

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 7th June, 1938.

The Council met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR WILFRID JACKSON, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, (Acting), (Major W. Bain Gray, C.B.E.).

The Hon. the Attorney-General, (Mr. J. H. B. Nihill, K.C., M.C.).

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. M. B. Laing, Commissioner, of Labour and Local Government.

The Hon. G. O. Case, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

The Hon. B. N. V. Wase-Bailey, Surgeon-General (Acting).

The Hon. B. R. Wood, Conservator of Forests.

The Hon. F. O. Richards, Comptroller of Customs (Acting).

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. F. A. Mackey (Nominated Unofficial Member).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 2nd and 3rd June, 1938, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Major Bain Gray): I desire to inform the Council that at a later stage I shall move the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders in order to enable the third reading of the two Bills on the Order Paper.

PAPER LAID.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Acting) laid on the table the following document:—

Order in Council made by the Governor in Council under section 4 of the Criminal Law (Procedure) Ordinance, 1931, on the 10th day of May, 1938.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

HINTERLAND DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. ELEAZAR gave notice of the following motion:—

THAT, this Council respectfully requests Government to appoint a small committee of the Council to consider the whole question of the development of the interior and to recommend to Government the best methods for the economic exploitation of its resources.

INDIAN AGENT IN B.G.

Mr. JACOB gave notice of the following question:—

1. The Government of India having readily accepted, in September last, the appointment of an Indian Agent in British Guiana and other Colonies, will Government state if any communication has been received from the Government of India and/or the Secretary of State for the Colonies? If so, what is the nature of the reply that has been sent?

ORDER OF THE DAY.

CIVIL LIST ORDINANCE.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Sir, I beg to move the motion which appears on the Order Paper under my name, and with your permission I shall now read it:

WHEREAS by the provisions of the Civil List Ordinance, Chapter 52, it was enacted that the salaries of certain officers in the Civil Service of the Colony should be those specified in the schedule to the said Ordinance;

AND WHEREAS it was further enacted by the Civil List Amendment Ordinance of 1935 that notwithstanding the provisions of section three of the said Principal Ordinance (Chapter 52) the Governor of the Colony shall be deemed to have and always to have had power and Authority when appointing an officer to any office mentioned in the schedule to the Principal Ordinance to fix and cause to be paid to him a salary at a less amount than the amount set forth in the said schedule;

AND WHEREAS appointments have been made by the Governor of the Colony at a lesser sum than the maximum sum specified in the said schedule;

AND WHEREAS there are at present vacancies relating to appointments under the Civil List Ordinance;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable in the best interests of the Service and of the Colony that the salaries of such officers should be determined by the Governor in Council:

Be it Resolved.—That the said Ordinance 7 of 1935 be amended by substituting for the words "The Governor of the Colony" the words "Governor in Council":

And be it Further Resolved.—That the provisions of the Civil List Ordinance should be submitted for revision by the Legislative Council at intervals of not less than (5) five years from the date of the adoption of this Resolution.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Hear, hear!

Mr. WOOLFORD: Sir, as will be gathered from the second preamble, during 1935—to be precise July 4, 1935—the hon. Attorney-General moved the second reading of "A Bill to amend the Civil List Ordinance, Chapter 52." If hon. members consult the Hansard for that year they will find that that very important amendment was introduced by the hon. Attorney-General with the shortest speech perhaps of his career in this Colony. It occupies just a few lines. He said:

It is possible that the Principal Ordinance may be construed that officers must be paid in respect of the offices set out in the Schedule the salaries which are mentioned therein, but it is considered desirable, as has been done elsewhere, to make provision to authorise salary being paid at a lesser amount than that which is provided in the Civil List. In most Ordi-

nances the provision is that salary be paid not exceeding the amount set out in the Schedule, and the effect of this amendment will be for the same purpose.

I know, sir, of nothing more agreeable, something which perhaps cannot possibly be understood as the *raison d'être* of the amendment, to be gathered from the words in which the second reading was introduced, but if hon. members look at the debate they will find that the necessity for the amendment arose as the result of the appointment of three officers to the Civil List Establishment at salaries less than the provision made in the Schedule to the Ordinance, (No. 23 of 1928). I will not call that Ordinance the Principal Ordinance for reasons which I will state later. That was an Ordinance passed when shortly after the Constitution was to be altered.

I am of the opinion that the circumstance in which the Civil List Establishment was created was one under an arrangement whereby a compromise was effected between the Elected Section of the Legislature, as constituted at that time, and the Government as the result of disputes which arose over the authority of the Crown to legislate by means of Order-in-Council. That had been the prevailing method prior to the first Civil List Establishment which was created as far back as 1836, as I have been able to gather. It was then provided that that Ordinance should remain the law of the Colony in so far as the Civil List Establishment was concerned until December 31, 1914. I think it is clear from the many Ordinances that have been passed since then, periodical in their operation—one from 1841 to 1848 and another 1849 to 1856 for a term of seven years, and again during the periods 1845 to 1848 when the Civil List came up for discussion annually—that the intention of the Crown as the result of the arrangement made was that the Civil List Ordinance should not be a permanent Ordinance but should come up for revision from time to time. In fact as a matter of principle, in 1874 a resolution to make the Civil List Ordinance a permanent one was rejected, and subsequently a similar proposal made in 1887 was withdrawn by the Government.

