be appointed were already in the Service and would go to the various districts with their salaries. That brings me to the point of the necessity for this tremendous increase of salaries it is proposed to give those officers. They knew well enough what they were going there for, and the conditions under which they went. As I understood it, they were going with their present status and would get their ordinary increments. I stand subject to correction,

but I am positive that Sir Edward Denham never at any time told those officers that if they proved successful they would get increases on their salaries.

That is the whole of the trouble, and the reason why we have to-day to go over this system. Perhaps I am wrong. I feel that the Scheme cannot be a success because conditions do not warrant it, but I am not against giving it a fair trial. If we did not have District Administration we still would not have had an Immigration Department because it was the policy of the House immediately after indentured immigration ceased in 1913, that the Department should be reduced to a mere skeleton because there was nothing for it to do. Up to to-day what has happened? In Berbice there is still a Chief Clerk in the office because there are statistics to be kept and information to be given to the public. It cannot be argued that because Government dispensed with the Head of that Department the saving must go to the credit of the District Commissioners. It is not correct.

Government now proposes to appoint Assistant District Commissioners as apprentices to the Commissioners—to learn what? Assistant District Commissioners are unknown either in the West, where the system originated, or in the East, where it has achieved its highest success. All that is required of a District Commissioner is commonsense and sound intelligence. Who taught Mr. Macnie and Mr. Laing? Where did they get their knowledge from? We must give them credit for having done well in a measure. It is due to their intelligence, their knowledge of human nature and their ability to apply a little bit of soft sodder. But they are to have apprentices at \$200 per month. Those are the things that make the community feel that Government is not sincere in what it is doing. To suggest that youngsters should be appointed Assistant District Commissioners, to learn nothing and get \$200 per month is a criminally disgraceful proposal. I understand that one of them is a junior Police Inspector whose salary must be \$100 per month at the most. He is to be put over the head of the District Inspector who is his senior, and ultimately he will be equal to the County Inspector who may have 12 years service while he has one or two years.

Can anybody believe that is done with any degree of sincerity, or with a view to benefiting the individual concerned?

While on the subject of apprenticeship I might mention the case of Mr. Roberts who was a Commissary for some years, and when the late Mr. Essex went on leave Mr. Roberts carried on the work of the Commissioner and did it so successfully that the people petitioned Government not to remove him.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. Member not to drag in the names of officers. The hon. Member must remember that all appointments are in the hands of the Secretary of State. I must ask him to eliminate all personal references.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am sorry, sir. But for the fact that I was going to say something in his favour I would not have mentioned his name at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is because of that that I allowed the hon. Member to do so.

Mr. ELEAZAR: To my mind appointments made in that way serve to destroy the confidence of the public in the Government. I say it regretfully but it is a fact. If the Department wants strengthening because the Colonial Secretary said they could not collect dog licences, do you want an officer at \$200 per month to assist in the collection of dog licences? Besides, at present the Commissaries do not collect dog licences. In the old days one could see Commissaries with a man behind them hunting out the owners of unlicensed dogs. To-day it is done by a policeman, or by a revenue runner with a policeman. If the Department is under-staffed in that connection, one or two revenue runners or a 3rd grade Commissary might be drafted into it. The salary of a 3rd grade Commissary is only \$80 per month as compared with \$200 proposed for the Assistant District Commissioners. All this debate would not have been necessary if Government had not placed on these estimates these large increases of salary for the two Commissioners in East Demerara and Berbice, plus the appointment of Assistant Commissioners. The Colonial Secretary in his Memorandum states:—

“There are already some officers in the District Service who would be suitable for

appointment as such and there are also others in other branches of the Service."

If there are officers who are suitable, what do you want with apprentices? The Colonial Secretary goes on to state:—

"Now, the charge has been made in certain circles that the District Scheme is a failure. Government does not admit this charge."

Nobody knows better than the acting Colonial Secretary the full weight and significance of that expression "Government does not admit this charge." All it means is that those who say it is a failure must prove that it is. I will not say that the Scheme has failed because it has never had a fair start. The Colonial Secretary states that during the flood the organisation of the District Commissioners rendered valuable assistance. That is not correct. They had no organisation at all. The organisation belonged to the Police and the several Local Authorities. The District Commissioners did their utmost, but what they could do was very little compared with other people. It is therefore not fair to say that but for them nothing would have been done.

Again credit is given them for the help Government gave to the villages. I have a recollection that in 1911-12 when there was a drought there were no District Commissioners at all but many villages got help. I also observe that the Colonial Secretary states:—

"I feel certain that if a plebiscite were taken—free from political interference—there would be an overwhelming majority in favour of District Administration."

I wonder what is that article in British Guiana which is free from political interference? It is not fair to write these provocative things in a Minute of this kind. The Colonial Secretary in his *apologia* states:—

"It will be of assistance I think if I refer to the changes in the estimates for the current year. As has already been announced, it is proposed to place the salaries of the District Commissioners on an equitable footing."

What is an equitable footing with respect to officers in the Civil Service? No argument Government is capable of adducing can convince anybody except Government itself, that when it appoints District Commissioners at salaries equivalent to the pay of specialists who have

had to spend years to acquire their profession, and a number of years to become specialists, it puts them on an equitable basis. Government does violence to professional men when it gives even a junior doctor \$80 per month and proposes to give apprentices to the District Commissioners \$200 per month. It is unheard of. Government says it only needs \$631 for these increases. It is not for Government to place these unwarranted increases on the Estimate and then say it is not very much. Is it reasonable and just to other officers in the Service? The Colonial Secretary also states:—

"I would add finally that it is the policy of Government to train local candidates and officers in the local service for appointment to the district service, and it is desired to make the conditions such as would enable officers appointed to that service to make it a life-time job."

What do I understand by that? Government is going to appoint two Assistant Commissioners and they must understand that they must not look for promotion in the Service at all, and that even more capable or just as capable officers will not have a chance of getting into that service because they have not been trained? That cannot make for efficiency.

There is continuous reiteration that Government intends to put forward the establishment of County Councils. Government knows very well it has no intention of doing so, for the simple reason that the two things cannot mix—like water and oil. County Councils and District Administration are absolutely unknown.

I regret to say that I cannot praise the Scheme at all, and I must urge on Government not to push through the proposal to appoint Assistant District Commissioners.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I join those Members who have expressed the view that the District Administration Scheme has been of some value to the village communities, but a good thing can be at times too expensive, and the tendency of this Scheme as I see it is to go higher and higher. When the Scheme was introduced we were told, and we are now being told again by the Colonial Secretary in his Memorandum, that the saving would be in the vicinity of between \$27,000 and \$28,000. We are told that the saving in

1935 would only be \$13,853. What I am concerned about chiefly is the difference between the 1934 and 1935 estimates which shows an immediate increase in one year of a sum of \$13,346, and if you deduct from that the recurrent expenditure of \$2,500 for the purchase of a launch, the actual annual increase would be \$10,846. In the same breath we are being told that the Scheme is not yet completed. Whatever that may mean I do not profess to know. Whether it means that by the introduction of County Councils or some other bodies the cost of the Scheme will go higher that is something left to be seen. One would be right in assuming that when the Scheme is actually completed the saving that was originally promised in 1932 would entirely disappear.

