

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.***Tuesday, 20th December, 1932.*

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

**PRESENT.**

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

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

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

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

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

Major 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. W. A. D'Andrade, Comptroller of Customs.

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

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

The Hon. F. Birkitt, Postmaster-General.

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

The Hon. N. Cannon (Georgetown North).

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

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

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

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

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

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

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

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

**MINUTES.**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 16th December, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS.****CONVERSION OF BONDS.**

Mr. MILLARD (Colonial Treasurer): I am the bearer of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor to the Council:—

**MESSAGE No. 8.**

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to invite attention of the Council to the present position regarding the 6% Bonds now outstanding and forming part of the Colony's Public Debt.

2. Under item 17 in the Schedule to the Public Purposes Loan Ordinance No. 11 of 1929 (Chapter 46) £537,000 was provided for the redemption of all 6% Bond issues then outstanding and it was proposed to redeem each issue as soon as the right to exercise the option of redemption had accrued after giving the required twelve months' notice.

3. The following 6% Bonds were accordingly redeemed up to 31st December, 1931, out of the proceeds of the first issue of £2,090,000 raised at 5% under Loan Ordinance 11 of 1929:—

Issue 12	...	\$	113,500	
13			333,000	
14			35,050	
15		\$	97,000	\$ 578,550

and there remained to be dealt with

Issue 16	...	\$	1,161,850	
" 18			838,150	\$ 2,000,000
				\$ 2,578,550

4. With regard to Issue 16, an undertaking having been obtained from the Crown Agents to finance the redemption pending the raising of a further loan under Loan Ordinance 11 of 1929, the required 12 months' notice was given in December, 1930, that redemption would be effected on the 1st January, 1932. Consequent, however, on the abnormal financial situation which arose during 1931 and the difficulty which would have been experienced in raising a further loan in the United Kingdom on behalf of the Colony, it was decided to offer to the Bondholders the continuance of the Bonds on their existing terms. The majority of the Bondholders accepted and Bonds to the value of \$1,020,300 remain outstanding under the 16th Issue.

5. With respect to the Bonds of the 18th Issue the right to exercise the option of redemption accrues 10 years after 1st January, 1923, and notice of redemption can now be given.

6. Now that conditions are again normal it is proposed to resume the redemption of the whole of the remaining 6% Bonds of the 16th Issue as well as the 18th Issue amounting to a total of \$1,858,450.

7. It is however intended that the notice of redemption shall be accompanied by an offer to the Bondholders of conversion of their Bonds to Bonds carrying a lower rate of interest and that redemption by means of a further issue in London under the Loan Ordinance cited at paragraph 2 should be limited to the balance remaining unconverted.

8. It is proposed that the conversion Bonds shall carry interest at the rate of 4% per annum and shall bear the same dates, terms and conditions as the Bonds for which they are substituted including the right of redemption 10 years from the date of conversion on giving twelve months' notice.

9. Regarding the offer of conversion it is important that Bondholders should be given an ample period within which to exercise and communicate their acceptance and at the same time it is essential to provide full opportunity for the necessary arrangements to be made regarding a further Loan issue and any advance in anticipation of that issue in order that the requisite funds shall be promptly available on the 1st of January, 1934, to meet demands for redemption. It is proposed therefore to fix the 30th of April, 1933, as the final date for the acceptance by Bondholders of the offer of conversion and to give notice that Bondholders who desire to avail themselves of the offer shall on or before that date deposit their Bonds with the Colonial Treasurer in exchange for deposit certificates pending the issue of the conversion bonds.

10. I accordingly invite the Council to approve of an offer of conversion being made on the terms stated to accompany the notice exercising the option of redemption of the remaining 6% Bonds detailed above.

EDWARD DENHAM,

Governor.

20th December, 1932.

#### POSTAGE ON POSTCARDS.

Mr. BIRKITT (Postmaster-General): I am the bearer of the following Message

from His Excellency the Governor to the Council:—

#### MESSAGE No. 7.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to invite the Council to approve of the re-introduction of the one cent rate of postage on postcards only transmitted by post within the Colony. The present charge is two cents.

2. At present there is a stock of over 116,000 1 cent embossed postcards on hand at the Treasury and on account of their age there is every likelihood of their becoming unfit for sale to the public and the cards having to be destroyed.

EDWARD DENHAM,

Governor.

20th December, 1932.

#### PAPER LAID.

The following document was laid on the table:—

Report of the Select Committee appointed by the Council on 1st September, 1932, to enquire into the administration of the Trust created by the late Walter Mitchell and to make such recommendations as may appear to be necessary to give due effect to the bequest contained in the last will and testament of the deceased gentleman (*Major Bain Gray*).

The Council ordered that the Report do lie on the table and be printed.

#### GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

##### BILLS OF EXCHANGE.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Hector Josephs) gave notice that at the next meeting of the Council he would ask leave to introduce and have read the first time:—

A Bill to amend the Bills of Exchange Ordinance, Chapter 56, with respect to crossed cheques drawn by a Bank on itself.

##### WALTER MITCHELL TRUST.

Major BAIN GRAY (Director of Education) gave notice of the following motion:—

*Be it Resolved*,—(a) That this Council adopts the Report of the Select Committee appointed to enquire into the administration of the Trust created by the late Walter Mitchell and to make such recommendations as may appear to be necessary to give due effect to the bequest contained in last will and testament of the deceased gentleman; and

*Be it further Resolved*,—(b) That effect be given to the Report by legislation.

## POSTAGE ON POSTCARDS.

Mr. BIRKITT gave notice that at a later stage he would move that Standing Order No. 11 (1) be suspended to enable him to move the following motion :—

THAT, with reference to Governor's Message No. 7 of the 20th December, 1932, this Council approves of the re-introduction of the one cent rate of postage on postcards only transmitted by post within the Colony instead of the present rate of two cents.

Further that this rate should come into force as from 1st January, 1933.

## CONVERSION OF BONDS.

Mr. MILLARD gave notice of the following motion :—

THAT, with reference to Governor's Message No. 8 of the 20th of December, 1932, this Council approves of an offer being made to convert as from 1st day of January, 1934, all the remaining Colony 6 per cent. Bonds issued under the Public Loan and Colonial Treasury Bills Ordinance, Chapter 47 (Ordinance No. 6 of 1916), to Bonds carrying interest at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum and bearing the same dates, terms and conditions as the Bonds for which they are substituted including the right of redemption ten years after the date of conversion on giving twelve months' notice.

## PETITION.

Mr. CANNON, on behalf of Mr. FREDERICKS, laid on the table a petition from Wilhelmina Griffith praying for a pension in respect of the services of her late husband in the Police Force.

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

## REDUCTION OF SCHOOL AGE.

Mr. CANNON: Before the Order of the Day is proceeded with, Your Excellency, I wish to make an appeal to you. There are three motions by Elected Members, two of whom are not present to move them, and at the moment there are only three other Elected Members present besides myself. These motions are far-reaching and very important and I am asking you to let them be postponed until after the holidays. A year ago I made a similar request. Christmas week is rather an awkward time for Elected Members, and I think also Officials, to attend the meetings of the Council, and I suggest that you favourably consider the suggestion that the Council be adjourned until after the holidays.

