

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 26th June, 1945.

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G.

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

The Hon. the Attorney General, Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M. C., K. C.

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

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

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, C.B.E. (Georgetown North)

The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K.C. (Nominated)

The Hon. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo)

The Hon. J. I. deAguiar (Central Demerara)

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated)

The Hon. M.B.G. Austin, O.B.E. (Nominated)

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice)

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E. (Nominated)

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River)

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated)

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

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on Thursday 17th May, 1945, and Friday 18th May, 1945, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

GUARANTEED PRICES FOR CASSAVA

The PRESIDENT: Before proceeding with business I should just like to take this opportunity of recording certain matters which seem to require an authoritative word from Government. These are, I regret to say, to correct serious misapprehensions or even misrepresentations which appear current.

The first is touching the allegation quite commonly current, that Government has broken its promise to pay a certain guaranteed price in regard to cassava. This is an absolute untruth.

There are two guaranteed prices, one of half a cent valid till 1947, and one of a cent and a quarter per pound valid for a year. There has never been any kind of guarantee of any higher price.

Some time ago statements appeared in the daily papers to the effect that Government had had a guaranteed price of a cent and a half and had stopped paying this, but were paying only a cent and a quarter, that is, a quarter cent below the guarantee. This was corrected after some time, but not before the untruth had had a run. Since my return from Berbice I have had my attention drawn to a whole series of statements made or reported in weekly newspapers repeating this untruth.

The facts are as follows:—In 1942, as an important factor in encouraging local food production, it was decided to fix guaranteed minimum prices which would ensure that farmers, in the event of a glut, would still find a purchaser in Government. These prices were very carefully considered in the light of prices in previous years by District Committees, by Legislative Council Committee, and so on, and the price of a half cent was agreed upon as a fair good guarantee. I remember the discussions at the time very well, including conversations with the late Mr. Eleazar who was particularly interested to get the best possible figure guaranteed.

In the middle of 1944 it became evident that the free prices in many items would probably drop very greatly from those then current, and to safeguard farmers against this and to maintain the encouragement to farmers, the guaranteed price was raised to a cent and a quarter valid for one year, as compared with the half cent price valid for three years. This was given wide publicity. Further, as the price actually being paid was a cent and a half, it was decided to maintain that price—not as a guarantee, but in practice for a short period as a further

help, and before coming back to the cent and a quarter.

At the end of the year what had been foreseen came about, and had the guarantees not been operative it is probable that prices would have fallen very low indeed. After losing very heavily indeed on cassava bought at a cent and a half, for which there was nothing like a demand, something like \$60,000, Government very naturally and properly came back to its guaranteed price of a cent and a quarter.

It seems to me just plainly wrongful that with all the publicity which has been given, persons should represent such a natural step as a breach of promise, or to attempt to represent that because Government had been paying above the guarantee they were not to be permitted to apply the guarantee. Such consistent misrepresentations as have occurred, which must to some extent be wilful, makes it difficult to deal sympathetically with such matters, or to grant any temporary concession lest it be misunderstood.

As to the actual guarantees themselves, it was widely considered in 1942 that the half-cent was a possible price in the case of big production. In 1944 most exhaustive enquiries and inspection of figures has satisfied all those persons who have the responsibility of handling this matter, that the cent and a quarter price is not only a fair one but a good one. A great many statements of figures to the contrary have been examined, and have been rejected as quite unreliable, with hopelessly inflated figures of expenditure, and sometimes far too low figures of production and so on. I am afraid my experience has been that one must regard with the utmost suspicion figures put forward in defence of this kind of claim for higher prices.

No doubt it is the common idea of primary producers that it is always good tactics and fair to agitate for higher prices. It is a kind of pressure

group business which is a common feature of politics. But to press plain untruth will only be ultimately to the disadvantage of the farmer and cause Government to withdraw.

In one place I saw chalked up the astonishing statement that Government was going to depress the price of all foodstuffs, fruit, poultry, eggs and everything else. As Members of this Council know very well, Government only concerns itself with the minimum number of essential foodstuffs of local production, seven or eight in all. In all other things, special kinds of green vegetables, fruit, etc., producers are entirely free and prices only governed by supply and demand.

There is just another point touching all this. We are spending very heavily indeed on subsidization, mostly foodstuffs, and imported foodstuffs to keep prices from bounding up to extreme levels. This mostly affects imported foods like flour, much the biggest item. But this kind of policy cannot be maintained if we encourage rise of prices of local products above what fair examination shows to be reasonable. In other words, if control must be lifted it would have to be lifted wholly. This would mean, of course, flour of at least 6 cents a pound or I believe something still higher. The people of the Colony cannot have these things both ways. I personally believe very strongly that the greater hardship in the end will be inflicted on everybody if we lightheartedly permit inflation in response to every demand.

THE NEW QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

The other matter to which I wish to refer, and as to which to my regret I find it necessary to take this action, to scotch what is nothing more or less than another serious misrepresentation, touches Queen's College. It was brought to my notice on my return from Barbice that Government was accused of breaking a "pledge" as to continuous building at Queen's College without limitation,

or up to six hundred, and secondly, that this had been done by a very sudden decision.

I will take the second point first. The decision not to build another temporary class-room in 1945, in addition to two built in 1944, dates back, as far as formal action in Executive Council is concerned, to the 13th February last, and was conveyed by letter to the Headmaster and the Board of Governors by a letter of 16th February. It was considered by the Board of Governors at a meeting on the 23rd February. On that day also went a letter intimating the upshot of the conversations with the Comptroller. I have the minute in front of me here.

The Chairman explained these. The upshot of those conversations had been that application for financial assistance for buildings to house 400 ordinary pupils, with an additional (about) 100 further places for pupils in training for teachers, would receive the Comptroller's support, and in the proportion of fifty-five for the four hundred ordinary places and a hundred per cent for the places for pupils in training as teachers, and would be recommended on that basis to the United Kingdom Treasury. That does not, of course, exclude possible expansion beyond those figures. It is recorded, and I quote from the minute—

"The Board should write to Government and accept these terms.....so that Government should be able immediately to apply for an Imperial grant.....in the circumstances they should not press for an extra classroom".

This is a quotation from the minute. This is all perfectly clear. The information and the resulting decision were conveyed quite clearly to the Principal, the Board of Governors. The President of the Old Boys' Association received a copy of the letter of 23rd February and, as a member of the Board of Governors, was present at the meeting when this and the letter of 16th February were discussed. The

President as well as the Principal had been seen personally by me also.

The Principal wrote to Government reporting that the Board "supported the proposals "given in your letter," *i.e.* of 23rd February, and quoted from the minute. It cannot therefore be said that Government has made a sudden decision in June because the Headmaster takes the practical steps necessary in that month on a decision conveyed in February. Moreover, it is to be observed that the proposals arising from discussions with the Comptroller were accepted by the Board of Governors as the practical thing, and it was expressly stated in the minute that the Board should not press for an additional class-room in 1945. If the Board of Governors or the Old Boys Association, whose President is a member of the Board of Governors, had reason to press Government to reconsider the matter, or to put forward further representations, the time was surely then, and not four months later when the Headmaster had taken the necessary executive steps.

As to possible expansion of the new Queen's College beyond the 400—500 mark I will comment later.

Now as to the allegation of breaking of a "pledge." I have gone carefully through all the files and I find no record whatsoever of such a pledge. What I do find is this, that in October, 1943, the Principal had suggested 375 as the practical ceiling, the numbers then being 351: numbers at 1942/43 had been 323, 1941/42, 305. The Old Boys' Association made representations then, in the end of 1943, for expansion by temporary building on the present site up to 600.

