

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 22nd October, 1935.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR GEOFFRY A. S. NORTHCOTE, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. E. J. Waddington, C.M.G., O.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. Hector Josephs, K.C.

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

Major the Hon. W. Bain Gray, C.B.E., Director of Education.

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

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

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

The Hon. E. F. McDavid, M.B.E., Colonial Treasurer.

The Hon. J. Mullin, O.B.E. Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

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

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

The Hon. Q. B. De Freitas, Surgeon-General (Accing).

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. L. De Aguiar (Central Demerara).

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

The Hon. A. R. Crum Ewing (Essequibo River).

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

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

The Hon. S. H. Seymour (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. J. W. Jackson (Nominated Unofficial Member).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 15th October, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

SEA DEFENCE CONTRIBUTION.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): I am the bearer of the following Message from the Governor to the Council:—

MESSAGE No. 6.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to invite the attention of the Council to the attached *Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Sea Defence Board for 1936 from which it will be noted that a sum of \$52,913 is required as contribution from general revenue towards the expenditure of the Board. This figure is \$2,913 in excess of the maximum annual contribution of \$50,000 fixed by section 18 (2) (a) of the Sea Defence Ordinance, 1933, as enacted by section 2 of the Sea Defence (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933. This further amount can only be voted in pursuance of a Resolution by this Council approving of the payment thereof under the provisions of section 18 (2) (b) of the Sea Defence Ordinance, 1933.

2 In accordance with the principle established by the sections of the Ordinance cited above, the contribution to be made from general revenue represents one-half of the estimated expenditure of the Board on maintenance works, administration, and loan charges on advances to the Board for the construction of permanent works. With regard to expenditure on permanent works the Council has been kept informed of the prevailing abnormal conditions resulting in further expenditure on permanent

•See Minutes.

works on the East and West Coasts of Demerara and on the Essequibo Coast.

3. I accordingly invite the Council to approve of the payment to the Board of the sum of \$2,913 in addition to the maximum contribution of \$50,000 for the year 1936 and to authorise the necessary provision being made in the Colony's Estimate of expenditure for that year.

G. A. S. NORTHCOTE,
Governor.

19th October, 1935.

PAPERS LAID.

The following documents were laid on the table:—

Report of the Sea Defence Board for the year 1934.

Proclamation under the Hand of the Governor and the Public Seal of the Colony dated 17th October, 1935, proclaiming and declaring that the provisions of Title 10 of the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Ordinance, Cap. 13, shall be in force as from the date of the Proclamation in certain parts of the County of Demerara set out in the Schedule thereto.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

TONNAGE AND LIGHT DUES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Waddington) gave notice of the following motion:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 5 of the 11th of October, 1935, this Council approves of a surtax of fifteen per centum being levied on the amount of Tonnage and Light Dues which shall be collected during the year 1936 under section eighteen of the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931.

EX GRATIA AWARD.

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

THAT, with reference to Message No. 2 of the 14th of September, 1935, this Council approves, as a special case, an *ex gratia* award of £100 to Mr. P. G. Barrow, British Guiana Scholar, 1925, towards the cost of University and other fees in connection with his studies in medicine, less the sum of £46 13s. 6d. advanced to him to meet the cost of his passage to British Guiana and certain of the fees referred to.

EX GRATIA AWARD.

Mr. MULLIN (Commissioner of Lands and Mines) gave notice of the following motion:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 3 of 24th September, 1935, this Council approves of the payment of an *ex gratia* award of \$768 to the legal personal representative of the estate

of the late Mr. A. J. Cheong, Deputy Commissioner of the British section of the British Guiana-Brazil Boundary Commission, who died on the 4th October, 1934, at Kassikaityu, Kupununi District.

Major CRAIG gave notice of the following motions:—

UNPAID SEA DEFENCE RATES.

THAT, with reference to Message No. 1 of 9th September, 1935, this Council approves of the writing off of the sum of \$3,000, being the amount advanced by Government from loan funds to the Sea Defence Board to defray the cost of construction works of a permanent character, and of provision being made in the Estimates to cover a further advance of \$1,577.61 to the Board against unpaid sea defence rates in respect of Sea Defence District No. 2, which ceased as from 31st December, 1934, to be a sea defence district.