THE PRESIDENT: An adjournment until after the holidays is not possible. There is other business before the Council. As regards the motion of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam, it is for him to say whether he wishes to take it to-day when we come to it in the Order of the Day. The hon. Member for Demerara River and the hon. Member for Essequibo River are not present and with the consent of the Council their motions will be deferred. Now comes the motion of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I am more or less in Your Excellency's hands. I am in a way prepared to proceed with the motion to-day, and yet, on the other hand, I feel I cannot at the moment do full justice to it. I have no desire to inconvenience Members in the matter. I am prepared to initiate discussion on the motion to-day, but there are so few Members present who I know are interested in the subject. Unfortunately, most of them are engaged in the Law Courts. I myself had to ask for an adjournment of a matter in order to be present here at very great inconvenience, and in the ordinary course of things I have to be in the Court again at 12.30. Although the motion is important it does not affect the Estimates for 1933.

THE PRESIDENT: In a matter of this importance, which it is known is down for discussion in Council to-day, interest must be shown by Members in being present. If they are not here to discuss it Government can only assume that they do not wish to discuss it or that they are not ready to discuss it, but full notice has been given of the motion and given for some time. I suggest that the hon. Member should see the Colonial Secretary and discuss with him whether he wishes to bring the motion forward at this session of the Council or wish it to stand over. I think in the interest of public business the hon. Member should consider it with the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I may say at once that I have not the slightest intention to withdraw the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not suggest to the hon. Member to withdraw it.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I am sorry that there is to be some delay in taking this motion

because I have come from New Amsterdam at great inconvenience in order to take part in the discussion. I am rather disappointed that we are not proceeding with it to-day if it is to be taken at all. I understand it is the intention of the mover to press the motion. If that is so I think we should be given timely notice as I should like to be present when it is to be discussed. Members for Berbice are entitled to a certain amount of consideration with respect to this particular matter.

THE PRESIDENT: Perhaps the hon. Member may wish to take it now. We have a certain number of Elected Members present and Government is fully represented as well as the Nominated Unofficial Members. I cannot impose my will on the hon. Member. It must be a matter for his discretion, but I think it may be best to take it now.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Sir, I beg to move the motion:—

WHEREAS a sum of \$ 23,500 has been voted by this Council on the Draft Estimate for 1933 for providing grants in aid to schools where free elementary education for children between the ages of 5 and 14 years may be imparted;

And whereas as the necessity arises this sum will be automatically increased as has been the case for many years past;

And whereas it is not within the means of the Colony to continue to provide so large a sum for such grants in aid to schools to enable children between the said ages attending thereat to receive such elementary educational training;

And whereas this Council is of opinion that free elementary education should be provided for children between the ages of 6 and 12 years only:

*Be it Resolved*,—That the Government take the necessary steps to introduce the required legislation to give effect to the decision of this Council if arrived at that grants in aid to schools providing for the free elementary education of children in the Colony should be limited to pupils attending such schools between ages of 6 and 12 years respectively.

In every civilised country in the world, in which I think British Guiana may fairly be included, whenever a discussion arises on the subject of education, whatever may be the particular problem under notice, it is a safe assumption that the investigation of that problem will end in public controversy. There is no subject that I can think of at the moment that is more calculated to excite animated discussion: there is no subject on which I think a greater variety of opinion can be found to exist. Speaking for myself, I never over-

look the consequences of tabling such a motion as this, and I should like to say at the outset that I entertain no feelings of anger or resentment against the declarations of those critics who are found to be in opposition to my motion. I believe that as a result of an examination by both prejudiced and unprejudiced minds there will be found to be contained in my motion essentials which are not easily capable of ready dismissal which has been given by some of the critics of the proposals contained therein. In the first place, when the Government proposals under the head of grants-in-aid were indicated in the speech of His Excellency the Governor, it was suggested that the maintenance grants of the denominations should be reduced by a specific sum of \$5,000. I was not slow in intimating to you, sir, that I entertained the strongest objection to that proposal. I conceived that the present maintenance grants were inadequate and that in return for the accommodation provided by school buildings, without which elementary education could not be carried on in this Colony, the maintenance grants as compared with what would be a fair rental value for that accommodation could not properly be reduced, and I indicated to Your Excellency at an interview which you were good enough to give me that if that attitude was persisted in and it became part of the policy of Government further to restrict the grants-in-aid being paid as maintenance grants to the Missions, and if the denominations banded themselves together, as they would have a right to do in my opinion, and made entry into their schools impossible Government's contribution towards the necessity of providing equal accommodation either by rental or erection of suitable buildings would be found to be far in excess of the aggregate sum now being contributed to the Missions in the form of maintenance grants. And it is because I object to the expenditure under this head being reduced I conceived it my duty to endeavour to suggest a formula by which a considerable saving could be effected on the total expenditure relating to grants-in-aid without entailing the necessity for the discontinuance of these grants to Missions and without increasing necessarily the vote under Elementary Education.

It will be seen that my motion in the abstract does not involve any reduction in

the total expenditure now being incurred by Government in the cause of education. I have arrived at the opinion that the maintenance of the maximum age of 14 is in a very large measure detrimental to the efficient teaching of elementary tuition in the primary schools. In order to appreciate the value of that argument it will be necessary to recall what was the position prior to 1919 when the age limit was extended from 12 to 14 years. Under the provisions of Ordinance 3 of 1876, which governed the conditions under which primary education was being given in the primary schools, it was made both free and compulsory to children who attended these schools up to the age of 12 years. That existed until 1919 when by some curious process of reasoning the age limit was raised from 12 to 14 only in the case of Georgetown and New Amsterdam. The extension did not reach the country districts and it was only until fairly recently that that privilege was extended to the village of Buxton. What then, sir, may I ask, are we all agreed, or is Government agreed, is the age limit for teaching in the primary schools? Is it to be found in the existing law, or is it to be found in the awards of Government Primary Scholarships? If those who declare that it is 14 years would enlist support from the contention that it is 14 years in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Buxton, what defence are they prepared to offer to a system which denies those privileges to the rural districts? Is it the contention of these apologists that the children in the country districts are less entitled to free instruction up to the age of 14 years? Is it to be denied that the advantages of residence in large townships, the advantages of environment, are in themselves so beneficial as to outweigh the extension of a privilege like this to children in Georgetown and deny it to those in the country? Are the parents of the children in the country districts to be taxed to contribute towards the extension of the age limit and all that it costs to children in the urban districts which is denied to their own children?