The President of the Association saw me, and I gave him a sympathetic hearing and, thinking something useful might be done, asked him to put up his idea of the accommodation necessary for the extra 250 boys at the present site, with estimates of cost, capital and recurrent. This was referred to the

Board of Governors who did recommend gradual expansion at the present site. No specific figure of a ceiling was put forward, nor did Government commit itself in any way to a guarantee or pledge of indefinite expansion up to a specific 600. What was actually done was to build two new class-rooms in 1944, and to arrange for a continuation of the leasing of a building. This has permitted expansion of the school from about the 305 of 1941/42 to 400 for 1945/46.

Since then this specification of financial support forthcoming for a new building to 200 ordinary places and 100 quite special places, for which the necessary arrangements cannot yet be ripe, had made it obviously a practical measure to stand on the number as it will be at the end of this year until we can consider further, rather than perhaps have to exclude 100 boys from the new building. Quite apart from questions of the finance of Queen's College and of the new Queen's College, there are questions of priority in all these things, and Government, which hopes to begin a programme of primary school building this year—I shall be approaching Members on this subject in a very few days—cannot consider it proper to give priority of finance and building material to a secondary school in Georgetown in addition to the priority already given Bishops' High School, if that has to be by priority over the needs of primary schools, and over the considerable requirements for other badly required building, the devastated area, housing needs and so on.

I repeat that in going through the papers I find no evidence whatsoever of any "pledge," or of anything that can be so interpreted. What I am afraid happens is that a sympathetic hearing coupled with some action to provide matter for investigation of what might be done, is promptly interpreted first into an understanding, and then later, by wishful thinking, into a "pledge."

Now as to possible accommodation in a new Queen's College. It is stated in all the papers that the plan of construction should allow for expansion. That is accepted. But the one practical thing at the moment, however, is—if we wish for financial support, it is quite certain that we need it — to put up our application in such a way as will have a pretty good chance of succeeding, knowing that it will have at least the Comptroller's support. It is not good tactics to push at the Secretary of State what will appear as an extravagant proposition, even if we were to propose to bear a bigger share of the expense. Even as it is, the existing tentative plans have been much criticised as extravagant, e.g., at \$900 a place. However, let that pass.

The practical thing to do is to put up our plan of application on the lines likely to get a quick response, and the Board of Governors accepted that, as I have said, in February. Whether or not more places should be provided is not a matter to be decided in 1945, but in the circumstances of the time of building when we come to it. I repeat that any plans can allow for that. Equally, it is practical wisdom to maintain Queen's College for the moment at a corresponding level, and this would be so even if we had not the clamant priorities of primary education and other things. In the present, too, let merit be the criterion for entrance, without any restriction on free scholarships, and where there has to be a choice let the meritorious boy get first chance. There are very real advantages to the College in such a system.

There are many things I could say on this matter, but I think this will do for the moment.

I should add two things. Government approved some three weeks or more ago the securing of a further graduate Master, now that with the end of hostilities there is a chance of securing him. The second point is

that Government is in no way committed to beginning new hospital buildings in 1946.

CURTAILMENT OF SEAPLANE SERVICE

I am afraid I have said a third matter on which to comment. The Chamber of Commerce was recently notified of a curtailment in the seaplane services, and notices appeared in the Press with a discussion in the Chamber. I am informed that this has revived the old untruth that the restriction of passenger traffic by Atkinson Field is solely due to the local Government. This is absolutely and completely untrue, and though in many cases the mention may be merely ignorance, in others it is difficult to believe that it is not, to say the least of it, careless and irresponsible, in view of the wide publicity I gave to this matter two and a half years ago.

Members will remember the note that I circulated, a minute giving a precis of the history of the matter, of the efforts of this Government to secure a useful *modus vivendi*, and finally the limitations to passenger traffic by Atkinson Field as laid down in precise words by an exchange of documents between the U.S.A. State Department and the British Ambassador in Washington. The phrase in the documents of the State Department is this:—

“Passengers to be emplaned or deplaned except in emergencies would include only

- (a) personnel of the military, naval or air forces of the United Nations,
- (b) Government officials of the United Nations,
- (c) civilians being nationals of the United Nations.

engaged in, and travelling in connection with, occupations vital to the war effort.”

I repeat that this is a precise quotation from the document of the State Department, and it is binding on the American Military Command and,

through the Ambassador and the Secretary of State, binding on me. We have in recent months put the widest possible interpretation on the definitions to meet general interest, but nevertheless the directive is still binding, and persons who cannot be brought within it may not travel by the Military Base. People seem to forget entirely that Atkinson Field is a military base.

I must ask Members of Council and through them the Press and the public again to take note of what the precise position is.

HYDRO-ELECTRIC POSSIBILITIES.

I have two intimations of some importance to record, and that is that the Imperial Government has made a free grant of funds for the further exploration and experiment of hydro-electric possibilities in the interior. Members will remember that was applied for some three months ago: and the Imperial Government has also made a free grant for the construction of four aeroplane landing grounds in the interior. Some progress in this matter has already been anticipated, equipment ordered, and some exploratory work done.

RELAXATION OF WAR-TIME CONTROLS.

I have also to announce that at a meeting of the Defence Committee of the Colony since my return from Berbice a number of further decisions as to relaxations of wartime controls were made. These are additional to those notified immediately after V-Day. A number of these will be gazetted in due course, others will be brought into effect gradually over the next few weeks, in some cases up to three months. I have been requested by the Imperial Government not to publish specifically the action taken in regard to certain of the important steps, but I have no doubt that the public will very quickly become aware of the changing position.

I pass to the Order of the Day.

ASSISTANCE FOR CANE FARMING INDUSTRY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY communicated the following Messages:—

MESSAGE No. 36

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council.

Government has for some considerable time been disturbed by the decline of cane-farming and the low level of efficiency prevailing in that industry. Representations have been made by the farmers themselves, and an investigation has been carried out by Officers of the Agriculture Department who have submitted a report on the state of the cultivation in which the following main remedial measures are recommended—

- (a) the improvement of drainage and navigation facilities;
- (b) the digging of certain cross-canals, and the smousing of a considerable acreage so that flood-fallowing, along the lines so successfully followed by the sugar estates, might be undertaken; and
- (c) the establishment of nurseries of improved varieties.

These proposals, from which 350 acres will benefit, have been examined by the Legislative Council Advisory Agriculture and Fisheries Committee, the Commissioner of Local Government, and the Consulting Engineer who support them but consider that the responsibility for the digging of drainage and navigation canals, and for smousing lies with the Local Authorities and the cane-farmers concerned who should be asked to carry out this work. They have accordingly recommended that \$23,650, made up as hereunder for carrying out the balance of the work, should be provided from general revenue—

(a) Estimated cost of mobile pump	\$ 7,000
(b) Flooding 350 acres for 3 years.....	10,500
(c) Compensation for crop damage in arranging block cultivation.....	3,000
(d) Provision of improved planting material..	3,150
	\$23,650

It is clear that early steps must be taken to set the cane-farming industry on a proper footing if the industry, of major importance to certain villages on the East Coast of Demerara, is not to disappear. In the circumstances, I invite Honourable Members to approve of the expenditure of \$23,650 as set out above.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
British Guiana,
12th June, 1945.

CHARITY-AMAZON IMPROVEMENT
SCHEME.

MESSAGE No. 37

Honourable Members of the Legislative
Council,

I have the honour to invite the Legislative Council to approve of the expenditure of \$47,500 to drain and improve the lands on both sides of the public road at Charity and Amazon, Pomeroon, Essequibo. These lands, which are about 500 acres in area, have recently been acquired by Government for the purpose of improving living conditions in the area.