EX GRATIA AWARD.

THAT, with reference to Message No. 4 of 2nd October, 1935, this Council approves the grant to Burton Rodney, a labourer who was injured as a result of an accident which occurred during excavation work on the Bartica-Potaro Road on 20th May, 1933, of an *ex gratia* award of \$302.40 less the sum of \$250, being full pay issued during detention in hospital.

SEA DEFENCE CONTRIBUTION.

THAT, with reference to Message No. 6 of the 19th October, 1935, this Council approves of the payment of an amount of \$2,913 to the Sea Defence Board in respect of the year 1936 in addition to the maximum contribution of \$50,000 fixed by section 18 (2) of the Sea Defence Ordinance, 1933, as enacted by section 2 of the Sea Defence (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933, and authorises the necessary provision being made in the Colony's Estimate for that year.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

Mr. ELEAZAR gave notice of the following motions:—

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

THAT His Excellency the Governor be respectfully requested to appoint a Committee to enquire into the whole question of Elementary Education in the Colony and report to Government.

ITALO-ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT.

THAT this Council respectfully requests His Excellency the Governor to convey to the British Government through the Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, its heartiest congratulations for the stand which Great Britain has taken and maintained in supporting the Principles of the League of Nations in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict.

PETITIONS.

Mr. GONSALVES laid on the table a petition from Edith C. Roberts praying for a compassionate allowance.

Mr. ELEAZAR laid on the table a petition from Isabella A. Henry praying for a compassionate allowance.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

The following Bills were read a first time:—

A Bill to continue certain expiring laws.

A Bill to amend the Beerarie Creek Ordinance, Chapter 135, by empowering the Governor in Council by Order to combine plantations and vary the acreage of any plantation (*The Colonial Secretary*).

A Bill to amend the Evidence Ordinance, Chapter 25, with respect to the reception of a medical report in the Magistrate's Courts. (*The Attorney General*).

A Bill to regulate the importation and exportation of plants and to make provision for the prevention and eradication of diseases and pests affecting plants. (*Professor Dash*).

A Bill to repeal the Pensions (Voluntary Retirement) Ordinance, 1932, (*Mr. Mc David*).

A Bill to amend the Bill of Entry Tax Ordinance (No. 2), 1932, by exempting certain articles from the Bill of Entry Tax (*Mr. D' Andrade*).

Notice was given that at the next or a subsequent meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bills be read the second time.

THE ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Before we proceed with the next item on the Order of the Day, sir, I am requested by some of the Elected Members to ask for an adjournment of consideration of the Estimates for a fortnight. The reason for that is that with the adjournment for only a week Members have not had sufficient time to go through the Estimates. Further, some Members feel that perhaps Your Excellency would be good enough to appoint a Select Committee comprising the Elected Members, the Colonial Secretary and the Colonial Treasurer, with power to summon any Head of a Department, to enquire into any item on the Estimates. It has been suggested that an adjournment of a fortnight would probably meet the case, but in some quarters it is felt that the

Council ought to adjourn for a longer period, because some of the Members desire to make an exhaustive examination of the Estimates in order to save time when we come to review them. I do not know if some of my brother Electives have any objection to that view, but it is certainly the opinion of five or six of the Elected Members.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the best course would be to let the Colonial Secretary move his motion, and then the hon. Member could move as an amendment that the Estimates be referred to a Select Committee of the nature he described. I would certainly be very glad to appoint that Committee if it is the wish of the Council. I am sure it would be to the advantage of public business. Instead of adjourning to a specific date I suggest that the Council be adjourned *sine die* and I will undertake that the Colonial Secretary would advise me when to call the Council together so that there may be no longer delay than is necessary for consideration of the Estimates.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: That would meet my views, subject to the views of the other Elected Members.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move:—

THAT this Council approves of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1936, which have been laid on the table.