I am submitting that the very differentiation in the case of Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Buxton, as compared with those in the rural districts, is an admission on the face of it that we have not yet arrived at a definite age limit. In a good many cases, instances of which I shall cite,

the Government's policy is a very negation of that principle. One of the awards open to scholars who attend the primary schools is that of a Government Primary Scholarship. That scholarship is open to pupils who are under the age of 12 years. Twelve years, therefore, is taken as the best age at which it might fairly be gauged whether a pupil might proceed from the primary to a secondary school, and Government has instituted awards in the way of scholarships for scholars under the age of 12. That age was once 13. I do not know what reason exists for the change, but there has been in fact a reduction of the age limit under which scholarships might be awarded to pupils of primary schools. The examination for these scholarships formerly consisted of merely arithmetic, reading, dictation, grammar and composition, primarily primary subjects. To-day, I think I am correct in saying, not only are those subjects features of the examination but in addition candidates may take history, geography, nature study and subjects of that kind. Another instance of the principle that should be applied to the age limit is to be found in the age limit at which the Buxton Scholarships are based. Those scholarships are awarded on the result of the Government Primary Scholarships and the age limit has been fixed at 13. In the case of the Blair and Mitchell Scholarships the test is the Cambridge Local Examination and the awards under those two scholarships are limited to children under the age of 14. The necessity for preparing children for these scholarships in the primary schools disturbs in a very large way the tuition that should properly take place in the primary schools. Having to prepare candidates for secondary subjects, every school wishing to attain the ambition of its scholars being awarded these scholarships, is an incentive to the teaching staff to devote a considerable amount of time to the preparation of those pupils. I understand that in some schools the population of the school is classified into sections known as scholarship sections. Is it right that this form of tuition should be undertaken in the primary schools?

There was once a time when school examinations were held in all the primary schools. In order that a pupil might enter for those examinations it was necessary for that pupil to have attended a

prescribed number of times, and by section 37 of Ordinance 3 of 1876 a parent incurred the liability for the child who either by failure to pass the examinations or failure by attendance was unable to compete. The parent was also liable for failure of the child to pass the examination in the standard at which children of similar age were competing. Those examinations were not without their value. They were of the greatest value in encouraging, first of all, the parent to see that the child went regularly to school. It was a stimulus to the child, whatever its sex may be, to attend school. There was a competition between the scholars as to whether they would rank above each other in the order of the results of the examination. It was a test of the rate of advancement and assisted everyone concerned in the administration of the school in determining whether a pupil might be advanced from one standard to another. The effect of compulsory attendance on the school is a very important factor. Under the present system a child may attend a session in the morning and may not attend in the afternoon. It may also attend to-day and not to-morrow. Special exceptions have been made to preclude the possibility of a child attending school, especially in the case of East Indians, on every consecutive Monday, and there has existed in our primary schools a condition of things whereby either the parent or the pupil, as it seems to me, may elect when to go to school. I make that statement subject to the reservation that under the law so long as a child can record 30 attendances in any one month in urban schools and 15 in rural districts no prosecution can ensue on the parent for failure to observe the Code. I cannot conceive of any system that is more detrimental to the tuition of children than the encouragement of a spasmodic system like that. Those of us who have had greater advantages know and realise that we dared not attend school at our own free will in this way, and it seems to me that education to be successful must be continuous, that children should be made to attend at every session of the school, provided there were no circumstances that rendered their absence unavoidable.

It is because of the necessity of enforcing greater regularity in attendance that I have been encouraged to make the motion

I have. I have formed the opinion, rightly or wrongly, that if the children attending the primary schools were forced to attend daily instead of spasmodically it would be competent for the teaching staff to impart and for the scholars themselves to acquire knowledge up to the sixth standard in a period of six years. Under the old system, when the period was between the ages of 6 and 12, the pupils had to pass an examination varying according to the standard up to the eighth standard, and I do not think it can be denied that the successes achieved under that system were far greater in actual results than those being achieved under the new. Yet we have a condition of things existing to-day whereby pupils who were formerly trained to compress knowledge up to the eighth standard in a period of six years being now given an extended two years to acquire a knowledge of six standards only. That is the position to-day. I say this question of attendance has a great deal to do with it. There are those of us who remember the late Mr. Sharples. I do not know how many head teachers are alive to-day who were acquainted with the system which he practised, but I know that no scholar attending his school could go to school on Monday and not on Tuesday without a very good reason being given. The consequence was that he so impressed on the parent the necessity of sending the child to school by the evident progress of regularity of attendance on his pupils that he was able year by year to earn the greatest number of successes in examinations of any school. On the result of these examinations what is called a merit grant was paid to teachers. It was because those merit grants were assuming large proportions, I suppose, that the Government of the day discontinued them. If the experiment is revived of school examinations as distinct from the present system of emergency inspection, and without necessarily paying merit grants on the basis of the old system, I think it would be found that it would be easy for children at school to be taught all that is required of them in the way of primary education within a limit of six years, and that it is not necessary if attendances were enforced for them to remain in school for any longer period.

There are at present—I speak subject to correction—enjoying the benefits of ex-

tended tuition beyond the age of 12 and up to 14 a total of 5,400 children, of whom 1,100 are East Indians and 4,361 of other races. There are also present in these schools over 14 years—for what reason I do not know—a total of 2,157 children. The cost of maintenance per caput of an elementary pupil is given at \$10.96 for 1931 and at \$10.51 for 1932. If, then, these 7,500 children were not allowed to attend these schools, and if the cost of their presence there were deducted from the total maintenance grants, it will be found that a very large sum of money could be saved on the total expenditure. From figures which I have in my possession that saving would be between \$7 and \$8 per pupil in respect of the number that now obtain the benefits of extended instruction only in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Buxton, and a saving of at least \$50,000 could be effected in this way. It was never my intention that any child should cease to receive the benefits of free education as distinct from primary education at the age of 12, and I think that whatever the total savings are if my proposals are adopted they could be turned to better advantage by creating a nucleus for the establishment of technical schools. I would advocate that this experiment of placing a limit to free education at the primary schools be fixed at the age of 12 and that for another two years with the savings to be effected those children who are found fit as the result of their elementary training should be allowed to pass into these technical schools, trade schools or vocational schools, free of cost to themselves or to their parents. I do not know what the cost of the establishment of a technical school would necessarily be, but I think Government is in a position to arrive at some estimate as to that. Another direction in which a portion of these savings may be made useful, either along with the institution of technical schools or even without them, would be in the establishment of as many Government schools as is found to be possible in one or more of the rural districts. I think, too, that the savings would produce better results in the primary schools if a proportion of them were devoted to enabling the Missions to furnish more and better equipment in the schools themselves than at present those schools enjoy. I think that in order to make primary education really successful by a system of real com-

pulsory attendance it will be necessary to provide equipment in the shape of books and other necessaries of that kind in all the primary schools but more especially in those in the country districts. Another circumstance which induced me to suggest this alteration in the age limit was the findings of the Education Commission in 1924-25. In paragraph 70 of his Report Mr. Wynn-Williams says:—

“Some divergence of opinion on this point was evident amongst the witnesses who appeared before the Commission. On the whole the balance of opinion was in favour of retaining the present law, that is to say, of keeping the children compulsory at school in urban areas until they were 14, and in rural areas until they were twelve years of age. There was, however, a considerable minority who dissented from that view on the grounds that in both town and country there was a large demand for light labour, that this form of work served as a useful introduction to industry and that there were very many boys and girls of twelve who would never develop satisfactorily under the existing form of primary education. The latter point was heavily pressed and there can be no doubt that relatively less progress is made at the top end of the schools than elsewhere and that the complete absence of any attempt to teach children through their hands and by other devices than the ordinary academic methods accounts for this unsatisfactory state of things.”