2. The road which runs from Supenaam on the Essequibo Coast ends at Charity on the right bank of the Pomeroon River where there is a Government Station. The Station is comprised of a police station, magistrate's court, casualty post, nurses' hostel, dispensary and quarters, post office and quarters, agricultural officer's quarters, and there is also a depot under the control of the Agriculture Department used for receiving and storing farmers' produce to be shipped to Georgetown by the steamers of the Transport and Harbours Department which call there. Charity is the entrepot of the Pomeroon district.

3. The population of the Pomeroon district was 6,810 at the end of 1943. These people are principally occupied on farms, but there are several shops from which revenue is collected, and which must be inspected regularly. There are also two Aboriginal Indian Reservations which are visited weekly by the dispenser, and once monthly by the Government Medical Officer. It is essential, therefore, that the Station should be maintained.

4. Owing to the condition of the surrounding lands the health and general sanitary conditions at Charity are far from what they ought to be. If these are to be improved and normal health conditions secured, it is essential that the

adjoining lands should be drained and cleared of bush and mosquitoes, which make life almost unbearable, to enable those residing in the area to live under reasonable healthy conditions. The district is known to be malarial.

5. The estimated cost of clearing and draining Charity and Amazon is \$47,500 made up as follows:—

(a) Reconditioning of main and internal drainage	\$38,500.00
(b) Clearing land for building purposes.....	1,800.00
(c) Clearing land for agriculture	7,200.00
	<hr/>
	\$47,500.00

6. Although the area amounts to approximately 500 acres, and land from which revenue will be obtained will be made available for cultivation by the execution of the works of clearing and draining, the scheme cannot be regarded as economic. It is intended to lay out the front lands for building purposes and the back lands for cultivation and provide a market place at Amazon near to the stelling to accommodate the petty traders and the small shops that now cover the parapets of the public road and sometimes impede traffic thereon.

7. I recommend that the sum of \$47,500 be provided to carry out the work to which I have referred.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
British Guiana,
21st June, 1945.

PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following documents:—

Mr. H. R. Howie's Report on Income Tax in British Guiana.

Report of the Directors of the Public Officers Guarantee Fund for the year 1943.

Schedule of applications for gratuities from dependents of deceased teachers for the period September 1943 to June, 1944.

Report on exploration for Oil in British Guiana.

A short survey on Tuberculosis in British Guiana.

Report of the Trustees, Berbice Lutheran Fund for the year, 1944.

The Inland Postal Matter (Registration and Advice of Delivery Fees) Regulations, 1945, (No. 21 of 1945).

The Stamped Postal Stationery (Charges) Regulations, 1945, (No. 22 of 1945).

The Inland Postal Order (Amendment) Regulations, 1945 (No. 23 of 1945).

The Inland Postal Order (Rates of Commission) Order, 1945 (No. 17 of 1945).

The Inland Money Order (Rates of Commission) Order, 1945 (No. 18 of 1945).

The Overseas Money Order (Rates of Commission) Order, 1945 (No. 19 of 1945).

The COLONIAL TREASURER laid on the table a Schedule of Additional Provision for the month of June, 1945.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

ASSISTANCE FOR CANE-FARMING INDUSTRY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motions:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 36 dated the 12th of June, 1945, this Council approves in principle of the proposals for assistance to the cane-farming industry, and undertakes to provide the necessary funds as set out therein.

CHARITY-AMAZON IMPROVEMENT SCHEME.

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 37 dated 21st June, 1945, this Council approves of the provision of \$47,500 for clearing and draining the lands at Charity and Amazon, Pomeroon, Essequibo, in order to improve the living conditions of that area.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE—JUNE, 1945.

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motion:—

That, this Council approves the Schedule of Additional Provision for the

month of June, 1945, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the Estimates for the year 1945, which has been laid on the table.

ORDER OF THE DAY

CLOSE OF THE SESSION

The PRESIDENT: I should intimate that this is the last meeting of the Session, and if we finish today's business I shall prorogue Council, summoning the new Council for Tuesday, 3rd July. That will be, I anticipate, the last session of the present Legislative Council, and one of the first Bills to be presented will be the Franchise Bill, which is now printed and in the hands of those Members of this Council who are Members of Executive Council. I have not yet received the comments of the Secretary of State on the Bill, but anticipate that I shall do so before we take at least the second reading. Other important Bills that will come up will be the Local Government Bill and the Town Planning Bill, and an important Bill confirming by statute all the conditions under which the United States Bases are held in this Colony.

The first business on the Order of the Day is the third reading of the Rice Tenancy Bill.

RICE FARMERS' (SECURITY OF TENURE) BILL, 1945.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move that the following Bill be read a third time and passed:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide better security of tenure for tenant rice farmers; to limit the rent payable for the letting of rice lands; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

Mr. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

JANKI PENSION BILL, 1945.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the following Bill be read the first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make special provision in regards to the pension and lump sum payable to Thomas Janki."

Mr. LUCKHOO seconded

Question put, and agreed to

Bill read the first time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think a very short explanation only is required in moving the second reading of this Bill. Mr. Janki served this Government continuously for over 40 years, and in the normal course of events a civil servant gets his maximum pension after 30 years. Owing to the circumstances of Mr. Janki's employment it happens that in spite of his 40 years' service he is only entitled to pension on the basis of 27 years and 2 months. Mr. Janki was appointed a school teacher on the 2nd June, 1904, and remained until the 7th June, 1915. During that period he was Headmaster for 10 years and 7 months, and he was transferred without any break in his service to the Immigration Department. It so happened that when he gave up his appointment as a school teacher and went to the Immigration Department he was not entitled to a pension under the Pensions Ordinance of 1907, because he was not 60 years. Since that date there have been several amendments to the Ordinance, but none covering the case of a person who left his employment as a teacher in 1915 but served Government until 1945. Therefore those 10 years and 7 months' service, which in all other cases would be pensionable, are not so in his case.

The object of the Bill is to award him the pension he would have got had he served for 30 years in the Immigration Department. In other words, it is

proposed to add just over 2 years service for the purpose of calculating his pension. It does not make very much financial difference, although very acceptable to the retired officer. The difference in pension is \$41.23 a year, and the difference in lump sum is \$276. I am quite sure that a person who has served 40 years or more deserves to be treated fairly and equitably, and that every Member will support this Bill. In fairness to the officer I must add that this Bill is not introduced in any way at his own request. What happened was that when the pension calculation was submitted in the ordinary way to the Auditor, the late Mr. Lempriere, to be checked, as every pension is checked, he noticed the extraordinary circumstances of the case and drew attention to it. He suggested to Government that surely this was a case where special action should be taken, and as a result this Bill has been introduced. I formally move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without discussion.

The Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

The Standing Rules and Orders were suspended in order to take the Motions appearing in the Second Schedule on the Order Paper.

ASSISTANCE TO CANE FARMING
INDUSTRY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the following motion, notice of which was given earlier in the proceedings:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 36 dated the 12th of June, 1945, this Council approves in principle with the proposals for assistance to the cane farming industry and undertakes to provide the necessary funds as set out therein.

The history of cane-farming on the East Coast Demerara, because Your Excellency's Message affects that district, is briefly this: In 1932 when I was District Commissioner in that district the cane-farming industry was established in the East Coast Villages or some of them to be precise. In that year the cane-farmers sold to the Estates' factories 7,354 tons of cane which netted them \$17,101. The industry progressed and in 1938 the amount of 30,870 tons of cane was sold to the estates which netted the farmers \$92,422. So it will be seen that the cane-farming industry is of major importance to those villages. The success of cane-farming was due to two factors—the skill of the villager in the cultivation of the sugar cane and the negotiations made by myself on behalf of the cane-farmers with the Sugar Producers' Association which led to an agreement which guaranteed to the farmer a minimum price for his cane. Before the farmer put his fork into the ground he knew he would get not less than \$2.20 per ton of cane supplied to the factory. He also benefited by any rise in the price of sugar, and in addition to the money he received for his cane he received 10 gallons of molasses for every ton of cane sold or the equivalent in cash and was permitted to buy from the factory 10 pounds of sugar for every ton of cane he sold to that factory.