As one Member pointed out, these estimates might have been passed without debate had it not been for one contentious item. I agree with the view of those Members who criticised Government on introducing another Deputy Governor of the Colony into the Scheme. I believe the Commissioners have done good work and will continue to do good work. I am not like those villagers who now and again attempt to do things to bring the Scheme into ridicule. Perhaps Your Excellency is aware that in some villages when the District Commissioner presents himself at the Village Council meetings all the members rise and an employee of the Council announces the arrival of "His Honour, the High Commissioner." I know that the officer in question does not at all approve of it. In other villages the Commissioner is referred to as "Meddlesome Matty." I am not one of those who say that the Scheme should be scrapped, but has it not become an expensive plaything of the Government? To my mind that is the position. We are told over and over again that the Scheme has not yet been completed, and the increased expenditure year by year does not convince this Council that this increase is towards the completion of the Scheme. After all Members would be quite justified in expressing fears that before the Scheme is actually completed we will be tied with a millstone around our necks.

I agree with many of the views expressed by the Colonial Secretary in his Memorandum,

but there are many I entirely disagree with. To my mind the Memorandum is an attempt to make an apology for the increased expenditure for 1935, and as one person with whom I discussed the matter described it, it is so much eye-wash, window-dressing. The Colonial Secretary lays down as the policy of Government the intention to train local candidates for jobs in the service. Are we to understand that it is the intention of Government to open a school for the training of officers for this Service? Where is the schoolmaster to come from? Are we going to be saddled with another expert, originally under contract for 3 years, after which he will be offered a permanent appointment? If there is an officer in the Service who is capable of training young men for service under the Scheme then it seems to me that the appointments that are being made under the Scheme are entirely wrong. There can be no doubt about it that officers appointed under the District Administration Scheme must be men qualified in several directions. I cannot speak about the District Commissioners because it seems to me that the only qualification they need possess is a nice sense of humour and to be popular with everybody. I am speaking of the officers who have actually to do the work, to look after the distilleries and things of that kind, the collection and protection of Government revenue.

Officers of that class need some experience, and I believe there are some of them in the Service. But where are they? Are they going to be promoted to a position that is equal to their experience? No, that is not so. Certain positions under the District Administration Scheme are for a certain type of officers. That seems to me to be one of the weakest links in the chain so far as the Scheme is concerned. The right type of officers is not being selected for the Service. Those who have experience are always being left behind. But if this Memorandum was written to hoodwink Members of the Council then it would have been better if it had not been written. Much as I do not like the idea of opening a school it does seem to me that a training ground is required, but that training ground must be inside the Scheme. The senior members of the Scheme must be so equipped that the juniors can learn something from

them, not the seniors to learn from the juniors, as at present obtains. The seniors of the Scheme are at present obtaining their knowledge from the juniors that are engaged in the Service. It seems to me that the sooner that position is remedied the sooner Government will receive full support from at least certain Members of this Council.

It was rumoured not many days ago—and I am surprised to see it is not included in this Memorandum—that in order to make out a case for the appointment of certain additional officers under the Scheme minutes were sent around to the various Commissioners to send in information regarding the amount of revenue collected, and generally to report on their Department for the last year. Whether those reports have been received I do not know, but the information which I believe was sent to Government is not included in this Memorandum of the Colonial Secretary. It seems to me that Government was wise in excluding the reports that were received on those points, because if they were included this Memorandum would have been torn to bits. It would have been a further weapon in the hands of Members who are opposing the increase in the expenditure. The District I am familiar with is that which extends from Bel Air to the Abary. When the figures for that District were received it was at once seen that Government could not present them to the Council. They did not show up the Scheme in any good light at all, for the simple reason that in the old days of the Commissaries Department the District was divided into at least two parts. With respect to the report that was received from the Georgetown Commissioner the revenue there undoubtedly showed an increase, but on examination it was found that that increase was entirely due to additional taxation that was introduced as soon as the Scheme was inaugurated. Government was wise in not embodying the information contained in those two reports because the Colonial Secretary's Memorandum would have lost a good deal of value.

Another little misstatement in the Memorandum is with respect to the position in Essequibo. It reads as follows:—

“It must not be overlooked also that in the majority of cases the new scales provide for a

modest increase in pay, while at least in one case—that of Essequibo—a definite saving will accrue on the retirement of the present holder of the post.”

If the District Commissioners in other parts of the Colony are referred to as Deputy Governors I think we will have to find a new name for the District Commissioner in Essequibo. He is District Commissioner, District Engineer, and I think he has something to do with the Industrial School. As a matter of fact he is everything up there. When he retires, as I understand he is to do shortly, it seems to me that we would be faced with further expenditure because then we shall have to have a separate District Engineer, as I do not think we could find another Commissioner with those qualifications as well. Government will also have to get a headmaster for the Industrial School. The Scheme is a good one and there is no necessity to put in all this window-dressing in order to bolster up the case for the additional appointments which Government proposes to make.

If up to the end of 1934 the Scheme suffered from a shortage of staff, and in consequence the collection of revenue suffered, by all means engage officers for that purpose, but do not take advantage of that in order to create appointments on a very high scale. That is my complaint. I admit there has been a shortage of staff two or three years ago. As a matter of fact that was done purposely at the beginning in order to effect savings. That was for the purpose of putting through the Scheme, but experience has taught Government that it could not do that, and it is trying to remedy a fault that should never have existed. It is a scandalous thing at the beginning of the year to attend at the Commissioner's office in Georgetown to pay licences. Within the past two years the position has been most intolerable on account of the fact that there was always a shortage of staff. There are certain Members of this Council who are in favour of this Scheme, but at the same time any attempt on the part of Government to bring in something new, such as the appointment of Deputy Governors, is distasteful, and I would make a very strong appeal to Government not to press those new appointments.

Mr. AUSTIN : I am convinced that this Scheme is costing the Colony more than Sir Edward Denham contemplated when it was introduced. Furthermore I am convinced that it is going up by leaps and bounds. The Scheme is not yet completed and we are bound later on to add to the expenditure under this Head. My opinion to-day is the same as it was two years ago. In this Colony we are not yet ready for District Administration. It is necessary in certain parts of Africa where there is a huge population and officers are trained to deal with that population which has not got education or easy transport facilities. We are at the moment *in transit* ourselves to a certain extent. We expect the new Governor, and the new Colonial Secretary, an officer who has been with us for many years as Colonial Treasurer, is due back also. We should therefore allow the appointment of new officers to stand over until those two gentlemen arrive in the Colony. I agree with the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice. I think those District Commissioners who have been burdened for the last two years should have their salaries increased, but there it should end for the time being until the new Administrator and his Secretary arrive and could have a real chance to study existing conditions in the Colony. It is not so long ago we had the report of the Financial Commissioners who stated that not only were the economic conditions in the Colony giving the people resident in the Colony cause for anxiety, but they were giving considerable trouble to the Administrator and his Officials. They made certain suggestions and advised that any increase of expenditure should be very carefully considered before it is undertaken.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : On the question of the cost of this Department we are told in the Colonial Secretary's Memorandum that the cost of the work of the Departments which were merged into the Scheme was \$113,632. I would like the Colonial Secretary in his reply to give us the actual figures with respect to those Departments and to say how many Departments were merged into the Scheme. From the figures I have I take it that two Departments were merged into the District Administration Scheme, and according to the Comparative Statement of Expenditure the expenditure of the Com-

missaries Department in 1931 was \$34,154, while that of the Local Government Board was \$20,184. As has been shown in the Memorandum, certain officers from the Department of Lands and Mines were transferred to the Scheme, and a new district, the Rupununi District, was added to the Scheme, at a cost of \$10,754, making a total of \$65,092. Of course I am not taking into consideration the Immigration and Repatriation vote because we still have that vote to-day, and in the natural course of things that vote would have dropped. Therefore the District Administration Scheme shows an increase, according to my figures, of \$39,213 instead of a saving. Members of the Council would be grateful if the Colonial Secretary would give the actual figures of the various Departments that have been merged into the Scheme.