Speaking on the desirability of establishing technical schools, in paragraph 33 he says:—

“It will be necessary to exercise very great care and much discrimination in selecting the boys and girls to be admitted to the technical school. The best method, though it is not suggested that it is altogether a satisfactory one, would appear to be by holding an examination of the children in the primary schools who have reached the age of 12 or who have completed a Standard V. curriculum. Those who provide clear evidence that they can read with understanding that they can write and have mastered the elements of arithmetic, might be regarded as eligible for admission to the technical school; the twenty at the head of the examination being selected as scholars or free-placers and the remainder as fee paying pupils. In normal circumstances not more than 60 would be selected but for the first two years, if the educational condition of the children seemed to warrant it, 100 might be drafted from the primary schools to the technical school.”

There, again, there was an indication of the opinion of an expert as to the age at which primary scholars might with advantage and profit be drafted from the elementary to the technical school, and he advocated that the training in that school should be extended over a course of three years, or, in other words, from 12 to 15.

For admission to these schools Mr. Wynn-Williams definitely recommended that there should be a public examination open to pupils 12 years of age or to children who had completed Standard V. in those schools. And this is what he says:—

“An interesting problem connected with the proposal to establish a technical school in Georgetown arises. It will be remembered that it has been proposed to recruit the latter by submitting all children of 12 years of age and all children who have completed Standard V. to tests in English and Arithmetic with the object of selecting the best of them for more advanced training. But what of those who fail to satisfy these tests, who never reach the level of Standard V. proficiency? Clearly something must be done for these, many of whom may, if treated by other processes of education than those commonly in use at the primary schools, develop into useful and valuable men and women. For these—the derelicts or misfits of the primary school system—two schools, one for boys and one for girls, should be provided where an effort would be made to train them not exclusively through eyes and ears but through the use of their hands and manual activities. The main aim of such schools would be to cultivate dexterity of hands and to arouse and stimulate the mind by methods involving practical workmanship.”

There is therefore plenty authority for the contention that the age limit of 12, though the suggestion may be unpopular, is an age at which the fitness of children attending primary schools might well be tested. If one cares to look around in this community for the results of primary tuition which was limited to the age of 12 in the old days it will be found that a fairly large percentage of schoolmasters, almost all schoolmasters on the pension list, a large number of men who occupy prominent positions in public life in the Colony (including membership of this Council and the Municipality), a very large number of men holding high public offices in the Government and an equally large number of men holding responsible positions in the mercantile life of this community, were all trained under the old system by which free elementary education ceased at the age of 12. Until someone can satisfy this community that the results that are being achieved by the extension of the age to 14 years are comparable with those under the old system it is impossible to say there is anything to be gained by the retention of the present system. I am unable to elaborate this subject for the reason that I am very much unprepared with some of the matter that I hoped would have reached

me to-day, and owing to physical unfitness I am unable to make out a case as conclusively as I would like. But I do say that when the subject is being discussed it is entirely being overlooked that for a period of 40 years the training of children in primary education existed in this Colony under a system that produced far better results than are being obtained to-day. It is perhaps somewhat early after 13 or 14 years of trial to gauge the actual results, but I have an impression in my mind that many of the idle young men who are to be seen in the public streets are the result of the graduation at the primary schools owing to the absence of any insistence on regular compulsory attendance. I believe that if the young men whom we all see about the streets had been made to attend both sessions of the school, and that regularly on every day of the week, it would have been impossible for them to have acquired the habits of idleness that are to be seen so prominently to-day.

In the years of which I speak there was no evidence of so large a number of what we may call idle loafers—young men of the age of 14, 15 and 16—either in the public streets of Georgetown or elsewhere, and I attribute it very largely to the imperfect system of imparting primary education in the schools under the conditions which exist to-day. It is also a matter for consideration that whilst the salaries of schoolmasters, so far as I know, are paid on the basis of average attendance these payments are not made on the basis of average attendance in any one month. The salaries are not dependent upon the aggregate average attendance during a month, or even during six months or even during a year. I believe the average is taken over a period of three years and the salaries are based on that average apart altogether from the addition earned by the certificates of the teachers. I am not blaming the teaching fraternity for that system, nor am I blaming them for the apparent failure of the system. I cannot see what more the schoolmasters can do. I know that they endeavour to secure the regular and prompt attendance of the children at their schools. I know that they take an interest in doing so. It is not merely a personal but a pecuniary interest which compels them to do so; but it seems to me that their efforts in this direction are likely to be unavailing for the simple



reason that so long as the minimum number of compulsory attendances is limited to the low figure, as I contend, of 30 and 25 so long will the evil results of this system continue. It follows that if the age limit were reduced to 12 it will be possible for the pupils to be given efficient instruction within that period without any detriment to their training if the curriculum and the syllabus were confined to what is only primary education. If you are going to introduce into the curriculum opportunities for teaching secondary subjects then, of course, you are allowing a state of things which will not give the best results for the expenditure, and which leads to overcrowding in the schools, to the impossibility of imparting efficient instruction in a limited space, and to interference with the opportunity the teacher should have of spreading the result of his tuition over the entire school instead of limiting it in part to only a certain section.

It has got to be instilled into the parents that education is costing them relatively nothing, and it is quite impossible for the schoolmaster to do that. There was a time when there was a large number of Emergency Inspectors. Their duty was to induce children into the schools. It was felt that there should be a reduction in their number, again on the score of economy, but in order to discover how far primary education is being imparted in the schools and how far the pupils are making real progress, I throw out the suggestion that there should be a reversion to the system of public competitive examination with the idea of testing whether irregular attendance has any reflection on the results that we are deploring to-day. I conceive that if parents were reminded of the necessity of the pupil attending regularly, and a certain number of attendances required before the child can sit for an examination, parents would make it their duty to see that their children attend more regularly than they do now. I am not aware if under the present system even parents know whether a child attends school. They assume when the child leaves for school that he goes there. They do not necessarily know. I think it would ensure greater interest on the part of parents seeing that the child went to school if they knew that it was a condition precedent to his being allowed

to sit at examinations. Having regard to the commencing ages for the scholarships, and the differentiation in the age limit between city schools and urban schools, I contend that we have not yet arrived at any definite agreement as to what the age limit should really be. I believe that the maintenance of the age of 12 in the country districts is detrimental to the progress of the children in those districts. It cannot be denied that the difficulties of children in the country districts attending school are far greater than those in Georgetown. In the majority of instances the schools are situated at a longer distance from their homes than would be the case in Georgetown and the attendance of children during school hours may be delayed from one cause or another or may be found to be entirely impossible. It is a question for grave consideration, therefore, if you are going to maintain the age limit at 14 in the case of urban schools, whether you should not grant the same privilege to the country schools. As a compromise I should be willing to consider what arguments might be adduced which would reverse the policy in this matter and limit the age to 12 in Georgetown and extend it to 14 in the country districts. But we must in our policy select some age, whether it be 12 or 14, which would be made applicable to the entire country. I shall regret very much, of course, if any of these proposals will have the effect of unschooling any children. If I thought that was going to be the effect of my motion I would never have made it. I do not believe that it will. I believe that careful investigation into the number of scholars whose education could be provided for at Government schools within the limit of the savings would not result in the general unschooling of the children at all. There is no question in my own mind that whatever advantages the children now gain by remaining in school up to the age of 14 those advantages would be trebled if they leave at 12 and were drafted into the technical schools to find their proper vocation in life.