In 1937-38 by an international agreement the export of sugar from

this and other sugar producing countries was restricted and the cane-farming industry was affected thereby in this way: While the farmer was not required to reduce his acreage under cane cultivation, he was not allowed to plant any further area. Cane-farming has progressed, but in recent years the fertility of the soil, as might be expected, has gone back and in 1944 only 10,901 tons of cane was sold to the factories. So that in 1944 we found ourselves practically back in the same position as we were in 1932. This has been entirely due to lack of fertility of the soil, as an agricultural survey has disclosed that instead of a yield of 20 to 24 tons of cane per acre the farmer was in 1944 only getting 12.7 tons of cane to the acre. Further investigations were made and recommendations were put up to Government to try and restore the fertility of the soil.

The only way this can be done is by flood fallowing. Now this is a measure that has been successful on the sugar plantations, and the Message before this Council is asking the Council to approve of financial assistance to the cane-farmers to the extent of \$23,650. That is to be spent on a mobile pump, flood fallowing of 350 acres for three years, compensation for crop damage in arranging block cultivation and the provision of improved planting material. Of that \$23,650 this Council has already approved of the sum of \$10,000 to be used as an advance and that amount is now being expended in this manner.

It is necessary for me to say here, that 350 acres is not all the acreage under cane cultivation in the villages, but unless cane is cultivated in blocks it will be possible to flood fallow and in very many of these villages there is mixed cultivation which makes flood fallowing at the present time impossible. Later on, however, it will be practical to cultivate cane in the

villages in blocks and further to extend flood fallowing to other areas. While the Message speaks of 350 acres, it has been found necessary to reduce that acreage to 284, so that in actual fact flood fallowing will take place at Beterverwagting-Triumph where 225 acres will be flood fallowed, at Plaisance, 40 acres, and at Buxton, 19 acres, making a total of 284 acres.

It is very essential that the cane-farming industry on the East Coast be not only kept alive but be restored to its former position of importance. I fear that if an industry which is worth to those villages no less and no more than \$90,000 is not restored, then the standard of living in those villages must certainly deteriorate. This, I hope sincerely, will not take place, and I commend this motion to the favourable consideration of this Council.

Mr. SEAFORD: I have great pleasure in seconding this motion which is now before the Council. I feel sure with the hon. the acting Colonial Secretary that the only way or method of stabilizing the villages on the East Coast Demerara is by cane-farming. I believe, in fact I am certain, that cane-farming in the East Coast Villages, where the maintenance of drainage and the cost of land cultivation are as high as they are, is the only means of maintaining the villagers, as they get from that higher returns than they would from any other cultivation they can adopt on that Coast. The hon. mover mentioned that in 1938 the farmers produced 30,000 tons of cane which brought them \$92,000. If they get that quantity of cane today that would bring them nearly \$150,000 at the present price of cane. These villages have been up against a hard time. Government has assisted them in several ways which I appreciate, especially in the matter of drainage on which, as we all know, Government has expended an amount equal to nearly 75 per cent. of the

cost, but it has been impossible for these people to fight against Nature, if I may say so. The accretion which has taken place on the East Coast has been too big a battle for them to fight, and it was essential for Government to go to their aid. They are anxious to help themselves and, I think, it is only fitting that Government should assist them where it can in this way.

I do not think it can be said that Government is entirely spoon-feeding these people, for the reason that this is not the total amount of money that is going to be required to put cane farming on its feet again. A good deal of expenditure has to be made on the raising of dams, smousing, etc., and I think the villagers are prepared to do that for themselves. It is not to cover this capital expenditure but to start them off afresh, and Government is quite right to go to their assistance. I have for many years tried to persuade these villagers, as the hon. the Colonial Secretary knows, to go in for flood fallowing. Had we not adopted it on the sugar estates in this Colony not one would have been alive today. It is only on that we have managed to exist. I am quite satisfied that without flood fallowing in the villages cane-farming will go out of existence. I am also satisfied that the benefit that is going to be derived from this motion is going to be of great advantage to them and it will not be long before the whole of the East Coast is under extensive and intensive cane-farming. I have very great pleasure in seconding the motion before the Council.

Mr. EDUN: When the proposal for the expenditure of \$10,000 came up in the Legislature the last time, I supported it wholeheartedly, and I am going to do the same in so far as this sum of \$23,650 is concerned. I am looking forward, sir, to the expansion of cane-farming in British Guiana other than in respect of a mere 350 acres. I am hoping that the Sugar

Companies will take the opportunity now to begin a system of cane-farming on the sugar estates themselves. I see that the labour problem will be so difficult in future years that unless the Sugar Companies take up cane-farming seriously within the estates the production of sugar will go down gradually. That will be a calamity indeed. Therefore this measure of encouraging flood fallowing in the villages is a very excellent one indeed, but I am looking to the period after the three years. We will be spending \$23,650 now in order to put the lands in proper order. After three years what will it mean? Will it mean that the villagers will have to come to this Council again in order that a further sum be voted for flood fallowing? Therefore I want to see this thing be of a self-supporting nature. I do not expect them to come back here and ask for more money to do flood fallowing in the years to come from the Legislative Council.

What I hope is this: Now that we are spending \$23,650, this should be the nucleus for the future. A fund should be built up so that when flood fallowing is required for another period a sum of money would be there ready to do that. But, sir, when I began I was thinking of cane-farming on the plantations and I made this suggestion to the highest authority on sugar cultivation in this Colony, Mr. Naylor, and to the Sugar Producers' Association and prominent members of that Association too, that they should consider the advisability of giving out a section of their lands to recognised family units to do cane-farming in order to solve the labour problem. The labour problem is a very big one in British Guiana. You will have the plantation system in one section and the cane-farming system in another section on the one plantation, and gradually the Sugar Companies will benefit thereby. It is a very big question, but I hope on this question of the expenditure of \$23,650 it is the

final amount which this Council ought to think of expending there. The cane-farmers on the East Coast should not come back for more money. The point is, they should make it a self-supporting scheme. Some sort of fund should be allocated in order to meet flood fallowing cost after the period of the first flood fallowing has been completed. With those remarks, sir, I think this expenditure should be supported.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I would have liked as many Members as possible to speak on the motion before contributing my quota to the debate, but it seems that after the remarks of the last speaker no other Member wishes to say anything. I would like first of all to express my appreciation of and gratitude for the support that this Message has received in this Council today, and incidentally, to make one slight correction of the statement made by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat. The \$10,000 to which he referred and which was passed previously in this Council was only an advance of portion of this sum in the motion. Therefore, the total expenditure on the scheme will be the figure stated here, \$23,650. In other words, that \$10,000 is not an additional sum to what is stated here. When Government approached this Council on that occasion, it was in order to get the Council to authorize an advance being made, because it was necessary so as to make an early start with the work before the whole scheme could be properly worked out in detail and proper agreement reached between the villagers on the one hand and Government on the other hand. I would like also to state in reply to the statement made by the same hon. Member that the actual acreage of cane-farming on the East Coast Demerara is more than 2,000 acres and the figure of 350 acres stated here in the Message only refers to that portion that it is possible to flood fallow at the present time. As the hon. mover of the motion rightly

explained, there is mixed cultivation on those lands, and it is impossible to do flood following where other crops are being grown at the present time. I should mention too that the 350 acres is not centralized in one particular village. Plaisance comes in for a portion of it but the major portion of it at the present time is at Beterverwaging and some of it is also in the Buxton-Friendship area.