With regard to the Scheme itself I may state at the beginning that I have been specially asked by the villages in my constituency to say that they are absolutely satisfied with the District Administration Scheme, but I may also state for the information of this Council that the proportion of the villages in my constituency that is under the Scheme is just one-fifth of the entire district. In view of that request from the villages concerned I am going to support the Scheme, but I would like to make some observations so far as other villages are concerned. I understand that the District Administration Scheme only represents villages that are under the Local Government Board. If the Scheme was intended only to represent one-fifth of the district in my constituency then I think Government would be well advised to include the entire Colony in the Scheme. It has been stated in the Colonial Secretary's Memorandum that the District Commissioners were of great assistance to the villages during the floods, and that through their representations grants were being given to villages. I take it then that the District Commissioner only recommended grants for villages directly under his control.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon recess.

Mr. WILLS took his seat on the resumption.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS (resuming)

When the Committee adjourned I was about to remark that in view of the catastrophe which befell the Colony last year, a flood followed by a drought, Government should have given assistance to the people in all villages which suffered, whether they were under the District Administration Scheme or not. It was Government's duty to treat them alike. In certain instances, if relief was given to those villages not under the Local Government Board it would have cost less than it cost in some instances to repair the dams of those villages under the District Administration Scheme. As an instance I would refer to the block between Hopetown and Bel Air. Hopetown is on the extreme eastern end of the block, and Bel Air at the western end. The eastern half of Hopetown happened to be under the District Administration Scheme, and one-half of Bel Air. The western half of Hopetown which happened not to be under the District Administration Scheme, was left out entirely from any relief, while relief was given to the villages to the east and west of that half of the village, relief to the extent of the construction of four side-line dams, whereas if Government had included one-half of the western portion of Hopetown it would have been only necessary to build two side-line dams. Because those people were not under the District Administration Scheme they have been penalised and refused any assistance whatever.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member should state the reason why. The hon. Member knows it perfectly well.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I am coming to it, sir. I was told in the replies to my questions given this morning that grants were not given to those villages because they are not under Government control. I have also noticed in the replies that there are villages that have received grants from the Government that are not under the Local Government Board or any Government control whatever. I refer to Bachelor's Adventure and other places. If those places have received grants, where is the principle that no villages will receive grants that are not under the Local Government Board? Government went further and stated:—

“In a certain instance assistance was requested and upon investigation the District

Commissioner replied that such assistance, by way of free grant, would be recommended if those seeking assistance would agree to the area being declared a Country District and administered by a Local Authority under the Local Government Board; this proposal was however rejected and, as a result, no free grant was recommended and the applicants were so informed at the time.”

I happen to know that there were some villages that were prepared to come under some control so that Government would have guarantee of maintenance of any works Government might have to do in those areas, but I have a grave suspicion from the replies supplied to me that because they did not agree to come under the Polder Ordinance is the reason why they have been refused assistance, but if they were under the Polder Ordinance they would have given Government some guarantee of maintaining any work Government did for them. It seems to me that they must either come under the District Administration Scheme or no grants would be given to them. I am fully aware that more than 75 per cent. of the proprietors signed the petition whereas the Ordinance requires that just one-third should agree. The petition was turned down because no assistance would be given to them.

The hon. Member for Berbice River has drawn the Council's attention to the fact that when drought relief was given to the villages that suffered no distinction was made as to which village was under the Local Government Board and which was not. I think the same principle should have been adopted in this instance. In the West Coast Berbice District just one-third of the villages are under the Local Government Board.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have given the hon. Member considerable latitude. I would remind him that we are discussing District Administration and not flood relief. The hon. Member must confine himself to the subject before the Council.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I think it all comes under the District Administration Scheme. Reference was made by the Colonial Secretary to the fact that credit must be given to the District Administration Scheme for the flood relief. However, I accept Your Excellency's ruling. I agree that the districts should be graded, but at the same time I do not agree to an

increase of those officers' emoluments, because of the fact that it was definitely stated by Sir Edward Denham that those officers would be drawn from the Service. I think if they are put on the incremental scale and given their increments year by year that would meet the present situation, but to give them four increments in one year I am opposed to it in principle. Regarding the new posts, I agree with the hon. Nominated Member that they should not be filled now, but if it is found necessary Government might do so next year.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I am thoroughly against this District Administration Scheme. When it was first brought forward I opposed it, and during its working I have seen nothing to make me change my mind. The opinion I have always held is that these District Commissioners are totally unsuited to a Colony like ours. From what I have read and from what has happened, in bringing forward this Scheme Government copied what was done in West Africa.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the hon. Member said that.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: That is anyhow my opinion. I do not know where the copy is taken from, but to compare places with millions of people with a Colony with 300,000 people seems quite wrong to my mind. I do not know about other districts in the Colony, but I do know that in Essequibo I have received a lot of complaints in regard to the working of the Scheme there. The Commissioner has a multiplicity of duties to perform. The Essequibo Coast was run just as well, and in fact better, from a revenue point of view when it had a Commissary, an Assistant Commissary, a District Engineer and a Superintendent of Onderneeming. At the present moment all these duties are performed with the assistance of a second-class officer, by one man, which to my mind is impossible. The abolition of the Commissaries Office was to my mind a great mistake, and the Colony has suffered enormously in its revenue collections. I do not know whether the people on the West Coast of Demerara or on the East Coast are satisfied with the Scheme, but I do know that the people in Essequibo are not satisfied with it. I am always receiving letters. One communication I

got was signed by no less than 30 people I showed it to the District Commissioner some months ago when I was in Essequibo. I did not agree with many of the remarks and suggestions that were made in that communication to me, but the fact remains that the people in Essequibo, as far as I can gather from conversations and letters addressed to me, are very much dissatisfied with the working of the Scheme in Essequibo now. I also do not think this is the time that any addition should be made to the expenditure of the Colony. I think that such far-reaching changes as those might well remain over until the arrival of the new Governor. I am not one who believes in always putting off things for the last possible moment, but I do think this is an occasion when we ought to wait until the arrival of the new Governor as it involves a considerable sum of money.

As regards the charge of favouritism—it amounts to that—in regard to the proposed appointments, I do not wish to associate myself with that at all. I do not think for a moment that Your Excellency would be a party to such favouritism as to put a young officer with very little experience over the heads of those who have been very much longer in the Service and have had more experience. I have always believed that ability and individuality should count when appointments are going to be made, and that neither age nor experience is always the crucial test. At the same time I do think that very great thought should be given the appointment of those extra officers if the vote goes through. We have heard a good deal about the qualities required for District Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners. I quite agree with some of the remarks of the hon. Member for Berbice River, that it is a very onerous undertaking when a man undertakes to be a District Commissioner. If he is to be a success he has to be highly intelligent, tactful, and must have the great asset, a plenty of commonsense. But apart from all that the necessary accompaniment is untiring energy. It is no sinecure, especially for the Commissioner in Essequibo who has to supervise from Supenaam to the mouth of the Pomeroon river.