It was never my intention, as you know, sir, that the savings should lapse into revenue. I told the Director of Education long before any public criticism had appeared in the Press what was at the back of my mind, and I believe that in course of time it will be found that other

economies can be effected by restricting the age limit to 12 and by restricting it within the limits of a proper curriculum. I think if that were done the children would be better able to earn their livelihood than by remaining at these schools up to the age of 14. In the determination of the question of the age limit in the country districts the Government of the day were afraid of adverse criticism. I make that statement because I believe it to be true. I do not allow the contention that the East Indian section of the community are Indians at all. They are British Guianese. Born as they were here, and if they are to remain here, that idea must be instilled into them from the very start. To allow children born in this Colony to attend school when they like, because it is the wish of their parents that they should earn money on a sugar plantation, means that a large number of children are not really getting the benefit of a completed and continuous education between the ages of 6 and 12, and I say most unhesitatingly that while the Government of the day were prepared to prosecute the parents of other children because of agitation concerning immigration they would not prosecute the parents of East Indian children. The result has been that there has been an impression on the mind of the East Indian that his children are free to take advantage of education in the primary schools only when it suits him to send them to school. I think that those children and their parents should be made to realise, first of all, that taxpayers other than themselves are being made to contribute to the maintenance of a system which should admit of no differentiation whatever the race of the people may be. If these children are not required to make the same number of attendances as children of other races it would be better if they went to a school of their own and in some measure relieve the general taxpayer of maintaining schools for them. It is an impossible position. It is a matter for regret that the Government of the day yielded to the entreaty to give such a system a trial.

I am sorry that I cannot at the moment proceed with any further argument on the subject. I am soon due in another place and, if I am not afforded another opportunity for saying anything more on the subject, I hope I will be given credit for

honesty of purpose. I have been in public life in this Colony for a number of years. I have for many years been a member of the Board of Education. It was mainly due to me then that the teaching fraternity secured actual direct representation on that Board. I also took an active and leading part in securing to the teachers some security against arbitrary and fitful dismissal by the management of their schools. Also through very strenuous advocacy on my part all teachers have pension rights to-day. A former Governor denied the right of the teachers to secure those pensions unless, as he said, they were Civil Servants and he could dismiss them or retain their services in the same way as he could do Civil Servants. He presided over the Board of Education and those of us who were acquainted with the atmosphere of those meetings know how difficult it was to secure a privilege of that kind. I hope that when discussion does arise as to the motives which have prompted me to make this motion it will be remembered that I too belong to this Colony and I too have its interest at heart, and whether I am mistaken in my ideas of how primary education should be controlled or that pupils at the age of 12 should be made to leave the schools and drafted into other schools at no further expense to their parents, I ask those who differ from me to give the matter more consideration than apparently they have done. If I am here when the time comes I hope, sir, I may be allowed to amplify the remarks which I have made to-day under very considerable difficulty.

Mr. CANNON seconded the motion.

Mr. CRANE: I desire to take the opportunity to contribute in a very small way to this debate because, like the hon. mover of the motion, I am due elsewhere in a short time. It is a matter for the greatest regret that Elected Members of this House should find themselves at variance over such a very important subject as primary education in this Colony. It is regrettable because the Elected Members, in my opinion, represent the masses of the community, and the education of the masses of the community must be a matter of first importance to each and everyone of us. The mover of the motion has been in public life for a considerable period,

much longer than I have been, he has rendered very distinguished services to the cause of education, and he has been the champion of the masses in general and of the teachers in particular. It therefore comes with more regret that I should stand here differing from him after his very long experience and the wisdom which he must have gathered during that period when he puts forward a motion the net result of which would be perhaps to unschool 7,000 children of this community. I shall approach the subject with no degree of satisfaction because I always hesitate to differ from the hon. Member in this House. I have been privileged to hear the whole of his argument in support of the motion, but from what I have heard, I respectfully submit in deference to the hon. Member, he has not made out a case for limiting free education to the age of 12 but has made out a very strong case for the establishment of a technical school to which boys and girls can go between the ages of 12 and 14. The hon. Member correctly says that our system of education would be of far greater utility if between those ages boys and girls can be drafted into a technical school and given some form of education that would be of practical benefit to them in daily life. Every Elected Member is in agreement with that view. But I ask the hon. Member whether he thinks a solution of the question can be effected by this proposal before a technical school is established. If he had asked Government to provide technical schools at which boys and girls could be trained in order that they should become workers and not idlers, and as a corollary to that proposal he had suggested that between the ages of 12 and 14 the children be taken out of the primary schools, he would have found a willing and loyal supporter in me. So far as the masses are concerned the only education they can get is free education given at public expense. The hon. Member considers that between \$50,000 and \$70,000 may be saved by his proposal. It was this ruthless cutting down that has caused the present position in education. The hon. Member has set off against this \$50,000 or \$70,000 the cost of the technical school. Until he is able to show the income and the expenditure side the suggestion of saving \$50,000 or \$70,000 cannot be taken seriously.

I understand that the question of mak-

ing savings out of the Education Vote arose out of the necessity to pay additional teachers who were required by virtue of the increase in the school population during the last two or three years. The executive officers have recommended that this sum, approximately \$10,000, should be found by making incursions on the maintenance vote of the schools. Representations were made to the church bodies that for next year they will get only one-half of the present grants. During the regime of Sir Gordon Guggisberg there was a reduction in the number of teachers which saved the taxpayers \$30,000 per annum. These figures supply evidence of an overwhelming case for Government supplying this \$10,000. The Education Vote was then arbitrarily cut down by \$30,000 by the reduction of the number of teachers. What has happened? Not only has the reorganisation of the teaching staff not been sufficient for current needs but it was not devised to meet the school population. Between two and three years about 3,000 children have been added to that population and the teaching staff has become so inadequate that Government itself has recognised the necessity of increasing the staff at a cost of \$10,000. It is unfair—I should almost say it is unholy—to ask the churches to accept a reduction of this \$10,000 when it took off \$30,000 ruthlessly. I said earlier in this session that I regard the attempt to throw the whole burden of maintenance of school buildings on the church authorities as unfair and retrograde. The religious bodies erected the school buildings and have for years rendered service, and it is the duty of Government to recognise that service with gratitude and not make things more difficult for them. The churches have been disendowed and a corresponding burden has been thrown on their members. Some of the churches are disgracefully kept because their members can ill afford to keep their churches and their parsons. Is this Council going to throw further burdens on those people? It would be interesting for this House to be told what sum is given to these bodies *en bloc* to be distributed in maintenance of their several buildings. The churches have done their part well to the masses of the country in the provision of elementary education. They have done what was the duty of Government to do and to them is due the gratitude of Government rather than

a policy of driving them to despair. What is going to be the practical effect of this policy? Some of the churches might be able to maintain their schools in spite of the fact that the grants are withdrawn. The Roman Catholic body may do it because they want to carry out their religious teaching, and I believe they are able to find the money to do it. But it is not so with the rest of the denominations, and being unable to maintain their buildings the schools may be closed by the church authorities.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not want to interrupt the hon. Member. His remarks are relevant on the point of reducing the grants, but the motion before the House concerns a definite proposal with regard to education. The subject of the maintenance grant does not come into the motion.