I mention that because I notice that the hon. Member was rather sounding a note of warning that he hopes that the cane-farmers will be able to stand on their feet after this and not approach this Council again for any more money. I share that hope with him, but I think he will also agree that before that stage is reached the assistance necessary will have to be extended to a much larger area than the 350 acres referred to in this Message. I mention that, because it is just possible that when further lands are available Government may consider it necessary to render some assistance, in which case Government will be approached.

On the merits of the scheme itself I would like to inform the Council that it was very carefully prepared and gone into by the Agricultural Officials and the villagers themselves. It is the first time, I think—and I can say it is a most extraordinary thing—where everybody reached an agreement that that there is every chance of this scheme being operated successfully. It is one of the few occasions where you find everybody agreeing that something which is being put up is likely to give the results expected of it. I have no doubt, Sir, that the farmers of the villages welcome this assistance, and I feel sure they will carry out their part of the bargain. As a matter of fact I am in a position to inform this Council that some work already has been begun in one of the villages where they are taking a very active interest in it and it is hoped very soon to see some of it completed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion adopted.

CHARITY-AMAZON IMPROVEMENT SCHEME.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY:
beg to move:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 37 dated 21st June, 1945, this Council approves of the provision of \$47,500 for clearing and draining the lands at Charity and Amazon, Pomeroun, Essequibo, in order to improve the living conditions of that area.

I think, Sir, that any Member of this Council who has had to visit Charity or who has had the experience of sleeping there either one or two nights will support this motion most wholeheartedly. Charity on the Pomeroun, as Members are aware, is the end of the Essequibo Coast Road which starts from Supenaam. Charity is important for the reason that it is from Charity one passes through the Pomeroun area, and it is from Charity that one returns. Farmers in the Pomeroun also bring their produce there. So it is essential that Government buildings and other amenities should be provided at this point. There is a Post Office and also a small Cottage Hospital and Police Station there. An Agricultural Officer is living there as well as several other individuals. On the last occasion on which I had to stay at Charity I slept at a building known as the Rest House, but I can assure hon. Members no rest could be obtained there for the reason that from dusk to dawn one was assailed by tens of thousands of mosquitoes. The reason for that is that the Charity Compound is carved out of an area which is otherwise bush and undrained.

In order to improve the facilities at Charity, this Council wisely purchased Charity and a grant or part of a grant on the other side of the river known as Amazon, the object being to improve the compound and living con-

ditions of the Charity Station and to form a market area at Amazon where shops can be erected. At the present time these shops are either built on the parapet of the road or astride of the road trenches. If this motion is adopted, it is proposed to drain both Charity and Amazon which comprise together roughly 500 acres. Outside of the building area and market square, the remaining lands will be available for cultivation. At the present time we are tapping quite a number of rubber trees at Amazon and there are other trees at Charity which may be tapped later on if these drainage works can be carried out.

It is not claimed that this project will be an economic one. It is really a Welfare Scheme. We will be obtaining some revenue from the lands, and we are obtaining at the present time some revenue from the rubber, but it is unlikely that revenue will cover entirely the cost of the present scheme. However, as I said at the commencement, the object of draining these lands is to make living conditions for those persons who must live there so that they will be able to live there in reasonable comfort and under reasonable health conditions. I commend the motion to the support of the Council.

The COLONIAL TREASURER
seconded

Mr. ROTH: I am sorry I cannot agree with the remarks of the hon. mover of the motion. I have lived in the Pomeroon in years gone by, not very far from Charity, at a place called Marlborough which was then the headquarters of Government until the road was extended. It was a well drained and splendidly kept compound surrounded by cultivation, all kept in perfect order—drains clean and kokers and sluices working—but when the mosquito season came around you had to live inside a protected house. If Government thinks that draining the lands

around Charity is going to get rid of the mosquitoes I am sure it is mistaken. It would be much better to spend a portion of the money in erecting mosquito screens around the buildings where people live. In the first place you cannot drain the land because it is below the level of the river. Some time ago the Council was asked to vote purchase of the land. We were not then told of the possibility of having a considerable sum of money for the to vote money to put the place in order. I think in future Government should let us know the expenditure we are really to be let in for. I am certain that the future will prove that I am right that the present proposal will be a waste of money.

Mr. LEE: I have to agree with my friend. I notice that no provision has been made for the cost of maintaining the place in good condition. This is a tropical country and vegetation grows again within three months. Even when drains are properly dug they fill in within six months. I take it that Government intends to continue spending money to keep the place in good condition—and for what purpose, simply for the purpose of keeping the compound free of mosquitoes? Government is not taking a wise course, and I agree with the suggestion made by the hon. Nominated Member.

As regards clearing the land for agricultural purposes, do I understand that land has already been given out to tenants for that purpose? If that is so it is a good idea because there would not be any expenditure by Government in reconditioning drains and clearing the bush, but if this is only a venture to attract tenants there I do not subscribe to this expenditure.

Mr. EDUN: I observe in the Message these significant words: "Charity is the entrepot of the Pomeroon district." In the sixth paragraph of the Message it is stated:—

"Although the area amounts to approximately 500 acres, and land from which revenue will be obtained will be made available for cultivation by the execution of the works of clearing and draining the scheme cannot be regarded as economic."

I have travelled about this country very much indeed, and when I travel I make comparisons between the three Counties. I consider the County of Essequibo to be the Cinderella County of British Guiana. That is a true statement, and I think that however uneconomic the scheme may be, so far as the entrepot of the Pomeroon district is concerned the money should be spent. The money should be spent in such a way and all the work should be done with the view of expansion—land settlement and leases to peasants. If that is Government's intention as regards the future of the Pomeroon district then an expenditure of \$47,000 in addition to what has already been spent in purchasing the estate would be worth while.

In my opinion Charity and Amazon are a blot on civilization. I spent an evening there; I did not sleep there, but what I saw was enough to make my soul creep. I saw mosquito netting around the desks in the Police Station and swarms of mosquitoes ready to move away the sentry. I was told that mosquitoes very nearly carried away a donkey, but how true that is I do not know. (Laughter). There were millions of mosquitoes. I would like to know whether Government contemplates experimenting with that wonderful discovery, DDT, in order to abate the mosquito nuisance there?

I want to be assured that these lands will be properly drained and irrigated. If they are there is a possibility of land settlement there. If Government would lease the lands at Charity and Amazon peasants would take them up.

That brings me to a bigger question. I do not think this is the time

to speak on it but seeing that it concerns drainage and irrigation of these lands I am reminded of the big drainage scheme on the Corentyne and the land settlement scheme at Vergenoegen. Have all those schemes gone with the wind? Are we just thinking about Charity? I do not wish to think that the Colonial Development and Welfare Act was merely a war stunt, or that we have to wait a period of years when everybody will forget the things that were promised us. I think this Government ought to take courage in its hands and carry out those schemes, as it is now taking courage to do something about Essequibo. I am sure that if this money is well spent Charity and Amazon would be an asset to Essequibo and the Pomeroon district. Government is doing the right thing in making this entrepot something worth while. With these few words I support the motion wholeheartedly, and I commend Government on doing something for Essequibo.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I am in sympathy with this motion and, like the hon. the Colonial Secretary, many years ago I had the misfortune to sleep at the Rest House at Charity. While the Colonial Secretary was able to count 10,000 mosquitoes or more I was occupied in killing them in order to have some rest that evening. I feel that if people are to live in that region—people who are producing ground provisions and supplying the City — something should be done to alleviate the suffering which they must undergo by reason of the unhealthy conditions in that district. I therefore do not consider this sum of money too much to provide for the improvement of living conditions in that district, and to make the people a little happier, even if from year to year we have to provide further sums in order to keep the district in a healthy condition. If the people are going to be advised to leave the district then, of course, there would be no need to spend this money, but so long as they inhabit that area, and so

long as we depend upon them for some of the good things we enjoy here we ought at least to extend some charity to them.