In placing this motion before you I do not propose to speak at such length as is customary on this occasion; my reason therefor is not what may be supposed to be the obvious one—that the short period of my service here has not enabled me to master the necessary figures—but rather the fact that much information concerning the Estimates has already been placed before Council.

After listening to Your Excellency's speech a week ago honourable members will have clearly in their minds the financial background into which these estimates fit; Your Excellency showed also the broad outlines of the estimates themselves stating the reasons for alterations as compared with 1935 in all cases of major importance. The detailed information is in the hands of honourable members in

the form of an explanatory memorandum and there only remains for me to explain a little more fully some of the points dealt with in the memorandum and to refer to a few matters which seem to call for further remarks.

2. Examination of the figures of Revenue and Expenditure as approved for 1935 and proposed for 1936 will show that, excluding items such as balances carried forward, extraordinary Revenue Receipts, Loans-in-Aid, and Colonial Development Fund Schemes, a working loss of \$431,109 is anticipated for 1936 as compared with \$758,422 in 1935—an improvement of \$327,313. This is accounted for by an increase in revenue amounting to \$122,236 and a decrease in Expenditure of \$205,077.

3. The revenue increases have already been explained by Your Excellency, the figures being based on the revised Estimate for the current year. In the case of each item under the head of Customs the basis of the revised Estimate for 1935 was the actual gross collections during the first six months of the year.

The percentage ratio of collections during the first half of a year to the total collections for the year remains fairly constant and, as the 1935 revised figures were obtained by the application of this ratio and a subsequent deduction to allow for estimated over entries, the figures are as accurate as it is possible to make them.

An increase of \$20,000 is anticipated in income tax collections owing to the fact that the 1935 returns were based on 1934 incomes which were adversely affected by the floods. The actual receipts in 1934 were \$55,000 more than the Estimate for 1936.

The increase of \$15,670 under the head of Interest is accounted for mainly by increased payments due from Drainage Boards and the Sea Defence Board.

4. As to the expenditure, analysis shows that the decreases under Transport and Harbours—\$150,717,—Public Works Extraordinary, Roads and Bridges—\$44,100—Public Debt—\$12,805,—account for the total, leaving the aggregate for all other heads practically unchanged.

5. The figures that I have given in respect of the Public Debt are exclusive of those for the Transport and Harbours Department where there is a further saving on this account of \$2,875 making a total decrease of \$15,680 in Public Debt charges. The reduction results from the redemption at maturity in July of the current year of the \$933,600 loan. The saving on this account of interest and sinking fund charges for a full year will amount to \$46,680 but for 1936 the benefit compared with 1935 is \$42,000 as only one moiety of sinking fund had to be paid in 1935. As against this saving, new liabilities accrue next year to the extent of \$21,000 for interest on new loan expenditure on sea defences and anti-flood measures and \$5,182 in respect of equated annuity payments on account of Colonial Development Fund loans, leaving the net figure of \$15,680 already mentioned.

6. In reviewing the expenditure estimates under the various heads I do not propose to anticipate questions which may be asked in regard to existing services but to deal only with those heads where under alterations from estimates for the current year make it desirable that the information already furnished should be amplified.

AUDIT DEPARTMENT.

The strengthening of this Department will, I feel sure, meet with the approval of honourable members; it is clear that it is one of the Departments in which Government cannot afford to economise and I find on reference to past debates that this fact has been very generally recognised. Some slight addition is due to the fact that provision has been made for a full year for the salary of the new post of Assistant Auditor, whereas the leave on retirement of the Chief Clerk will not expire until the middle of March.

The substitution of three Class II. clerks' posts for the same number of Class III. posts is desirable for two reasons; firstly in order to strengthen the status of officers who in the course of their duties have to conduct audits of the accounts of senior officers, and secondly to afford officers reasonable prospects of promotion inside the Department in view of the adoption of a policy of keeping the Audit Department as self contained as possible.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

The consolidation of these estimates will enable honourable members to see at a glance the cost of these services and a table is appended showing the allocation to the various districts. The increase in the departmental estimates is due to additional provision for cycle labels, which is recoverable, and the fact that the salary of an Assistant District Commissioner was provided for only a portion of the current year.