I see it is mentioned in the Colonial Secretary's Memorandum that extra work

has been thrown upon the District staff which has made the proposed appointments necessary. It is stated that the staff has been made responsible *inter alia* for collections under (a) the Sugar (Temporary) Excise Duty Ordinance, 1932; (b) The Rice Factories Ordinance, 1933; The Sea Defence Ordinance, 1933, and (d) The Copra Products Sale and Manufacture Ordinance, 1933. I cannot see that there is a tremendous amount of extra work thrown on an officer if he has to carry out the duties under those Ordinances. In the past the Commissaries had to carry out all sorts of things. There was always fresh work being thrown on them, but I never knew that it necessitated augmenting the staff of the Commissaries Department, except in the case of the Distillery Tax Ordinance.

I have no doubt that this Scheme will go through, and I hope for the sake of the Colony it will be a success, but I would not be true to myself if I said that I agreed with it, or that I thought it was going to be a success. I do not think since this District Administration Scheme has been brought into being the Colony has benefited one sixpence by it. I think, on the other hand, the Colony has lost. The loss of revenue is far greater than most people can imagine. What is required in Essequibo is to revert to what obtained there prior to the advent of the late Sir Gordon Guggisberg—a Superintendent of Onderneeming, a Commissary, an Assistant Commissary and a District Engineer. Even if the Commissioner is a genius it is impossible for him to carry out all the work he has to do to the satisfaction of the people of Essequibo, and with efficiency with regard to Government's revenue collections and the management of village affairs. I am sorry that I should have to speak as I have spoken on this matter, and I am more than sorry that I shall have to record my vote against it, but those are the views that I honestly and sincerely hold. I have always been thoroughly against the Scheme. It is something that is beyond the needs of this Colony. The whole trouble with us here is that we live above our means. We do not cut our coats to suit our pockets. We are supposed to be a first-class Colony, but when it comes to finance we are about a 10th-rate Colony. We have all sorts of grand titles and an organisation in numbers and

salaries that can look after a million people, and we are adding to it every year without any tangible improvement. I am against this.

Mr. DIAS: I have listened with very great interest to the discussion on this subject and I am very pleased indeed to see the turn it has taken. Except the hon. Member who has just spoken, I think one might sum up the situation and say that all the other Members regard the District Administration as a service which the Colony should retain. I do not think that upon close examination of the matter there will be much divided opinion, because if one takes his mind back to what obtained prior to 1929 and compares it with what obtains to-day I think it will be borne upon him that it is necessary not only to maintain this service but to develop it. A good many Members attach very great significance to the statement that the Scheme would not cost the Colony any more. Surely that assurance was only in respect of the launching of it—that it would not cost the Colony as much or more than it was then costing to run the Colony in a different way, because I would be very sorry to think that any Governor or any body of men would give an assurance that a certain scheme would never at any time cost any more. That would be absurd, and it could never have been so understood.

If the figures given by the Colonial Secretary are correct we have still up to the moment saved money on the Scheme. But I would not be satisfied to learn that we had reached the end of the expenditure and at the same time want a Colony like this to progress, because progress rather involves expenditure of money and the maintenance of the Colony in proper order and condition. I fancy that hon. Members have got too accustomed to the various reductions in the Service that have been made by the Government in 1928 or 1929 on account of the depression, and the moment an attempt is made to replace a penny of what was taken off there is a cry that if you look back to 1930 you will see that Government spent so much. Hon. Members must bear in mind that that is not the period of time they should look at. If they want to make comparisons they should examine documents which can give the necessary information, and it would be

observed that the expenditure prior to those drastic reductions—and I say many of them were most unwisely done—was far in excess of what obtains to-day. Comparison should be made with those days, and particularly so with respect to Departments that collect revenue. That was a terrible mistake and the Colony is now awaking to that. Government is endeavouring to see if it can remedy that. Complaints are made here—and very just complaints—that the Colony has been losing revenue for some years.

It is a matter of common knowledge to-day that Government is not collecting revenue that it should collect because there is not the staff to collect it. The staff of the Commissaries Department was cut down to the minimum, and we have heard complaints about crowds not being attended to. I have personally made complaints to Government about the same matter. People go there to pay licences and are turned away at 2 o'clock after waiting for hours. If an attempt is being made to correct those things hon. Members should welcome it. I certainly do. The opposition, as I understand it, is not to the Scheme but to the attempt which Government is making to strengthen the Department so as to be able to collect revenue which for some years has gone unpaid. If I understand the discussion correctly, that is the dispute at present, because hon. Members speak of the Scheme as being excellent, and of people being satisfied with it. It is true that the hon. Member for Central Demerara made reference to a friend of his who, speaking as an individual, said he had no use for the Scheme. If the hon. Member had said he was told by somebody that the people had no use for the Scheme one might consider that as a serious statement.

If therefore we got down to bedrock and considered all the matters that are really objected to, namely, the putting on a proper footing of the salaries of the Commissioners and the appointment of two Assistant Commissioners, one might examine them from the point of view advanced by the Colonial Secretary. The matter has been treated as if the officers were going to draw the maximum salaries straight away, whereas it is only intended to pay one of the officers the maximum. The others will begin at the very beginning

and gradually rise, and in some cases they would not draw their maximum salaries for the next five years. I do not consider it fair to base discussion on the assumption that the officers will draw their maximum salaries. That is not so.

With regard to the Assistant Commissioners I am sure there is more than one hon. Member in this Council who knows my views about having understudies in business. It is a fallacy, a great mistake, and one that has led to financial disaster in this Colony, to allow any concern to be managed by a single man, and that those below him should be such juniors that they would never get to know the serious part of the undertaking. There is no difference between a commercial house having understudies and a District Commissioner having under him a man who is trained to take his place. Surely that is a business measure. I have heard businessmen say that is the proper thing to do. I see businessmen in this Council. Are they going to change their views on this again? I know one house that has met with the greatest disaster because it did not follow that policy, and to-day the Directors have regretted that they did not take care to see that the head of affairs had somebody under him learning so that when the time came for him to retire or go on leave there would be somebody to take his place. Surely, if we are to have Assistant Commissioners it cannot be said that the salary proposed, £400 to £500, is too much to give them. They must be drawing very near that to-day.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not see any provision for a salary of £400 to £500.