Mr. JACKSON: Both of these names are unfortunate—Charity and Amazon—and perhaps it may be thought that in voting money to put Charity in order we are being charitably inclined towards Charity. So far as Amazon is concerned, the little I know about it is of a fighting woman. I however think that the motion is a fine one in view of the object it seeks to achieve. I am sure that no one would grudge spending money for that purpose. I do not think we can manage to kill all the mosquitoes in Georgetown. We will never be able to do that, but I do not think anyone would be bold enough to say that because we could not do that we should not carry out any campaign against mosquitoes in the City. There is no doubt that if this money is spent it will be spent profitably, and it would assist people who at present are suffering from the lack of proper drainage and amenities. I am sure in doing that the Council would be doing something that is right.

One hon. Member wants to know whether Government intends to spend money year after year to maintain the place. Maintenance must be kept up no matter by whom it is done, and if it is intended—and I believe it is so intended—to have some of the land released for cultivation it will be able to a very great extent to pay for itself. I do not agree that the money could be more profitably spent in providing netting or screens to keep mosquitoes out. Nobody is going to live in a screened building continuously. People must get out of the buildings some time. I therefore do not think the Council need consider the proposal made by the hon. Member for the hinterland (Mr. Roth). We respect that Member's views so far as the hinterland is concerned, but we have to discount his views with respect to this motion. I am not surprised at the support he has received from the hon.

Member on his left (Mr. Lee). My experience in this Council is that some hon. Members like to be somebody's echo (Laughter), and I think we should also let that Member's remarks go by the board. I support the motion because I believe it is reasonable, and because I believe the people living at Charity are entitled to the protection we are about to give them, and because I believe the money will be well spent.

Mr. SEAFORD: If Government considers it essential to maintain this Station then it is essential that Government should make living conditions as healthy and as good as they possibly can be, but I agree with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, that all the clearing in the world will not get rid of the mosquitoes. I therefore feel that whatever Government does in the way of clearing, improvement of sanitation and bonification, it must go one step further and screen the houses in which the people have to live. It would not add very much to the expenditure, and Government would be providing the people with that extra bit of comfort so as to fit them for their work. It would be an investment which would give very good returns.

There is one thing that worries me about this proposal, and that is the clearing of lands for building purposes. Does that mean that Government is coming back to this Council in a short time for more money for buildings? If that is the intention I think it would be wise to let the Council know what will be the annual bill right away. It may be that Government is clearing the land for farms. If that is the case it is so much the better.

There is one other point. In Your Excellency's Message it is stated that the scheme cannot be regarded as economic. I do not think we expect economy altogether, but I think this Council would like to know, and I personally would like to know what is going to be our annual bill to maintain this area. I am quite willing to vote

the money but I would like to know the ultimate cost. It is all very well to spend money but I am not prepared to vote \$50,000 now if it is going to cost another \$50,000 annually to maintain the area. If the cost is going to be very heavy Government might find it essential to remove the Station to some other site.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I take the silence of other Members as approval of the motion. On behalf of the residents in the Pomeroon district, and especially those whose business takes them to that district, I thank the Council for its support of the motion. To anybody who has visited that area, as I have had the opportunity to do on several occasions, it must be striking to think that there should be any opposition to the expenditure of this sum of money, or even a larger sum, on the improvement of that district. Conditions there strike one immediately as appalling. Humanity cries for the assistance which Government proposes to render, and I am surprised that any voice should be raised in protest against the expenditure which is proposed for the improvement of that area. It is amazing to find the hon. Member, who on several occasions has pleaded for the betterment of the living conditions of the agriculturally minded people of the Colony, in opposition to a motion of this kind. It is so amazing that one hon. Member referred to him as an echo. I can only say that that echo will wane some day. He is losing his voice and has forgotten his words of wisdom. His appeals for improvement of the conditions in the islands of the Essequibo can only mean that we should circumscribe our entire efforts to those islands. I am optimistic of the Colony's future and I am not going to be deterred by expenditure, be it economic or uneconomic, so long as this Colony will progress.

I think Your Excellency, on the occasion of your visit, was appalled by the conditions on the Essequibo Coast. The people in that district are among the hardiest. They strive very hard to

make a living, and I protest very strongly against any voice raised in opposition to this motion. I am glad to know that the hon. Member on my left (Mr. Seaford) suggests that screens should be put in the houses. I know he has something to do with the supply of materials, therefore I can expect his support of priority for the building of the houses and the provision of screens. We all know the difficulty in obtaining accommodation at Charity. I made this proposition as one of my small efforts to see that this small community of 6,000 people should have some improvement of its living conditions. Let us take some of the champagne from the City and drink it in the outlying districts.

Mr. LEE: I rise to a point of correction. I do not say that the people in the Pomeroon river are not living under conditions which should be rectified, but the motion only refers to Charity and Amazon, and it will be observed that the only bonification is in respect of the Government compound. I would like to inform this Council how many people are resident in that district—

The PRESIDENT: You are making a second speech.

Mr. LEE: No, sir, I have only risen to a point of correction.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have to agree with my friend, Mr. Roth, who has had experience in the Pomeroon, that one could not possibly expect to exterminate all the mosquitoes, but I think he must agree with me that Marlborough is a well drained and well laid out place. We have a Public Health Ordinance now which forbids persons building houses in undrained areas. Charity is undrained, and we are trying to drain it. I think the least we can do for the people who are compelled to live there is to put it in proper order. I think that is their due.

As regards the question of maintenance which the Member for Esse-

quibo River (Mr. Lee) and the hon. Mr. Jackson asked about, it is, of course, essential that the whole area that is cleared should be maintained in proper order. The hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) wanted to know what it is going to cost. I cannot give a firm estimate, for the reason that the greater part of the land is going to be given to agriculturists and the farmers will maintain that area. The hon. Member also wanted to know what is the meaning of item (b)—Clearing land for building purposes, \$1,800. In the fifth paragraph of the Message it is stated that we propose to clear the land for a market place at Amazon, to which the petty traders and the small shops can themselves remove. The owners of those shops will re-erect them there, so that there will be no cost to Government at all. We merely wish to clear the land for the market place.

The hon. Mr. Edun wanted to know whether there will be expansion. I hope there will be, but I think Government would be wise to see how the land is taken up, and then perhaps that would be the time to consider an extension of the scheme.

The PRESIDENT: My visit to Charity has been referred to. The crux of the question is that if the Pomeroon district is to make any progress at all there must be something in the nature of an entrepot at Charity. Conditions there at the moment I saw them in November, 1941, were just unspeakable. I have seen places which are thought often to be some of the worst places of that kind on earth, in the Niger delta, and I am quite sure that any Government Station there is paradise compared with Charity.

If it were simply a question of cleaning it up it might be possible, but that is not the only thing to be done. The trouble is to find a convenient stretch of land alongside and get rid of the shops. I do not see why the

hon. the Colonial Secretary is not correct in saying there may be more settlers at Charity and there can be a good settlement in that area.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion adopted.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE—JUNE, 1945.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. McDavid): I move—

That this Council approves the Schedule of Additional Provision for the month of June, 1945, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the Estimates for the year 1945, which has been laid on the table.