EDUCATION.

This head is responsible for an addition to the estimates of over \$15,000, almost the whole of which is due, as Your Excellency has explained, to the increasing number of children of school age. The allowances to British Guiana Scholars are rather larger than usual owing to the fact that four scholars will be in receipt of allowances. As members are aware the Scholarships can be spread over three or four years and it so happens that in 1936 there will be one scholar in his fourth year and three scholars each of whom will be drawing a third of his total grant of \$4,320.

LANDS AND MINES.

The apparent increase of \$2,667 is due to the inclusion in the 1936 Estimates of salaries for officers previously seconded to the Brazil Boundary Commission, the saving under the latter head being \$9,648 and the resultant net decrease in expenditure \$6,981. On the other hand reimbursements to revenue on account of the Boundary Commission show a decrease of \$6,830.

MEDICAL.

There are a number of alterations of a minor character to which it is unnecessary to refer as the notes in the Estimates offer full explanations. The redistribution of certain votes under Hospitals and Dispensaries permits a proper classification to be made and enables the comparative figures for the various institutions to be clearly set out in the allocation table which is appended. Close analysis will show that no votes have been increased in this reshuffle.

GOVERNMENT HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

The Central Board of Health has been occupied since its creation last year in

drafting suitable regulations to govern its activities. It will be necessary to provide a clerk for this Board if its functions are to be carried out efficiently and without unnecessary inconvenience to the public. The salary of this additional post, \$1,260, is more than covered by savings on other votes.

PRISONS.

The items which are mainly responsible for the increase of \$2,564 under this head have all been explained elsewhere. An item of considerable interest is that for the expenses—an amount of \$312 only—of a visit to the Colony by H.M.'s Commissioner of Prisons. It is hoped that the Commissioner, who is an authority on reformatory institutions, will be able, in addition to his prison inspections, to offer advice on the work of the Industrial School at Onderneeming.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

The growing needs of the College make it impossible to grant necessary leave to members of the staff without impairing the teaching efficiency unless provision is made for relief. It is more economical to make provision for temporary relief for masters on leave than to make a permanent increase in the staff.

SEA DEFENCES.

The apparent increase in respect of Onderneeming is in reality a transfer from the last item on page 85, Public Works Extraordinary.

7. Honourable Members will observe that the Estimates adhere very closely to those for 1935, and I trust that they will agree that such a result is inevitable having regard to our financial position, the existing heavy incidence of taxation and the severe economy control which has been exercised in the current year's Estimates.

8. In moving the approval of the Estimates, I have followed the procedure adopted for the last supplementary estimates rather than that which has been customary in previous years. When the motion has been seconded and honourable members have spoken generally on the subject if they so wish I propose to move that Council resolve itself into Committee to consider the Estimates in detail.

Mr. SMELLIE seconded.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Before moving the amendment for the adjournment, the Elected Members would like to hear from Government whether they would be given the usual privilege of replying to the Governor's Speech and also the Budget Speech of the Colonial Secretary.

THE PRESIDENT: Would the hon. Member not move that the Select Committee be appointed?

Mr. DE AGUIAR: In addition to the amendment for the adjournment I beg to move that a Select Committee consisting of the Colonial Secretary, the Colonial Treasurer and the Unofficial Members of the Council be appointed for the purpose of considering the Estimates for 1936, with power to summon any Head of a Department for any information that may be required arising out of the Estimates.