Mr. CRANE: I think I stated at the beginning that the reason for this motion is to find money to meet the maintenance grant.

THE PRESIDENT: The mover of the motion in his remarks said he desired to make it quite clear that he did not wish to save money but wished the money to be spent in another way.

Mr. CRANE: In justification of the suggestion contained in this motion, the hon. Member thought education between the ages of 6 and 12 was sufficient to enable a child to acquire what he considers should be primary education at the expense of the community. In my days children were put into school at the age of 4 and left at 11. I do not consider seven years as an unduly long time to receive primary education. Boys from the primary schools who commence their secondary education at the age of 12 are the very best. The fact that boys can get there between 11 and 12 is no argument in support of the motion when you ruthlessly cut off a number of boys whose sole opportunity of education is in the primary school. The only boys who can leave the primary schools at 11 and 12 are those who are going to continue their education in the secondary schools. I am not referring to the human wreckage in the town but to the boys without opportunities for a secondary or higher education who

need nevertheless a sound primary education. The hon. Member's indictment is a criticism of the system of primary education, which, in my opinion, is not sound at the core. It is the system which makes it possible for boys to attend even at the age of 16 and come out worse than those who left school twenty years ago. It is a severe indictment of the education system but it is not an argument for turning boys out of school. The hon. Member has unwittingly blundered in making a motion which will have the effect of increasing the number of wayward boys and girls and throwing the community into decadence and moral degradation.

The Council adjourned for the luncheon recess.

Mr. LUCKHOO: So much has been said on this subject that I do not wish to inflict myself on the Council. In any case I think the motion is one that should not find ready acceptance amongst my colleagues. I feel it is a retrograde movement and one that has created a great deal of unrest in the community. Since the publication of the motion there has been a great deal of talk on it. I thought at one time that the mover would have taken the line of least resistance by withdrawing the motion, but having persisted in putting his case before the Council the only course open to us is to oppose the motion. As far as the moral aspect of the question is concerned I think children should be kept in school until the age of 14 at least. It would have a most disastrous effect to turn children away from school at the age of 12. Children are not in school only for the education of their minds but also for the training of their character in all the qualities that go to make good and useful citizens worthy of our great Empire, which never had greater need for trained characters than in these dark, difficult and troublous times. The mover of the motion has suggested that the saving which may be effected should be diverted to the institution of technical schools. If the motion were carried into effect it would be practically a reversal of the whole educational policy. At the present time the Education Department has under consideration the organisation of technical schools. To say that there would be a saving of \$50,000 or \$70,000 is not a correct thing under the circumstances. The children should be given every opportunity of

equipping themselves for the battle of life, and to curtail the educational facilities which they now enjoy would undoubtedly be a serious mistake. This motion does not commend itself to reasonable men in the community. A saving of \$70,000, or even \$50,000, might have to be expended in other directions if the children are left without the means of getting the necessary education, and I think those who have studied the question closely will see in it what has been described in some quarters as a reactionary movement. That is my considered opinion. I had the benefit of education in a primary school. In those days, as has been pointed out, there was an examination annually for promotion from one standard to another. Schoolmasters in those days—and I believe they are doing it at the present time—applied themselves not only to the intellectual but also to the moral development of their pupils, and I think it would be a great mistake if the children were thrust out into the world without the advantages of making them good and useful citizens. Let us give them the best we can up to a reasonable age. A distinction has been drawn of children attending schools in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Buxton up to the age of 14 years. If there was any agitation on that point I would support children in country schools being given free compulsory education up to 14. A large number of boys and girls are turned out of the schools and have no opportunity to get profitable employment. What we really want is a good vocational training for these children after they leave school. Let that be supplementary to the primary education, and the age which would be reasonable for children to attend these schools would be 15 or 16. It would be a very serious matter if anything is done to curtail the educational facilities of children, and while I believe that the motion has been moved by the hon. Member with the best intention I record my vigorous protest against its adoption.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I am strongly in disfavour of this motion. I do not think the motion if given effect to would be putting forward the hands of the clock but think it would be putting them back very considerably. It is common knowledge that if a country is to progress it must have a good system of education. One of the reasons put forward for the success of the

Scotsman is his education system, and if we turn to the Continent we also find that the people of countries like Germany are highly educated. It would be a very ignorant person who would advocate less education, and to turn children out of school at the age of 12 would certainly be giving them less education. I was responsible for the motion which brought Mr. Wynn-Williams to this Colony. I am not an educationist but I am satisfied that our system of education leaves much to be desired. When I asked Government to appoint the Commission what struck me was the question: What is to become of the vast number of children one sees pouring out of the schools in town and country? While that Commission has done a great deal of good we are still faced with the problem. This motion is certainly not going to do anything that will solve the question. For that reason I cannot support the motion. No one can question the sincerity of the mover of the motion. Every Member of the Council has the desire to see the advancement of the Colony, but we must be sure that the steps we take are wise and will result in improvement and not retrogression.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to congratulate the hon. Member for having the courage to bring forward this motion and on the good it is likely to produce in that it has caused the whole community to give some attention to elementary education. There can be no doubt that the hon. Member in bringing forward the motion addressed his mind to the economic aspect alone, and from that aspect there seems to be merit in the motion, but that is a fallacy. It is the business of the State to safeguard life and property and ignorance of the masses is the greatest menace to the life and property of the community. That being so the question is not how much would it cost but is it worth it. The hon. Member suggests that children should be in the schools from the age of 6 to 12 years. He has lost sight of the fact that between the ages of 4 and 6 a child's mind is most plastic and influences for good or evil will be embedded in its mind which it is impossible to eradicate. Between 5 and 6 is the age when a child should be receiving some sort of education. When the child arrives at the age of 12, the hon. Member says, he should have learnt sufficient to leave school. At that age the child has barely com-

menced to appreciate and to be able to apply what it has learnt between the ages of 6 and 12, and to remove it at that age would be to throw on the community an individual with a smattering of knowledge, who becomes a mere machine and very little better than dumb driven cattle when faced with the troubles of life. The hon. Member says the money saved must be spent on secondary education. Secondary education does not mean a cessation of elementary education. 75 per cent. of the children who attend the elementary schools will never get anything more than elementary education and we are asked to subordinate those 75 per cent. to 25 per cent. who are likely to find themselves in secondary schools. Is Government prepared to establish secondary schools all over the Colony, and, if it is prepared, will that be a wise step? I think not. I venture to think, notwithstanding that it is so hard pushed for money, Government will not accept the motion. What to my mind is needed more than anything else is an enquiry into the whole system of primary education with a view to seeing how we can obtain better results. Within the last ten years the fabric of education has been rudely thrown down and mere experimentation has taken its place. The idea is to standardise education, but you cannot standardise education. Every attempt to standardise education has failed and Government should look into the system, not from the point of view of what we are paying but from the point of view of getting better value for the money we are spending.