Mr. DIAS: I think I am right in saying that the proposal is £400 to £500. If the hon. Member would look at page 6 of the Estimate he would see Item 1b—Assistant District Commissioner (\$1,920—\$96—\$2,400), \$1,920. Before the officer can get \$200 per month he has to wait five years. I do not consider that is too much. When it comes to the question of selecting officers that is, of course, Government's function, and Government must assume the responsibility of selecting and appointing suitable persons. I imagine that if each of the 29 Members of this Council was asked to nominate somebody we would have 29

candidates. We cannot have that, and the proper thing is for Government to make the appointments. If Government makes a mistake I have no doubt that hon. Members would not hesitate to come here and complain bitterly. I remember the time when I complained bitterly against one appointment, and the old Combined Court was so unanimous about it that the officer had to take the next steamer and go back. We protested against it because it was an appointment that should not have been made. I am sorry that it is not proposed to appoint four Assistant Commissioners. I think each District Commissioner should have an Assistant, especially in view of the complaint the hon. Member has just made with regard to Essequibo, that the Commissioner there has too much work. There could be no stronger case for an Assistant Commissioner in Essequibo than the remarks made by the hon. Member who spoke last. He has made out a perfectly good case for the supplementing of the staff in Essequibo, and I am inclined to support him on that ground. It is obvious to everyone that the pruning knife was applied too indiscriminately, especially in connection with the revenue-earning Departments. I am glad to see that Government has at last realised what the position is and is earnestly attempting to put things in order.

Mr. CANNON: I am going to ask just one question. Is it contemplated to bring anybody from abroad to fill these positions, or will they be filled by people in the Colony?

THE CHAIRMAN: By people in the Colony.

Mr. CANNON: That is enough for me. I was not responsible for the inauguration of this system; in days gone by I voted against it, but I have said all along during the session, the British Government want this, and if they are prepared to have it let them have it.

Dr. SINGH: In my opinion the personnel of the District Administration should be the same as in 1934. There should be no increases in 1935 in view of the prevailing state of affairs. Unemployment is still rife, the circulation of money is still poor, and two of our major industries, sugar and rice, will have some set-back on

account of the low prices offered for them. Another reason why they should not be an increase is because it cannot be shown that the population of the Colony has increased, so that the District Administration will have to cater for the welfare of more people this year than last year. It also cannot be shown that the revenue this year will be materially increased because the industries are the same. Therefore, there is no reason why we should spend any extra money. The members of the staff of the District Administration have been carrying on for the past three years and I hope they will continue to carry on. When it becomes necessary to increase the staff this Council will willingly do so when our population has increased and when there are additional industries. At the present time every penny should be saved to meet our huge expenditure.

Mr. WILLS: During last week Members of the Council were favoured with a Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary dealing with the District Administration estimates. That Memorandum, I take it, was given to Members for the purpose of preparing them to meet the estimates, and perhaps to persuade them to accept the increases as they appeared on the Estimate. That Memorandum has not convinced the speaker, and I am sure it has not convinced several of the Members of the Council that the increases are justified. Let us examine the Memorandum.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the hon. Member was not here this morning when several Members examined the Memorandum. Does the hon. Member consider it necessary to go over the ground again?

Mr. WILLS: I thank you, sir, for the information that the ground has been already covered. I may be permitted to say this: that the reason why the District Administration Scheme has not met with the universal approval of the people of this Colony is that Government failed to put into operation the Scheme as suggested by the Committee that considered it, although Sir Edward Denham gave an assurance that he would inaugurate it for the purpose of expediency and necessity, putting District Commissioners at the head, and that as soon as possible he would set about to make the necessary provision for the inauguration of the Dis-

trict Councils and County Councils. I think that at present the officers are not doing the work they were originally brought in to do when the Committee recommended the Scheme to Government. In advancing argument why these Assistant Commissioners should be appointed I heard the hon. Nominated Member make the statement that in all business concerns there are understudies. I agree, but those understudies are not men who are brought in from somewhere without any special knowledge of the particular branch of work that they might be called upon to do. Is Government going to pay an apprentice a salary of \$160 per month rising to \$200? I say there is something wrong. In other walks of life apprentices have to pay to learn. I notice also in the Memorandum it is stated :—

“ Moreover, officers appointed to the district staffs are required to have *inter alia* a knowledge of revenue collection, customs work, distillery work, etc., and unless trained officers are available, the service is bound to be prejudiced.”

It seems to me that if Government is going to appoint Assistant Commissioners those officers are in the Department and it merely means a matter of promotion. I appeal to Government not to close its ears to the criticisms which have been levelled at the Scheme, not for the purpose of being destructive or to hinder Government, but for the purpose of letting Government know the feeling that exists among the people in the districts. If revenue clerks are needed they should be appointed, but as regards increasing the salaries of the Commissioners and appointing Assistant Commissioners I think Government would be well advised to leave those proposals out until such time as the Colony can afford to do so.

Mr. SEAFORD : I was glad to hear that all the hon. Members who have spoken, with the exception of one, are really in favour of the District Administration Scheme in principle. I was rather expecting to hear condemnation and various motions for throwing it out altogether when I remembered the speeches in reply to the Budget Speech, but no doubt further consideration has made a good many hon. Members change their minds. I do not think anyone can conscientiously and truly say that the Scheme has been a failure. It is true that it is not working quite as well

as it might, but I do not think any scheme that has ever or will ever be put forward can be expected to function efficiently from the very commencement. It has to find its feet. It is absolutely new work to the officers, and they had to adapt themselves and their subordinates to the multifarious duties they had to undertake at the time. I have personal knowledge of the extraordinarily good work that has been done on the East and West Coasts of Demerara. I have come into touch with them there and I can vouch for their honesty of purpose and the good work done. There is no doubt in my mind that it has power of doing more good than it has done up to the present, but one cannot get away from the fact that the Scheme gives the villages and the people in the country direct representation to Government which they did not have in the past. It gives them a chance to have any hardship or any grievance they might have attended to at once instead of, as in the past, having to go through the red-tape of the Colonial Secretary's Office. It takes a long time to get things done when you have to go through various offices. You find that through the Commissioners things get a move on very quickly. That is one reason why the Scheme was instituted.

To my mind the Scheme is not working quite satisfactorily for two reasons. The first is that Government tried to be over economical, and the second is that I do not think Government was successful in finding quite the right officers in most cases. Those are points that can be remedied. I think it is admitted by all that the Commissioners have more work than they can possibly get through in certain districts. What is the remedy for that? The only remedy I can see is to give them Assistants. How can it be contended that the Scheme is not a success because the Commissioners have more work than they can do, and then refuse to give them Assistants to make them efficient? I cannot understand. The remedy is to get the right men for those jobs. Where is Government going to find them? Has Government got those men now? It seems to me that if Government has not men who understand Customs work, distillery work, it has to train such men. It seems to me that Government will not get such men ready-made, and the only way is to attach

them to the Department and teach them their job.

I cannot possibly oppose Government's recommendations. It is the only way to put the Scheme on a proper footing and get full value from it. We are too much in the habit of saying we cannot afford it. I admit that in a great many cases we cannot and should not attempt to do it unless there is reason for it, but very often we have refused to vote money here, and that refusal has cost us more in the end through lack of efficiency. That can be borne out by the Public Works Department. I think, especially in sea defence work, if we had a bigger staff and more efficiency we would have saved more money. Exactly the same holds good in this case. I cannot agree with the suggestion to postpone this item until the arrival of the new Governor. I do not think it is really a matter of policy, but a matter of a departmental nature. I think when the new Governor comes he will have so many back matters of policy to attend to that before he gets down to an item like this it will be a long time, and then he would have to be guided by his advisers. I do not think there is much to be gained by postponing it. I know that Members of the Council do give assistance wherever they can, and I appeal to them that in a case like this, even if it is carried against their wishes, that they should sink any feelings they may have and give assistance to both the District Commissioners and their Assistants whoever they may be.