Mr. JACOB: I desire most heartily to second that motion.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I desire with all the vehemence I can command to oppose the motion. It is an innovation which cannot make for the efficient discharge of the duty of considering the Estimates. The idea of considering the Estimates before they are considered by this House is not a new one. It has been tried before and was an absolute failure as there was never any unanimity. It is therefore very necessary that every item in the Estimates should be placed before the full House, and Government and the public should see what has transpired behind closed doors. I do not see how this innovation can be of any value. What authority would the Committee have, and who would be bound by their findings? The adjournment might have been asked for last Tuesday. That would have enabled Members to make arrangements to suit their own convenience and the business of Government. It is not fair for a few Members to say they have no time to give Government in order to economise time for themselves; and if the ordinary routine is not departed from there is no necessity to ask for permission for Your Excellency's Address to be discussed by the Council. Even if the Address was not discussed by the Council, when the Estimates are under consideration every Member would have an opportunity to make any remarks he desires. I

cannot conceive that the innovation could lead to any improvement, nor do I think that, for the sake of the convenience of a few Members, Government should be called upon to change the whole of the procedure, which is of very doubtful utility if of any utility at all.

Mr. GONSALVES: I am going to support the motion and also the opposition of the hon. Member for Berbice River. I am prepared to assist the hon. Member for Central Demerara and the new Members of the Council in giving another trial to something which has been tried before and has not worked. In saying that I am supporting the hon. Member for Berbice River. If the hon. Member for Central Demerara is going to give a pledge that each member of the Select Committee, after deciding whether an item should stand or not, is going to say nothing again either for or against it in that case progress will be made. If, on the other hand, there is not going to be anything binding on the findings of the Committee, we shall continue to have a state of things which has always obtained in this Council. I did not attend the meeting held yesterday by the Electives because I was otherwise engaged at the hour fixed, but I am willing to co-operate with those Members who are anxious to assist the Council in arriving at a unanimous decision. My experience in the past is that decisions arrived at at the Committee meetings have been altered and the time of the Council taken up in discussing items as if they had not been considered.

Mr. AUSTIN: I would support this motion whole-heartedly if history has not a way of repeating itself. Previous to your administration, sir, we used to have a Committee sitting here from 8 o'clock until midnight with the Heads of Departments giving us all the information we wanted. The Elected Members were in the majority and items were passed, but when the items came up for consideration later they were challenged on the ground that Members had heard something outside which threw a different light on them to what they had heard in Committee. No time will be saved in Council by appointing a Select Committee unless there is a signed agreement by the Members that they will not reconsider the

decisions arrived at. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam and the Hon. Mr. Smellie would be able to confirm my statement that if the Committee now suggested is appointed it will not save time, or ensure that there will be no discussion of items which in the ordinary course of events will not come under discussion.

Mr. SEYMOUR: Being a country Member, I can see no useful purpose of this Committee. If the Elected Members want to show co-operation they should get together and not necessarily sit on a Committee for hours. If the Elected Members can get together and condense in a few words what they want to say I can see some useful purpose in the appointment of the Committee, but if they cannot guarantee me that their findings will be binding I can see no useful purpose of the Committee.

THE PRESIDENT: I have had considerable experience of Committees such as the hon. Member for Central Demerara has suggested, and I have presided over such Committees in three other countries. In respect of a Member pledging himself, the usual practice in my experience is for a Member either to accept the explanation given or to say that he does not accept the explanation and he is going to raise the question in Council. I say that merely as a guide to the Council.

Mr. WIGHT: I am going to take this opportunity to ask for a pronouncement from the Chair as to who is the Senior Elected Member of this Council. I thought that the hon. Member for New Amsterdam was the Senior Member, but there is a little jealousy as to who should have replied to Your Excellency's Speech. I make no claim whatever to be in the running for the position, but I think it is necessary to have a pronouncement of that kind as it would clear the atmosphere considerably.

THE PRESIDENT: I am advised that the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice, as Member of the Executive Council, is the Senior Elected Member in accordance with the Order in Council.

Mr. WIGHT: Thank you, sir.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am going to ask for another pronouncement on that question.

A Member of the Executive Council becomes a Member of the Cabinet, and as a Member of the Cabinet he assists in making the Budget. Has there been any case of a Member of the Cabinet going into Parliament and saying "This is a good Budget, therefore accept it." It is the privilege of the Senior Elected Member to reply to the Budget Speech and I cannot conceive how constitutionally he can do it. I agree that a Member advanced to the Executive Council becomes the Senior Member of this Council even though he may be the last Member elected, but having become a Member of the Cabinet his right to speak on behalf of the Elected Members is very doubtful.