Before I move that this Council go into Committee to consider the Schedule I would just like to refer to one important item on it, that is the one under the Head "Treasury—Income Tax" to provide for the re-organisation of the staff of that branch following on the recommendations of Mr. Howie, Income Tax Adviser. Mr. Howie's Report was laid on the table this afternoon, but I think copies were put into the hands of Members before then, and I hope they have had time to pay some attention to what he said at least in that portion of his Report. I shall also ask permission to move in an item which is not in the Schedule one referring to the purchase of accounting machines for the Treasury and Post-Office Savings Bank Departments of the Public Service. I have circulated a note explaining the position in this respect. When the time comes I propose to deal more fully with this point. I beg to move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to consider this Schedule.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and proceeded to consider the Schedule.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

AGRICULTURE.

Item 7—Purchase, Production & Distribution of Seeds and Plants \$1,000.

Mr. LEE: I had written a letter to the Advisory Committee and given my hon. friend and colleague, Mr. Jacob, a request to give notice of a motion today, but as his chair is vacant I presume he is ill. When I was a boy, about ten years of age, I visited the Essequibo Coast and could have always got sugar apples, custard apples and other fruits. Recently I had the occasion to go to the Essequibo Coast and could not get any other fruit except what we call here "Long Mangoes". When I was six years of age I went to the school at the village of my good friend, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, and could at any time during the year obtain fruit from the village. I wrote the Advisory Committee a letter asking them to consider a proposal by me to distribute free of charge all kinds of fruit trees grown in this Colony to Local Authorities and Villages in order that the people may be educated into the growing of fruit trees and the selling of those fruits to who can buy. The distribution is to be under the supervision of the Agricultural Instructors in the various localities. Perhaps it has not been brought to your knowledge when this vote was considered in Executive Council.

I understand, sir, they are going to set up a nursery, but in that nursery they are only going to grow such plants as are ordered and the people have to pay a small sum for those plants. All of us who were born in this Colony and have grown in this Colony know that in order to educate the people, especially those in the Villages and Country Districts, you have to do it by example. The

only profitable example, therefore, you can find is to let the Agricultural Department and Agricultural Instructors grow the fruits. All of us do enjoy the sapodilla. When it is in season it does not cost much, but at the present time you cannot get a good sapodilla for twelve cents. What is the cause of that? It is the lack in the Country and Village Districts of these fruit trees. Is it the policy of Government to encourage agriculture? If it is, then I am asking Government to consider whether it is not possible to set up such a nursery and plant all kinds of fruit trees for distribution free of charge to the people through the Agricultural Instructors in the districts, and let the Instructors see that the persons receiving those trees are given definite instructions as to their care. The officers must also be made to carry out the instructions of the Department in seeing that the trees are cared for in the proper manner.

I am asking Government to consider this question in the light that it should be done for ten years from now.—all kinds of fruit trees to be grown in a nursery and distributed to the people free of charge. At the end of ten years I feel that this Colony will benefit as the result of such a policy. I had intended to move it as a motion. I am, however, not saying that I am not supporting the motion before Council, but I think it should be for a sum of \$5,000, because if really citrus plants were to be grown and sold at a very cheap rate throughout this Colony, the people will have to do the planting of them. At the present moment everyone know that oranges contain vitamins, and they should be available for the public to obtain. This vote is only begging the question by asking for \$1,000. If Government's policy is agricultural, let it be agricultural.

The CHAIRMAN: We will bear that in mind.

Mr. de AGUIAR: The hon. Member made reference to a letter he addressed to the Advisory Committee. I think it is rather unfortunate the hon. Member did not find it convenient to attend the meeting at which his letter was considered. He found it inconvenient to be present and so he did not hear the other side of the story. Before I deal with that I would like to correct what appears to be an erroneous impression as to this vote of \$1,000. This is an excess vote, the original amount being \$5,300 as appears on the Schedule, and what is being asked for is an additional \$1,000 to make it \$6,300 which is the sum estimated to be spent for this year. Like the hon. Member I would like to see an amount of \$10,000 or \$15,000, but we cannot do that merely by coming to the Council and asking for it without making the necessary provision for it.

I want to tell the hon. Member that I heard something today that I did not know before, and that is he had belonged to the "sling-shot brigade." He said he went into the village and took fruits off the trees, and so I conclude that he had belonged to that brigade in his younger days. I presume he knows better today, and that he would be arrested if he attempted it today. I do not think he can be serious in his point that the plants should be got ready and distributed free of charge, when the position at the moment is that the price charged for the plants is very small, a penny or more, and that is done really to have a certain amount of control. The hon. Member knows, as he was told, that although such a small charge is made the plants are not enough to go around. We have got more orders for these plants than are in the ground at the present time, and this situation will be for a long time. I would like the hon. Member to think what the position would be if they were to be distributed free of charge. I would like

to ask him too, in what form could charges of discrimination be avoided in such circumstances? At the present moment a man places his order for plants and it is entered in the usual way and the distribution is made in order of priority. If the distribution is to be free, I would like to know how it is possible for the Department to answer any charge of discrimination. As I said just now, there are more orders on hand for the plants we have coming up, and for that reason it is thought that by a special effort we can do a little more in that direction this year, and Government proposes to increase the vote by \$1,000. If it is found possible to extend it still further next year, I have no doubt that further application would be made. I do ask the hon. Member not to press his point that these plants be distributed free of charge.

Mr. FERREIRA: I strongly support the amount being voted, but I would like to make this suggestion which, I think, would go a long way in helping this industry to get on a much firmer footing. I think the hon. Member who has just taken his seat will agree that it was not possible in the past for residents in this Colony to get supplies of plants. In fact the position has been most unsatisfactory. I know I had to wait for a small number of plants something like six months. If it is a question of money and we are agreed that this is something beneficial to the country, it is up to us to vote the necessary funds. But I would ask that this \$1,000, or whatever sum, should not be tied down to the Gardens in Georgetown. That is wrong. A certain amount should be allocated for such stations as Whim and No. 63 on the Corentyne Coast and the Land Scheme in New Amsterdam. I say that for this reason: You' will have the Agricultural Superintendent and the Agricultural Instructor on the spot to make the people in the locality interested. The plants will be given out to the people in that locality and these Officers

will be in a position to do something which at present is not done by the Department. What happens now? Orders are placed for plants and after those plants have been supplied that is the last the Department hears of those people. I feel that a record should be kept of all persons who receive plants and they be followed up from time to time.

There are areas throughout Berbice, I refer to the Berbice River District and Savannah where, we have been told, nothing can grow. Only three weeks ago I had the pleasure of seeing 300 grape fruit and orange trees, just three years old, heavy with fruit. Yet I have been told that the Agricultural Department cannot get enough plants. That is not satisfactory. On Saturday morning last I raised the matter that I would like the Grow More Food Committee to ask for funds for the establishment of a Citrus Plants Nursery in New Amsterdam and possibly on the Corentyne, and it was decided that we would have to take the matter up with the Director of Agriculture and get his views on the subject. I think the time has come when all that red tape should be set aside. If we agree that something of that nature should be done, let us do it. I am appealing for these Citrus Nurseries. Let us go in for a system of decentralization. Let the Agricultural Instructors be interested in getting the people to grow their own fruit trees.

Mr. LEE: I would like to point out that if it is within the knowledge of Government and the Department that there are more orders for plants than can be filled, then is it not the fault of us who are advising Government if we do not stress that the people want plants and cannot get them? Therefore, I cannot stand here and take the blame, and so I am asking Government to consider it. We have just voted \$50,000 to open Agricultural lands in the Pomeroon. We have voted money for the Bonasika Scheme and the Canals Polder where there are lands available for planting fruit trees. Are we then going to say that the Agricultural Department

must lay dormant and not encourage the people to plant? They have Agricultural Instructors who know the soil. I do not say the people must plant indiscriminately. The Country and Village Districts are supposed to be well drained lands. The moment a man puts in an application, the place should be inspected and the man told what kind of plant can grow there. I do not know if Your Excellency has had experience of our pineapples—those from the Essequibo Coast compared with those from the Canals Polder area and from the Demerara River. They have three distinct kinds of flavour, and that from the Essequibo Coast is the best you can eat. Then why cannot they encourage the growing of pineapples on the Essequibo Coast in order to show that that particular district can grow a particular kind of fruit that the country as a whole can be proud of?