There is another point which, to my mind, is fatal to the motion. Government has found it necessary to make the school-leaving age 14 for children in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Buxton. The reason for that is that Government realised that it was dangerous to let loose children between the ages of 12 and 14 in the towns and the village of Buxton upon the community. A system which permits of that age for one part of the Colony and the age of 12 for the other is a pernicious system of differentiation. I protest strongly against the idea of some hair-brained visionary who would like to convert the elementary schools into workshops where every boy will become a shoemaker or tailor and every girl a washerwoman or something else. The primary school is

not the place for that. Can Government or anybody wonder at the alarm that some of us feel when we begin to visualise the number of children at the age of 12 let loose and the tendency to vice that must overtake them? These children should remain at school until their ideas have developed and they have a foundation so laid that they can build on it. The system permits of no proper supervision over the schools. At one time the managers had it all their own way and abused it, and now they resent it and will not pay proper attention to the schools. The system permits too of the master of a school being prevented from training his own assistants and of teachers being thrust on the school whom he has to train to his own methods in order to get them into line with what he is doing. To-day a schoolmaster is worse than a policeman in his job, because he can be moved from Dan to Beersheba without marching money. In some cases he is allowed to say whether he would go or not, but if he won't go he gets a reduced pay for doing the same work. To speak of a system is a delusion. It is a misdirection of education all the time. I can find no appellation which describes it better than that but I can find something much worse. When I came here this morning I came with the intention of moving an amendment for consideration of the whole question by a Committee, but the hon. Member for Demerara River suggested to me to let the motion die a natural death. We claim that we had a very good foundation laid in teaching a boy to read, write and cipher, with the elements of Grammar and Geography to open his mind to read a book intelligently and to understand what he is reading. After all that is what is expected of the elementary school. The motion gives us an opportunity of pointing out the defects of the system. I do not think there is any likelihood of Government accepting the motion and therefore do not think it incumbent on me to take up more of the time of the House in pointing out the defects of the system. I will conclude by urging that the points I have made represent the considered opinion of the people of the country that education is being misdirected and will have to be changed in a very short time.

Mr. SEAFORD: This question has engaged the attention of communities all

over the world. In Great Britain to-day they are considering the question and maintain that if children are kept too long at school their heads are cramped with knowledge that they cannot assimilate. In other parts of the world children are taught to use their senses, their eyes, their nose and to put facts together, and they learn that not in the schools but in their homes. Is Government committed to teaching children to enter various walks of life, such as to become carpenters, engineers, schoolmasters and office clerks? To my mind the earlier they get a groundwork for what they have a bent the sooner they will benefit by it. I am in agreement with the mover of the motion that if we can get more regular attendance there is nothing lost by reduction of the age from 14 to 12. A point was made by the hon. Member for Berbice River that a child's plastic age was between 4 and 6. Home influence is going to make the child and not so much what is forced into its head. Another point made by the mover of the motion was examinations. I was reading an article a short time ago by one of the Cecil family and he pointed out that cramming for school certificates and scholarships was doing more harm in the United Kingdom than anything else. One is inclined to agree that we should eliminate a good deal of the book work and teach the children how to use the gifts God gave them. To my mind free education is a misnomer. For education is paid \$400,000 a year. How can it be called free education? The question was also raised of technical or trades schools. Some trade can be taught children without the State paying a penny for it. Children are serving to-day at different places as apprentices. The difficulty in many cases is that they want to get out into the world before they have learnt sufficient of the trade. It should not be necessary to establish schools for that purpose. In the matter of education in this Colony we are too apt to put everything on the schools. Parents should be made to accept responsibility for the behaviour of their children. As regards education the child should get very much more from its own home, the school being only an adjunct to the home. If it is felt that the homes are not capable of doing it then it is time to consider the question of remedying it. I feel that the question of limiting the age is worthy of consideration. Its

reduction would give the children a better opportunity of finding out what they desire to do and give them a better fighting chance, and I am sure the Colony will advance much more rapidly than it is doing to-day.

Dr. SINGH: An educated community is an asset to any country. The inhabitants of this Colony number over 300,000. In round figures the annual expenditure is \$5,000,000, of which \$396,000 is allotted to education, which is a little over one dollar per caput of the population. It is fairly high but it is money well spent. These are progressive days and every opportunity should be given to the community to educate their children. I feel that the present generation should be given better opportunities than we have had. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam has told us that the age limit for elementary education should be between 6 and 12. He has not outlined a preparatory scheme for the child before it enters the elementary school. A child should have some preparatory training between the ages of 4 and 6 before he enters the elementary school. The hon. Member has told us that a child should have industrial training after leaving school at the age of 12 but he has not told us for how many years there should be that course of training. In the absence of a preparatory scheme and a scheme after the age of 12 I feel that I cannot support the motion.

Major BAIN GRAY (Director of Education): This is rather a difficult motion to reply to because the speech made in support of it diverted it from its original objective as it was understood by most people. There are, however, one or two facts which are overlooked, or misunderstood, which perhaps I had better explain before I deal with the points raised. One is the history of the age limit. In the annual report of the Education Department for 1915 there is a short statement dealing with the subject. Up to the year 1904 grants were paid on boys and girls attending the primary schools up to the age of 15. Since 1904 compulsory attendance has been limited to 14 years. The present position is that attendance is compulsory in Georgetown and New Amsterdam up to the age of 14. With regard to Buxton we passed an Ordinance but it has not yet been proclaimed;

the intention is to bring it into force on the 1st January next year. With regard to the other parts of the country compulsory attendance stops at 12 but children may and do attend up to the age of 14 years and in some cases beyond that age. It is therefore not accurate to suggest that the children over 12 years outside the two urban areas may not attend school; they do attend and are encouraged to attend by the majority of masters. The accepted policy of the Education Department and of the schools generally has been to encourage those attendances.

So far as I know there is no one connected with education in the Colony, whether as schoolmaster, manager or as a member of the Education Committee, who will be inclined to give any support to the motion as it stands or as it was generally understood. When there is added the proposition that children over 12 are to be transferred to some other educational institution it then raises rather a different set of considerations, but under present circumstances we have not got those institutions. If by a stroke of the pen at any period, say, the 1st July, 1933, or some subsequent date, children at the age of 12 were excluded from the primary schools we would be totally unable to deal with them in any fashion. That is a point I should like hon. Members to keep in mind.

There is a certain amount of confusion as to the term "primary education." Its very name indicates that it is going to be followed by something else, and I wish to emphasise the fact that it is not complete in itself and ought to be followed by some other process. One hon. Member has mentioned that 75 per cent. or more of the population have to be content with the education as given in the primary schools. That therefore throws a very heavy responsibility on us as to how we are to organise this system so as to achieve the best results in general education for the whole community. Within the last few years a great deal of attention has been devoted by all countries of the world to the proper organisation of the primary or elementary education of the child from the very earliest age it can be educated up to the time it reaches youth or early manhood. It follows three stages: the first or infant stage from 4 to 6 or from 5 to 7, the strictly "primary education" stage between

7 and 12, and the stage beyond that which is in most countries called post-primary education. When we start to reorganise education those are the three stages we have to keep in mind and it will be our duty to organise on that basis. We have been working towards it but we have been confronted with the great difficulty of buildings. One hon. Member suggested that the difference between our present attitude to primary education and that of 20 or 30 years ago was that we want to standardise the schools and consequently standardise the children. There can be no greater misapprehension. The contrary is exact the case.