THE PRESIDENT: The Attorney-General agrees with me that the point raised by the hon. Member for Berbice River is not a constitutional one. It is a privilege to reply to the Governor's Address and it is a privilege which is extended to all Members of this Council. If in due course it is the wish of hon. Members to debate the Address, I shall give every opportunity to them to do so. The actual point the hon. Member is getting at is who should rise after the Governor's Address to make some remarks in reply to it and ask that it be printed.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Who is to reply to what is known as the Budget Speech?

THE PRESIDENT: That would be a matter for the Elected Members to determine between themselves and I decline to give any decision on it.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Perhaps I might rise to a point of explanation. For many years on the conclusion of the Governor's Address at the opening of the Legislative Council I enjoyed the privilege, whether of my own volition or it was forced on me, of thanking the Governor for that Address. In that position I was supposed to assume the privilege of the Senior Elected Member. That is one position. Another position arose to-day when at the conclusion of the Budget Speech it was thought to be the privilege of the Senior Elected Member to move the adjournment which gives the right to reply. That is a reply to Government's policy as distinct from the reply which I have indicated merely thank-

ing the Governor for his Address, therefore there are two positions to be considered. I thought someone should have thanked Your Excellency for your Address, and I would have done so but I did not want to suffer the experience of being reminded that I was rifling the position. I did not want to be squeezed like a lemon and I retired from the combat. I believe the matter was referred to the Attorney-General, whose opinion no one knows, and that position has arisen again to-day. The position to-day is one for an adjournment.

Perhaps I might be allowed again to state my experience. For many years the Electives met, either under my Chairmanship or someone else, in the afternoon or evenings. Those meetings were far from successful. No decisions were arrived at for very many reasons. In some instances Members were even prevented from making some explanation with regard to a vote affecting his own constituency. On the other hand agreements reached have been varied. I do not think any general complaint can be made about that for the simple reason that it is very inconvenient to be bound by hide-bound decisions of that kind when, as often happens, some matter comes before the Council, a statement of an Official Member might induce a Member to change his opinion. But to some extent those meetings were of some benefit. It has always been allowed by Government that some Official, not necessarily the Head of a Department, should be available for the purpose of explaining any item on the Estimates, and I have known that done even by one of the senior clerks of a Department. The suggestion that the Committee should have the power to summon the Heads of Departments is therefore entirely unnecessary. The Colonial Secretary could, and would, furnish all the information that the Head of a Department can supply. The great fear which I express has already been suggested by other Members: that is, that these conferences are productive of no final result.

It may be convenient at the present moment for new Members to acquire some information of items on the Estimates. We have all enjoyed that ignorance or unacquaintance with some items on the

Estimates, but, as in my own case, attention to the procedure by the more experienced Members in relation to items on the Estimates is the best course for new Members to adopt. I find as a matter of history that every Member in a very short time forms an acquaintance with the procedure on all items. I do not think any necessity arises, at any rate, for so long an adjournment. It would be an inconvenience to some of us to have an adjournment for two weeks, but I think it is unnecessary and suggest a week. I further suggest that if they do meet Members will be allowed to deal with matters in relation to or affecting their own constituency. I deprecate the habit of every Member to rise and merely reiterate what another Member has said in a different form. Nothing contributes more to the length of the sessions than that. I find that repetition is a great pastime on the part of Members of the Council, and it is productive of no good and is conducive to lengthy sessions.