Mr. WIGHT: I may as well inform you, sir, that I am entirely against this Scheme. I have been against it and will continue to be. It was not inaugurated by Sir Edward Denham; he endeavoured to carry out what the late Sir Gordon Guggisberg inaugurated. I am in a position to say—I had his confidence—that after his visit to the North West District his views had entirely changed. I think most Government Officials occupying prominent positions would tell you if they wanted to, that if Sir Gordon Guggisberg had returned they would have taken six months' leave and not returned. He was a whale for work but could not get work done. He said he could not find persons to carry out the Scheme which was a good one, but he was satisfied it could not work in this Colony. Those were his last words

to me. I am sorry that his life was not spared to return to this Colony. My own view of the Scheme is that it amounts to nothing else but absolute failure. In the first place the appointments, as usual with Government, were like kisses which go by favour. Appointments were made of certain favoured individuals, and now we are told that the Commissioners want further assistance. Your Excellency's reply to a question asked by the hon. Member for Georgetown North satisfied him, but it certainly does not satisfy me. You were asked distinctly whether the new appointees would be men from this Colony.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was not asked that, but whether they would be from abroad.

Mr. WIGHT: That is correct. Your answer was that the posts would be filled by persons in the Colony.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the Colony at the present time.

Mr. WIGHT: Do you say that those persons did not come from the other side?

THE CHAIRMAN: I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. WIGHT: The hon. Member said he was satisfied, but as far as I am concerned I am not satisfied because it is a vast difference. I look upon these Commissioners as nothing short of glorified collectors, and even then they are not doing what they should do. I think the hon. Member for Central Demerara referred to them as meddling. I agree with him. They want something to do; they are meddling in things they have absolutely no right to interfere with. This Memorandum is certainly well written. It is a document which lawyers would describe as a bad case, and their motto is: make your reply as long as possible when you have a bad case. (Laughter). One portion of it states:—

“With the inauguration of the District Scheme there has been also a very noticeable increase in the collection of rates and outstanding revenue in the villages. . . .”

It is an honest document, but what I want to know is why they did not collect the rates etc., due by estates on the Essequibo

Coast? I consider it nothing else but sharp practice on the part of some officer in the Government, the method adopted to collect rates which are, in my opinion, prescribed. I am going to make a test case of it. They had not the pluck to levy on any estate themselves, but when someone loaned money to help the poor farmers and foreclosed the mortgage Government put in a claim in a stealthy manner. I was down there a few weeks ago and saw the position. It is appalling, but it is absolutely true that on an estate worth \$8,000 nearly \$5,000 was allowed to accrue in rates and taxes. The people were given what is called a koker which is supposed to cost \$60,000. I feel sure I would have put it up myself for about \$10,000. They damaged the man's property by putting a concrete wall on the one side, and spent \$800 to clear the channel in order to give his estate drainage. It silts up in two or three months. That is the kind of thing Government expects people to pay rates and taxes for. It is an appalling state of affairs. I have the greatest respect for the Commissioner in Essequibo; he certainly has too much to do. It is out of the question to ask one man to administer so many Departments, but it is just like Government.

It is stated in the Memorandum that officers appointed to the District staffs are required to have a knowledge of distillery work. I would like Government to tell me the name of one of those gentlemen who possesses that knowledge. The document which has been put before us is a masterpiece, and I give the Colonial Secretary credit for it, but it will never induce me to say I am satisfied with the Scheme. The Memorandum refers to relief work done by the Commissioners during the flood. Did the Commissioners do the work? They had not the slightest thing to do with it. It was fortunate for the Colony that we had such good sugar estate managers. I know what happened both on the East Coast and the West Coast. But for them we would have been all flooded out, yet we hear about the Commissioners being responsible. I cannot see what work the Commissioners have done. I heard the Hon. Mr. Seaford say he is satisfied. He has a wider experience on the two Coasts than I have, but I speak from personal and intimate connection with the Commissioners. I called on the

Commissioner in connection with a certain matter I was interested in, and in which he was meddling, and what was the result? The matter is unsettled up to the present moment. The Commissioners have nothing to do and are finding work for themselves. I have the greatest respect for the Commissioner on the East Coast. I consider that his time, knowledge, education and ability are being wasted in that district. He would have been better employed in the Colonial Secretariat doing some work.

I am entirely against the Scheme, and if there is anything I can do to prevent these proposals being carried through I would not hesitate one moment or stop at anything to do so. I would stoop to anything within my brains to put a stop to the Scheme. I have no axe to grind whatever. When I speak I say what I think. I may tread on some people's toes but it is an unfortunate habit of mine, and that is why I say as little as I can.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think the hon. Member referred to me in connection with the floods. I would like to remove any misapprehension. The District Commissioners did extraordinarily good work on the East Coast and the West Coast during the flood period. Naturally they did not have the supply of labour available to the managers of the sugar estates, but they did everything they could and very good work indeed.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I was very pleased to hear the hon. Member for Georgetown Central speak of the conditions that prevail in Essequibo because it is what I have been preaching for years.

Mr. WIGHT: If the Hon. Mr. Seaford makes that statement he knows more than I do, and I am not going to say it is not correct. If he tells me something I know he means what he says, but my knowledge of it came over the telephone from the very people who said that in the next hour the whole of the West Bank would be ruined.

Mr. SEAFORD: That is perfectly correct because the gentleman was at the backdam and was able to see what was happening there. The Commissioner had a very large area to deal with.

THE CHAIRMAN : He could not stop the floods.

Mr. WOOD : (Conservator of Forests) : I think the task I have been set in this debate has been very greatly simplified by the knowledge that the majority of the Elected Members have stolen my thunder. I was going to explain, more or less from the inside, how District Administration work was done before the District Commissioners Scheme came in, but there seems to be a concensus of opinion that great improvement has resulted from the inauguration of the District Administration Scheme. There is, sir, and I think there has been from the very beginning, a dark cloud hanging over the idea of the inauguration of District Administration in this Colony, and that cloud is the absolutely erroneous idea which is possessed by some people that District Administration is a form of Administration which emanates from Africa, and which has its highest form of development in Africa. I have lived in four Continents and I have worked in five countries. Apart from the landing stage at Port Said I have never yet set foot in Africa. The hon. Member for Berbice River ventured this morning to speak on something with which apparently he was not very familiar. He seemed to think that the idea of District Administration originated in the Bahamas and found its way to Africa in 1907.

Mr. ELEAZAR : I distinctly stated that it began in the Bahamas with Resident Justices and after changing its name in various ways, in 1907 they were called District Commissioners.

Mr. WOOD : When I heard that I thought of the grave of John Nicholson in Delhi, the most famous District Officer who ever lived. I know where the system of District Administration originated, and where it has attained its greatest perfection, and that is in India where it was originated by the Mogul Emperor, Akbar, who was honoured by Queen Elizabeth long before 1907, and some years before Livingstone ever set foot on the shores of Africa. Another thing which I understood the hon. Member for Berbice River to say was that Sir Gordon Guggisberg wished to inaugurate the Scheme, but that before he left he realised

that he had made a mistake ; that his new Scheme, which would have been a better one, was in his brain but had never been put on paper. This Scheme we are discussing to-day is not Sir Gordon's Scheme. Sir Gordon's Scheme was on these lines but was rather different. Furthermore Sir Gordon Guggisberg had selected me to start this Scheme and he dovetailed it with the Local Government Board, and appointed me Chairman of the Local Government Board for that purpose. I think I was once as intimately associated with him in his Scheme as the hon. Member for Berbice River, and almost the last morning's work he did in this Colony he did on this Scheme. He did it probably after he last saw the hon. Member because he was not well enough to come down to his office and did his work in his bedroom where he had an office table. That, I submit, is not the action of a man who has decided that his Scheme is no good and is going to give it up.