I am in agreement with the hon. Member for Berbice River that if the thing is to be done and to be extended, then let the nurseries be extended to depots throughout the Colony. Let the public know that there they can get fruit trees which they can grow in their backyard. Is it not a self-supporting policy that Government is aiming at? I am sorry I have to take up this attitude, but if we are aiming at self-sufficiency then these things must be encouraged. If it calls for an expenditure of \$50,000 to bonify and drain certain lands and you are not prepared to establish nurseries for the distribution of fruit trees or plants which can be of benefit to this Colony, then it is a waste of good time.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I do assure the hon. Member that in respect of his suggestion as to the possibility of establishing nurseries, there are a number of difficulties, but I promise him to have it investigated.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Item 1 (o)—Acting Allowances, \$360

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I am glad to see placed on the Schedule of Additional Provision for 1945 an allowance to an officer who is acting in a more

responsible position than his substantive appointment. I think the principle is a good one because the officer is called upon to assume greater responsibility than his substantive post compels him to assume. I have examined the Schedule throughout and have had a chat with the hon. the Colonial Secretary about some other officers who are called upon to act in a more responsible position than they now hold. They also should be treated in the same manner. I refer to the two Puisne Judges of the Supreme Court and the Registrar. They are called upon to perform duties more responsible than those of their substantive posts. Likely there are others who deserve to be considered also. I support the item under this Head, and I would like to see moved into the additional provision at some time a sum for those who are entitled to like treatment.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the case referred to is covered by the Colonial Regulations and probably it is unnecessary to put it on a supplementary estimate. If it is covered I would sanction it right away, if not it would be asked for in a supplementary provision.

MISCELLANEOUS—(B) SUBVENTIONS
OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL

Item 73—Contribution towards establishment of post of Director General of Civil Aviation, \$3,960

Mr. LEE: May I enquire of Government whether this will be a yearly contribution?

The CHAIRMAN: There is to be an officer who has been here before. I think he has either arrived in Trinidad or will be arriving there shortly. He is to be charged with this general question of Civil Aviation throughout the Caribbean Area. His headquarters will be at Trinidad. It is a three years, non-pensionable post, and we are asked to contribute so much.

Mr. LEE: I am thinking whether after three years the post will be retained.

The CHAIRMAN: We will see how things stand at the end of three years. It is only proposed for three years at the moment. An Air Vice Marshal from Montreal visited me last night and he spoke about the officer coming here.

PRISONS

Item 16—Extension of Dairy Farm etc. at New Amsterdam Prison, \$1,120.

Mr. FERREIRA: I notice that an additional Assistant Warder is required for the extension of the dairy herd and piggery at the New Amsterdam Prison. The Warder so employed should be someone who has some knowledge of the work. In the past we have been very fortunate to have a Chief Warder up there who certainly had that Prison Farm and Dairy in excellent condition. But all men are not alike; some are fortunate to be blessed to have the gift of knowledge. I think if the appointment of an Assistant Warder for the Dairy and Farm is being made in order to get the best results, we should get someone with some knowledge of the work who would take a distinct interest in that work. I would suggest for very good reasons that this sideline of the Department should be placed immediately under the Agricultural Department. I think it would be a very wise thing.

The CHAIRMAN: I will take a note of that certainly.

TRANSPORT & HARBOURS DEPARTMENT

Item 12—Boat, Lorry and Equipment for Camaria Service, \$9,000

Mr. LEE: May I enquire if it is within the knowledge of Government that this Service will be a loss to the Colony as it cannot pay its way?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: On the estimates as I have seen, a certain rate has been agreed to by the Principals of the Cuyuni Goldfields Ltd.,

II

the Service will just pay its way. In other words the operating expenses will balance revenue.

MR. LEE: Is Government entering into a contract with the Company that their freight should be so much at least?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it is so much per year but per lb. carriage.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The Company agreed to pay 1½c. per lb. for all transport.

Mr. LEE: I would like to tell Government that my information is that this Service will be a loss. If it is a loss to the Government in revenue, it would only mean that Government is subsidizing this Service.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we will put up the rate.

Mr. LEE: I hope when that is suggested it will not be turned down.

Mr. ROTH: This is the result of one of the recommendations of the Interior Development Committee. Mining operations show very good prospects indeed, and any reasonable assistance Government can afford to that Company, I am certain, will be more than repaid many times over.

TREASURY—INCOME TAX

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The most important item is the provision for a new whole-time Commissioner of Income Tax. Mr. Howie stated in his report that Income Tax Administration will require a full-time man who will act with the two Commissioners, Mr. King and myself, who are part-time. I do not think I need go into the details of the report. I know hon. Members have read the report themselves. It is fully established that Income Tax is so important that it requires a whole-time officer to direct the administration. The other items I

have explained in a memorandum attached. Unless hon. Members wish to make any enquiries on it I would leave it at that as, I take it, that memorandum fully covers the ground. There is however one point I would like to mention in respect of item (f)—2 Junior Assessing Officers. One is in place of a Class I Clerk and the other is a new post in place of the Supernumerary Clerk.

I should like to amend the total figure. \$3,636, by adding \$600, for the reason that we now feel that this post should be a new post altogether, and in order to enable it to be filled by a Class I clerk released from some other Service we are asking that the amount be increased by a sum of money to pay the new officer as from the 1st August. I also move that the item—Temporary War Bonus, \$345—be increased by \$75. In other words the items will be increased to \$4,236 and \$420 respectively.

Items as amended, agreed to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move in the item I referred to—XL. Treasury—Extraordinary Expenditure—6. Purchase of Accounting Machines, \$10,000. I have circulated a memorandum explaining the need for these machines. I am very glad that the opportunity has arisen for us to make a beginning with mechanical accounting in this Colony. The most important use to which these machines will be put will be the re-constitution of the Post Office Savings Bank. I think most Members realize that the accounting machines at the commercial Banks are regarded in these days as a prime necessity for efficiency. I do not suggest that the personal of the office should be reduced, although I have an estimate of what might be saved on the staff eventually if these machines prove successful. In the case of the Treasury I feel sure that the efficiency of the Department will in every way be improved by the use of mechanical accounting, but there again I do not

wish to promise any reduction in staff until I feel sure that in due course of time the work can be handled by a smaller staff.

Mr. SEAFORD: What will be the position if, when this matter comes before the Control Board, it considers that these machines are not essential? At the present moment the Control Board is governed by certain rules and regulations, and it has to consider very carefully the question of finance and the value of the dollar. The Board may argue that Government has been carrying on for many years without these machines with wonderful success under the leadership of the Treasurer, and that it does not consider them essential. If on those grounds the application is turned down, what does the Treasurer propose to do?

Mr. de AGUIAR: The vote would lapse.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The Treasury, too, can boast of being controlled by foreign exchange.

The Council resumed.

The COLONIAL TREASURE formally move:

That, this Council approves the Schedule of Additional Provision for the month of June, 1945, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the Estimates for the year 1945, which has been laid on the table.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY supported.

Motion put, and agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: That brings us to the end of the business just finished in minutes over the time. In adjourning we end what I expect will be the penultimate session of this long-lived Council. We open next week what perhaps will be the last session of this Council, which has been in being so long though modified in its composition to some extent only two years ago. I would just like to express my personal thanks to Members for the manner in which they have carried out the business of this last year.

The Council was then adjourned *sine die*.