Apart altogether from the meetings which have been referred to, I remember about four or five years ago Government sanctioned the appointment of what is known as a Finance Committee. I rather fancy that is what Your Excellency referred to as your experience in other countries. Government then gave an assurance that a Finance Committee would be appointed, with the Colonial Secretary as Chairman, and I believe that is the practice in Trinidad. In other places the decisions of the Finance Committee, whose meetings are more or less well attended, are always given effect to when the Members meet in Council, but I doubt very much whether that can be looked forward to here, at any rate at the present session.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are just two points in the debate that I should like to refer to. First of all, the hon. Member for Western Essequibo says the same result could be achieved by an arrangement among the Elected Members. The essence of a Committee such as that proposed is that there should be discussion in the light of information obtained from Heads of Departments in attendance. A meeting of Elected Members would not achieve anything along those lines. Secondly, the hon. Member for New Amsterdam said that the Colonial Secre-

tary could always supply all information to a Committee such as this without the Heads of Departments attending. I assure him that Colonial Secretaries who have been in their post a great deal longer than I have find it extremely difficult to answer some of the questions asked by Elected Members during consideration of the Estimates, and those questions can only be promptly replied to and properly explained by the Heads of the Departments concerned.

MR. DE AGUIAR: It is not often that I find myself in disagreement with my brother Electives. It is very unfortunate that the hon. Member for New Amsterdam did not attend the conference yesterday. The object of my motion is not to deprive Members of any of their privileges. It is only an endeavour on the part of certain Elected Members to save the time of the Council, and if they would look at it from that angle Members would agree with the motion. I would give a definite assurance that any item which is not unanimously approved would be debated, and, further, that no decision that is not unanimous would be binding on any Member of the Council. I did not think it was necessary to make these remarks when I moved the motion, but it seems to me absolutely necessary to do so now. I think the hon. Member for Berbice River has overlooked the fact that he was a member of that Committee. Perhaps you will permit me, sir, to amend the motion to include the Nominated Members. I am sure that if the Committee is appointed Members will find that considerable time will be saved in the work of the Council.

There can be no doubt that if certain explanations are given by Government beforehand, and if Members do meet and discuss the items, there would not be such lengthy debates as have taken place in the past. On many occasions, after a debate lasting more than an hour, information is given by the Head of a Department or the Colonial Secretary and Members find that they had been fighting a phantom. It is to arrive at some agreement before the Estimates are put before the House that I have suggested that they should be considered by a Committee. If Members meet and agree to all the votes of a Department they would so inform Govern-

ment when the estimates of that Department come up, and I am sure that would save a good deal of the time of the Council. I am surprised to hear that after Members of the Council have met and arrived at decisions they would go back on their decisions. I venture to believe that no Member would go back on any decision on which there is agreement unless there is strong reason for doing so, and I know it has happened where a Member has received certain information subsequent to arriving at a decision. I appeal to hon. Members to at least give this Committee a trial, and I assure them that if it is found not to work satisfactorily I will not be the mover of a similar motion next year.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I put the motion to the Council I have two things to say. The first is that this is a question which principally concerns, in my view, the Unofficial Members. I shall leave it, therefore, to the Official Members of the Council to vote or abstain from voting as they wish and think fit. If they wish to vote they will vote according to their own views. Government is prepared in this case to meet the views of the majority of the Unofficial Members.

MR. SEYMOUR: I trust that if we do have a Select Committee of the nature proposed they will get together. I cannot come all the way from Essequibo unless they guarantee to get together and work.

THE PRESIDENT: The second thing I have to say is I personally decline to believe that this Colony differs essentially from many other Colonies, and I think it will be found that the procedure which has been suggested by the hon. Member is usual in the Colonial Empire and I may point out it is the practice in the Mother of Parliaments. The question is that the Estimates be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Colonial Secretary as Chairman, the Colonial Treasurer and the Unofficial Members. I will leave the question of the adjournment over until that question has been settled.

The Council divided on the question and voted :—

Ayes—Messrs. Jackson, Seymour, King, Jacob, Crum Ewing, Humphrys, Peer

Bacchus, Dr. Singh, De Aguiar, Gonsalves, Wight, Mullin, McDavid, Woolford, Major Bain Gray and the Attorney-General—16.

Noes—Messrs Austin, Eleazar, Dr. De Freitas, Luckhoo and Smellie—5.

Did not vote—Major Craig, Mr. D'Andrade, Professor Dash and the Colonial Secretary—4.