Furthermore, I think it only fair to say in that connection that the hon. Member for Georgetown Central has said that Sir Gordon was not altogether happy about the personnel. That may have been the case, sir, but I think it only fair to say in that connection something which I do not think anybody but myself knows, and that is this : that on an occasion in this Council, shortly after Sir Gordon came to this Colony, a motion was moved and was passed that his salary should be increased. Sir Gordon's idea with this Scheme was that he should have an officer who had wide experience in District Administration, and he wished to have that officer as a sort of Colony Commissioner working with him. He told me once that that was his idea, and that he thought it would have been a very good thing for the Scheme, but he felt that he was not entitled to ask the Colony to pay for such a man, and that he had hoped to use his rise in salary to pay him himself.

Where a Scheme like this is introduced entirely *de novo* it would be a perfectly wonderful thing if it worked perfectly well from the very start, and it would be a marvellous thing if there were no diehards that disliked it. I held the post of Chairman of the Local Government Board for a year, and I say emphatically it was the most astonishing system of Local Admin-

istration. It more or less deliberately divorced the Government from any representation in the villages and divorced the villages from any executive representation in the Government. It was literally accepted that such should be the case. Anybody who cares to turn up the file when on one occasion it was being sought to find a Chairman for the Local Government Board, will see the various remarks made by the favoured individuals who were offered that lucrative and enjoyable post, and the various excuses they made, that they were already working overtime and would not be able to spend more than 10 minutes a day. It is a most interesting file to read. It came back blank as regards candidates for that very enjoyable position. It was then sent again to an officer with literally what amounted to an S.O.S.—that as a matter of patriotism and loyalty would he take it on? The reply was that in the circumstances he would take on the supervision of the Local Administration of the Colony on the condition that he was not expected to visit any village, and Government's reply was couched in words of thanks that he should have taken it on at all. That was the condition that Local Administration was in before the District Administration Scheme was evolved. The result of that was that the villages had no effective executive representation whatever in the Government. I am not suggesting that the Chairman of the Local Government Board or the members of the Local Government Board were not conscientious and did not do their very best, but that was quite useless without the intimate knowledge they ought to have had, an up-to-date knowledge of what was going on in the villages.

I will give one instance which has always stuck in my mind. Three East Indians from a rather unhappy collection of huts at one end of Wakenaam found it difficult to find somebody sufficiently literate and sufficiently interested to be Chairman of their small Country District. Nobody on the Local Government Board knew anything about the people. Some recommendations might come from the Sanitary Inspector or Police Corporal. It was a very small community and it was such a serious matter that those three East Indians, scarcely literate in English, came all the way to Georgetown to see the

Chairman of the Local Government Board. They arrived in Georgetown rather lost and were found sitting on the stairs summoning up courage. They were found there by a Barrister who was going up and scenting what is, I understand, technically known as a "pick up," he asked them what they wanted and took them up to the office. That is how they got into the Local Government Board office. They came into my office and the Barrister began to explain what they wanted, but he did not understand them very well. Fortunately one of them said something to a companion in Hindustani and we carried on the conversation in that language. At any rate the whole thing was settled, but the great point about the interview was that those three men went away absolutely astonished at the idea that they had been able to see somebody and had been actually listened to. Coming from India where every District Officer held *mulakat* three times a week in his house where anybody could see him about anything, the conditions in this Colony under which people have to travel to Georgetown to see the Chairman of the Local Government Board made me feel discontented with the system I was administering.

We have heard to to-day, quite rightly in many ways, what the qualifications are for a District Commissioner, but there is one qualification which I think has not been mentioned. It may be tactless of me but I propose to mention it, and it is that a District Commissioner, if he is worthy of the name, must regard himself as the champion of the people of his district. He must regard himself as the man whose business it is to advise Government and make absolutely certain that Government knows what the wants and aspirations and troubles of the people of his district are, and he must be prepared to stand up for them quite fearlessly. In the past, under the Local Government Board system, that did not arise. The villages and the districts had no executive representation at all. If something was going to be done by Government in some village that might be palpably wrong, but was being done with the best intentions, how could they represent to Government that it was a bad scheme? They might go to the harassed Chairman of the Local Government Board in Georgetown, who has his own Department to run, and worry him, and he might

say "You are quite wrong because I have discussed the matter with the various Heads of Departments." The result was invariable acquiescence by the Chairman of the Local Government Board in anything Government proposed to do. That was a terrible system to both sides. Government were in a most difficult position because they were not getting the advice of a man whom they could trust, who was on the spot and, if it was a real grievance, could explain why.

When the Coastal Drainage Schemes were in very hasty preparation, and when a small staff was rushing about preparing a Drainage Scheme for various parts of the coastlands, it was decided that Ann's Grove should be drained by means of a pump. The pump was going to cost a great deal of money and Ann's Grove would have to pay for it in 50 years because the life of the pump would have been 25 years, so that when the next pump was due they would still have half of the cost of the old pump to pay for. The people pointed out that they were never flooded. They protested that they did not want a pump as they were never flooded. The scheme was acquiesced in by the Chairman of the Local Government Board who could not possibly know anything about it. He had only undertaken the post on condition that he would not be expected to visit the villages. So the people were told "You must have a pump because we know you need it and you have to pay for it." The pump is there and had a trial run for two hours. They have never had a flood since, not even during the great flood last year. Things like that must occur wherever the central Government is divorced from the villages. They cannot occur under any system of the District Administration that is even reasonably efficient. For these reasons, and coming as I have from a country where District Administration was originated and developed to its highest point, and where the District Officers were amongst the people the whole time, living in the villages under canvas for eight months of the year, the system of Local Administration that obtained in this Colony struck me as being the most amazing system I have ever seen, and it seems to me rather a wonderful achievement if it has been possible to scrap that system and establish a better one in its place without increasing expenditure.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think I have been misunderstood by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat. Your Excellency will permit me to correct him on the points he has raised. I maintain that I never said that District Officers originated in 1907, but after slavery in 1838, and that eventually the title of Commissioner came about. There were officers prepared to look after the interests of people in outlying districts. The hon. Member mentioned the Ann's Grove pump—

THE CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. Member not to continue that.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The Local authority insisted that they did not want a pump and that the village had never been flooded, but Government insisted that they must have a pump.

Mr. WOOD: I submit that that is redundant. I have said that already. (laughter).

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am submitting that had a District Commissioner been there he would have said the same thing as the Local Government Board. The result is that since its trial run the pump has not worked until this day. I have been crying like a voice in the wilderness, pointing out that by allowing the Secretary of the Local Government Board to remain in Georgetown he was giving second-hand information to the Board and causing wrong decisions. I say honestly that decentralisation of the officers has been a good thing, but I do not think it justifies Government in dismissing the 3rd grade Commissaries and now saying that the Department is understaffed and that we should appoint Assistant Commissioners at \$200 per month.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member has explained his point and might leave it there.