Another aspect that has been raised is what would be the effect of this policy, of closing the primary schools to children at the age of 12, upon employment or unemployment. There is no doubt that it would swell the ranks of the unemployed. No one has been able to suggest means by which they could be absorbed and there would be a period of very great disturbance and economic difficulty for everybody concerned. It is surely no unreasonable request that those children who are receiving education after the age of 12 should be received in the primary schools as they are organised now. We would of course very much prefer to have central schools for them.

The whole policy of primary education is indicated in the 1925 Education Commission Report and one definite recommendation is that there should be central schools in Georgetown for boys and girls over the age of 12. When the Department was first organising the Government school we considered the question whether a central school of that kind should not be the first Government school opened in Georgetown. It was found to be against the balance of convenience and we decided that it would be of far greater benefit to the whole system of organised education if we opened a complete school and not a school which dealt with only one stage of primary education. There are a few more misapprehensions. There are ideas abroad that in the primary schools we teach Latin and Greek, the Calculus and higher subjects generally. That is far from the case. We teach on a sound basis of the three R's but do not pretend to stop there. That was the old and



narrow conception of the primary school. We consider that the child should know a little of his own country, its geography and its history and something of its men of note, and that he should have some knowledge of elementary hygiene with regard to his own body and the surroundings in which he lives.

The question of attendance has cropped up frequently. Every officer of the Education Department would like every child to go regularly to school, to go every day and to go up to the age of 14 years. We would welcome any steps to induce attendance and we do our very best by prizes and otherwise to inculcate the habit of regular attendance in all children. If they came we should have to add another 10,000 to the school population of 40,000 and there is no doubt that we would need more accommodation than we have now. A debate of this kind brings home to the minds of the community the educational importance of the primary schools of the country, but it is essential that we should get away from the idea that education is a matter of £. s. d. and that only. Government is unable to accept the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: After the full, clear and comprehensive speech by the Director of Education there is not much more to be said, but I would like to emphasise one or two points which have been made in the course of a very interesting debate. I think there should always be a debate, and a full dress debate, on education, and I should be very sorry to see Estimates go through without a debate on education. It is something which concerns everybody. One Member said that this motion has caused a good deal of unrest in the community. That is the sort of unrest that I do not think does the community much harm. Unrest about education is a good thing because it makes everybody take a little more interest in it and they begin to ask questions about education. To paraphrase a well known saying "The country which gets the education with which it is satisfied deserves it." No country is or should ever be satisfied with the education it gets. They are not satisfied in England with education and are beginning to see that more and more must be done for different forms of education. There is no better subject for everybody to discuss than education. The hon.

Member for Berbice River said the mover of the motion deserves thanks for bringing it forward. I agree with him, though not on the principle. Government cannot accept the motion, but, at the same time, it has brought into the arena a subject for discussion, which has made people think perhaps a little more. Curiously enough, I was looking at a paper this morning of a Colony with which I was associated, Ceylon, and found that a debate has been going on in the Legislative Council there on this very subject. There education is from 6 to 14 and it was argued by the mover of the motion that the schools were filled with children over 14 and steps ought to be taken to have some graduated charge with respect to children according to age and the numbers in each school after due notice has been given. I do not know what the fate of the motion was but mention it to show that these questions do arise elsewhere and bring out points in connection with education.

There has been a good deal of misunderstanding about Government's action, or proposed action, with regard to the maintenance grants to the schools. The position is this. Do you prefer to have all the children possible in the country taught by as many teachers as you can possibly afford to recruit for them, or do you consider the first objective is to have buildings for them and not have more children than the present buildings can accommodate? We cannot do everything in all departments. There are two important services in which we have to economise in one way or the other. No one wants to economise on education. You will find that for the current year the education vote has actually been increased by \$6,000. We don't want to economise to the extent of cutting the grant, but we want to economise in the same way that every good householder economises in order to get better results. In education you get your return from the teaching; it is the men you have in the schools who make the schools; and it is not buildings, attendance officers or other agencies. The influences that make the school are the headmaster and his staff. If you have a school in a village with a schoolmaster who is well known and respected parents take care that their children go to school. It is the honest teacher who is going to matter

most in this country and we ought to have more of such teachers. Government looked around to see where the money was to come from and it was proposed to reduce the maintenance grant, but it was not intended to reduce it to anything like the extent originally proposed. It was not intended to throw any extra burden on the Missions, but to put before the country the position of how best we are going to spend the money on the school. Is it better to spend money on teachers or on buildings? The people have themselves to consider what they are going to provide. The point is what are they going to do to help their own school. I know of many parts of the world where a school is only provided with teachers if it is put up and maintained by the people who ask for the teacher. Let us use the buildings much more than they are used at present. They can be used a good deal more, and there is no reason why there should not be night schools. The Missions have not all the money to maintain schools. Let Government help, let the Missions help, and let the people help, because it is much more important to get all the teachers we can than it is to be spending money in ways which the people themselves can assist. I know that in some places a very great deal is being done by the people and what we want is co-operation with Government.

Government is by no means unsympathetic towards education. Government realise that no vote is more essential than education, but it has a duty in regard to education in the same way as with regard to every other vote, and that is to see that the money that is being spent on education is well spent. Reference has been made to the appointment of a Committee or Commission. I doubt whether a Committee or Commission will do much good at the present time. I think what we do want leading up to such a Committee or Commission—and it would perhaps be advisable to have a Commission or Committee afterwards—is to get the Education Department, the Missions and the Teachers

and people together in some of the big centres of population like Buxton, New Amsterdam and various other places, and let them thresh out a good many of these problems. The Director of Education referred to the problem of attendance. There is no doubt that attendance is not satisfactory and should be improved, and the people to suggest the best means of doing it are the teachers. The Director of Education would be the last person to say that education is in all respects satisfactory. It is not and it will never be so long as human nature continues to be what it is, but we must all try to make it more satisfactory and more suited to the needs of the Colony.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I had not the benefit of hearing what has been said on the motion. I am not willing to thrust my opinion on other people for their acceptance. I have already explained that my object in bringing forward the motion was to prevent a reduction in the maintenance grant and in the total expenditure with the idea of providing technical schools and devoting the savings to other purposes. I gathered from what Your Excellency said towards the close of your remarks that the question will not be lost sight of and in the near future there will be some opportunity given of appointing the people you have in your mind working Committees to deal with the question and see how far improvement can be affected. Perhaps at some time next year we may be in a position to reconsider the question. I feel very strongly that the curriculum in the primary schools have got to be restricted to primary subjects. That is not being done, but the system has helped the entrance into the schools of a number of pupils who have no right to be there. With the consent of my seconder I propose to withdraw the motion.

Motion accordingly withdrawn.

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