THE PRESIDENT: I propose to adjourn the Council *sine die*, leaving the Estimates in the hands of the Select Committee now appointed to get through them with all reasonable expedition.

ITALO-ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I beg to move that the Standing Rules and Orders be suspended to enable me to move the motion of which I gave notice this morning.

Mr. DE AGUIAR seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have no hesitation at all in moving the motion:—

THAT this Council respectfully requests His Excellency the Governor to convey to the British Government through the Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, its heartiest congratulations for the stand which Great Britain has taken and maintained in supporting the Principles of the League of Nations in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict.

I feel that the motion will meet with the approval of the House without much discussion. In this Colony of British Guiana, the only British province on the South American Continent and one which boasts that it is one of the most, if not the most, loyal cosmopolitan community in these parts, it is only fitting that on an occasion such as this this Council should convey to the British Government its congratulations on and satisfaction with the stand Great Britain has maintained in support of the principles of the League of Nations. This country, sir, is peculiarly in a position to offer such congratulations, being one in which I can almost say all races of the earth dwell together in perfect amity. Ours is certainly a country that will support the Mother Country, as it does, in the maintenance of justice common to all in a conflict such as is being

waged in Africa to-day. It is not in British Guiana a question of race, colour or creed; it is a question of British justice maintaining right against might. It is a question of the British Government standing for a principle which after all is an attribute of Divine justice. And when we look around and see the amity of the various races, of various colours and various creeds moving together as one community, and respecting the rights of one another as we conceive is the spirit of the founder of Christianity, it does not need very many words from me to convey to the British Government the feeling of the entire community of British Guiana on this question. We cannot help feeling anxious, but it is tempered considerably with the satisfaction that we are part of the Empire that stands for right, equity and the support of the weak against the strong so long as justice is being done. It is in that spirit that I move the motion and recommend it to the House with the sincere hope that there will be no dissentient voice to the sentiments of the people of British Guiana as expressed in the motion.

Mr. JACKSON: I crave to be permitted to second the motion. I am quite sure that a motion of this kind, of loyalty and of support of the British Empire, in this cause, cannot but have a very great and abiding effect upon the minds of the people of British Guiana. It will serve to dispel all doubts, which I know are existing, in the minds of people who are not well placed intelligently. I know as a matter of fact that there are numbers of persons in this community who regard this matter from a racial point of view, and the remarks that have fallen from the lips of the hon. Member must have a good effect upon the minds of all such persons who may read or hear them. There is no gainsaying the fact that the stand taken up by Great Britain in connection with this War is one that will be supported by every Member of this House and cannot but be approved by all well-thinking persons. I heartily second the motion because I feel that it is right and proper, and, as I said before, it will tend to settle the little doubts in the minds of some people. It is essential that they should be told the part Great Britain has played and is playing in the matter of stopping the War. I have no doubt that the

nations supporting Great Britain in the League of Nations are moved by a deep sense of justice, and before long we sincerely hope that the War will be stopped and Ethiopia will be indemnified for the penalty she is paying at the present time. (Applause).

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I desire to associate myself with the remarks made both by the mover and seconder of the motion, also to congratulate the seconder of the motion on his maiden speech, especially on such an important subject before the world to-day. All that they have said is perfectly true and, I feel, represents the views of every Member of this House and of the community. There can be no doubt that every Member of this House endorse and support the Mother Country in the stand which she has taken in this unfortunate dispute. It is not surprising that Great Britain has taken such a stand; it is only one of the means of displaying British justice. I heartily support the motion.

Mr. WIGHT: I desire to congratulate you, sir, on the Message you delivered through the Press in connection with this matter. It has served an exceedingly useful purpose. I can see no harm in sending forward this resolution, but to my mind it looks as if we want to dictate to the British Government. I think what has happened already has served the purpose and is something that Your Excellency should be very proud of.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir, I would like to associate myself and other Official Members with the sentiments which have been expressed on the motion, and to state that we feel that the motion is one which should be sent forward to the Secretary of State as expressing the view of the people of British Guiana.

Motion put, and agreed to.

The Council adjourned *sine die*.