Mr. WIGHT: I desire to say that most of my interviews with the late Sir Gordon Guggisberg took place in the same sick room.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Exception was taken to the remark I made that District Administration is not necessary in this country on account of the size of its population. I wish to emphasise that and

to say that the speech of the Conservator of Forests bears out that. He referred to India which is one of the most thickly populated countries in the world. My argument is that District Administration originated and has been highly successful in thickly populated countries, not in sparsely populated countries.

Mr. WOOD I gained two years of my experience of District Administration in a portion of India which I do not think is as thickly populated as this Colony.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: That might sound very clever coming from an Official, but that might be a solitary place in the huge Indian Empire.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: After the very extensive debate that has taken place there remains very little for me to say, but from the outset I would like to disabuse the minds of some hon. Members who seem to have the idea that the Memorandum was prepared by a lawyer with a very subtle brain to try to hood-wink or deceive them. I would like to inform those Members that the Memorandum is the entire work of Mr. Green, the Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary, and revised by me. Except for some slight amendments the whole thing was his work and not mine, therefore there was no subtle brain at work. The hon. Member for Georgetown Central made the point that the arguments were highly legal and technical and intended to mislead Members of the Council. The hon. Member for Berbice River also drew attention to the fact that Government had simply denied that the Scheme was a failure, and had used a legal form of pleading. There was no intention to deceive hon. Members; it was simply a plain statement of facts as Government saw them, and I submit that all the Memorandum contains is a plain statement of facts and figures. With Your Excellency's permission I would like to read an extract from a letter from Sir Edward Denham addressed to Your Excellency dealing with this matter. His name had been referred to by several hon. Members who said he had promised various things—that those Officers would be transferred to the District Administration and no additional expense would be put on the Colony. Sir Edward Denham, writing on or about the 26th December, 1934, says:—

"I congratulate you. I am particularly glad of what you have done for the Staffs of the Departments, especially of the District Administration."

That refers to the increased emoluments under District Administration which Your Excellency has put before the Council, and shows that Sir Edward Denham, as late as December, 1934, agreed with the recommendations which are before the Council to-day. I am not aware of what the late Sir Gordon Guggisberg's views on District Administration were. I left the Colony a week before he arrived here, and returned a week before he left, so that I did not even have the pleasure of seeing him.

I think there are only one or two points to which I need refer. It seems to be generally admitted that District Administration is something that has come to stay, that it is desirable, and that the work being done by the District Commissioners is good work. I think from the point of view of the Central Government it is most desirable that there should be in each district an officer who is charged with the Administration of that district, whose business it is to keep his eyes open on all matters that occur in his district, and should be responsible for putting up to Government recommendations for the betterment of his particular district. I submit confidently that that tends to keep the Central Government in much closer touch with the various outlying districts. In a Colony of this size I do not think it can be gainsaid that it is impossible either for the Governor himself or for the Colonial Secretary to be kept in close contact with all the problems of the various districts, and if there is in each district an officer whose duty it is to watch the various problems that arise in his district, and whose duty it is to make representations to the Central Government for the improvement and betterment of the district, I submit confidently that there is far more likelihood that the wants of the outlying districts will receive much better attention, and they receive much better attention than they ever did under the old system that prevailed in this Colony.

I think it is admitted that in that respect the Scheme has proved successful. I am quite satisfied that there are some Members of the Council who will never be persuaded that there is anything good in

this District Administration. They have made up their minds that they do not want it, and are fully determined not to consider any proposals that are put up. Fortunately they are in the great minority, but I am quite satisfied that other Members who have considered the matter carefully would not like to go back to the old order of things, but are prepared to give the District Administration Scheme a fair chance of proving itself successful.

I think it is generally admitted that when the Scheme was started in 1932 that was a year when drastic reductions were made in the Service, or shortly before that. The staffs of every Department were cut down to the minimum, and in some cases even below the minimum required to run those Departments efficiently. Therefore when the District Administration took over the various duties which it is now performing, the staff that was available for the work to be done was the very minimum it could possibly be. During the two years the Scheme has been in operation it has been found absolutely necessary, if it is to be given a fair working chance and to prove a success, to have more staff. It is impossible for a District Commissioner to do everything himself, and in some cases he has had practically no assistance in the district in which he may be. Government is not contending that the Scheme has proved without fault. It has been in operation for two years only. Charges have been made that there is overlapping, that there is a lack of co-operation between the District Commissioners and the various Heads of Departments. That may be, but those small defects in the system can be easily remedied, and Government would welcome information in cases where a Member of this Council is aware that there is overlapping or friction, or where complaints are made to the District Commissioner and do not receive the attention they should. The attention of Government should be called to such cases and every effort will be made to remedy them. With regard to the charge of overlapping it must be realised that that was bound to occur at the beginning, and I do not think the overlapping hon. Members complain about is a very serious matter. We have been told that sometimes a District Commissioner sends out an account

and the next week a similar account is received from the Department primarily concerned. I cannot see that that is a very great defect. Perhaps in some cases when the District Commissioner has sent out an account it is overlooked and put aside. It might mean a little extra work, but in the course of time when the Scheme has been in operation for a little longer, steps will be taken to see that these slight defects in the system are remedied.

There are only two points which I think really need replying to, and those are as regards increased salaries for two Commissioners and additional staff to be provided. As regards the lower grade there seems to be really no opposition except by those hon. Members who do not want the Scheme at all. I think most of the other Members of the Council are prepared to grant that staff and realise that it is absolutely necessary. The points upon which I desire to reply, and which call for reply, are first of all as regards the salaries of the two District Commissioners. These have been set out in the Memorandum for the two senior posts, East Demerara and the Berbice District, and are £650—£25—£800 in one case and £500—£25—£650 in the other. As has been set out in the Memorandum, when the District Administration Scheme started the various members of the Civil Service were transferred to the District Administration with varying grades of salaries, and in the opinion of Government the time has now come when the District Administration salaries should be put on a uniform basis, because it would not be right to continue drafting officers into the District Administration Scheme with various rates of pay attached. There should be some uniformity in the District Administration, and it is for that reason that this scale of salaries is proposed.

One hon. Member referred to the fact that the Committee that sat and reported on the District Administration recommended salaries of £650 rising to £750 in respect of all the Districts, but the recommendation now before the Council is that two of those Districts, which are admitted to be the most onerous of the Districts, should be placed in a higher grade; that they should be regarded as the prize Districts of the Colony, and

that the rates of pay should be slightly higher. I refer to the East Demerara and the Berbice Districts. I submit that having regard to the duties which have to be performed in those two Districts the pay suggested is by no means excessive. I think it was the hon. Member for Berbice River who tried to draw a comparison with lawyers, doctors and professional men who, he said, were paid less than the salaries proposed for the District Commissioners. I do not think that is

any comparison to draw. Lawyers and doctors are even paid very much less than business people, not only in Water Street but in other parts of the world. Because you are a doctor or a lawyer does not entitle you to better pay than anyone else.

THE CHAIRMAN: I understand it is the desire of hon. Members that we should adjourn until 2.30 p.m. to-morrow instead of 11 a.m. as there is some important meeting to-morrow. I therefore adjourn the Council until 2.30 p.m. to-morrow.