The next important epoch, if I may say so, was in 1891 when the Constitution of

the Colony was altered and election to the Legislative Chamber was by ballot. It is perfectly clear that the arrangement came to was that so long as the Elected Members agreed to vote and did vote the Civil List, they were free to discuss, as it was then stated "freely and without reserve," every item of the Annual Estimate. It amounted to this, that the selected officers, whose names appear on the Civil List which was then reviewed every five years, had their salaries protected from being ever struck out or reduced during the continuance of the Civil List. The only difference between those officers and other officers in the Public Service was that the salaries of the other officers could be struck out or denied them, and thereafter they would retire on pension I suppose. It was an arrangement in return for which the Crown surrendered all revenues from every source which they hitherto enjoyed.

In 1928 when this Ordinance was passed, it was perfectly clear from the provisions that it was never intended to be a permanent Ordinance. Section 5 of the Ordinance says:—

The entire revenues of the colony, of whatever nature or description they may be and howsoever arising, which of right or by custom would hitherto, in the absence of any provision for a Civil List, have been payable to His Majesty's predecessors for the uses of the Colony, and which have accrued or shall hereafter accrue to His Majesty, His heirs and successors, shall during the continuance of this Ordinance and no longer be payable to the use of the Colony.

So it is open, I submit, for the Crown to say: "Very well, we do not propose to surrender the revenues of the Colony for your use; in which case you are not expected to vote the salaries on the Civil List." I refer to that, sir, because when the amending Ordinance, as it was called,—No. 7 of 1935—was passed not only was the privilege, I submit, of this Council of reviewing the Civil List Ordinance entirely forgotten but was hidden in the reasons given for it. The real object was to validate the appointment of three public officers whose salaries were below that established by the Civil List. In other words, I cannot help feeling that members of the Legislature were willing and ready to approve of the appointment of three local men to very important positions on the Civil List and forgot at the moment their right to examine the Civil List which had been passed on January 12, 1928.

After a period of nine years had elapsed since either that Ordinance or any amendment had been made—a period longer than any in the history of legislation affecting it—something happened which I believe did not redound to the Colony's credit. I believe I am expressing the views of the large majority of this community, when I say however welcome may be the appointment to this Colony of members of the Civil Service who are serving in other Colonies, when the opportunity arises for anyone local who possesses the ability to be appointed to these positions, it does not seem to me to be either fair to the Colony or to the officer that he should be asked to fill that appointment at a lesser salary than his predecessor. There can be no claim to good reason in that.

I am going to give a few instances—for the purpose of gaining support—in which that system worked both unfairly not only to the local officer but to those who have come to serve us in this Colony. The Attorney General of the Colony must excuse me when I say that if this Council had an opportunity at the time of his appointment, or if it had it now, it would not allow the appropriation of the minimum salary of £1,400 for that officer. I believe I am correct in saying that no predecessor of his had been paid so low a salary. I want to ask hon. members if they consider it fair for the Attorney-General of this Colony—I am not speaking now of Mr. Nihill—that he should be paid a sum of £1,400 and be denied the additional sum of £200 salary paid to all or a great many of his predecessors. If I can do anything to prevent the salary being maintained at that figure or to prevent its recurrence I propose to do so, and I submit that as the Ordinance stands now that appointment was irregular, unconstitutional, and against the wishes of those who took part in the passing of this Ordinance. Hon. members on consulting the Schedule will find that the Attorney-General's salary is £1,400 to £1,600 by annual increments of £50. I am submitting, sir, that when the Council passed that Ordinance it intended that the payments of the annual increments appearing on that schedule should be given effect to, and I question the right of the Crown to make an appointment of any officer on the Civil List without the additional privilege of being given the annual increment as

provided for in the Schedule, without previous approval of this Council. It is a privilege we must guard very closely, because if you do not do that the Colony may find itself in the position that high official appointments like that will not attract the notice of men of the ability and legal training required as in the case of an Attorney-General of this Colony. We are likely to have mediocre men appointed.

In so far as the other appointments are concerned, those to which I have alluded, there was no reason whatever why the Colonial Treasurer, however willing he may have been to accept the appointment, should have been asked to accept a salary less than that specified in the Schedule. It is not a matter, I submit, merely for his choice; it is a matter for determination by this Council what salaries officers should be paid and what the Colony could afford, and what inducements should be offered to those outside who are likely to come to this Colony. Can there be anything appropriate in the salary paid to the Comptroller of Customs? I feel compelled to mention that the salary of the Comptroller of Customs is entirely disproportionate to the salary of the Registrar of Deeds. Anyone who has any idea of the work and responsibility of the Comptroller of Customs, I am sure, will not deny that his appointment should carry a higher salary than that of the Registrar. I am submitting that the amendment, which has the effect of giving to the Governor of the Colony the right to make appointments of such importance at such salary as he may consider he has the right to offer any particular officer, is one we should not allow. I cannot conceive that any individual, however experienced he may be, is better qualified to determine alone what salary a public officer should receive than, we may say, the combined assistance either of the Governor in Council or the members of the Council themselves. I have instances, sir, of cases where apparently for no appropriate reason the salaries of public officers have been lowered or reduced without any consideration for the opinion of this Council.

One additional reason which moved me to bring this motion is the recent appointment of the Commissioner of Labour and

Local Government, whose office should be included in this Schedule. I can well conceive that in a couple of years to come that officer, however admirably he may fill his post, will come into conflict with the sugar community, or with labour, or even with the Government. I think that his office should be added to the Schedule. We ought to place the officer who holds that post in such a position that no meeting of the Council here can vote that his salary be struck out. Is it to be alluded that an officer holding an important post like that, corresponding in importance to others on the Schedule, should not be protected from opposition of that kind? He should be placed in a position of independence.

The whole idea of the constitution of the Civil List and the making up, as it were, of the offices which should be included therein is to secure to those who fill those appointments that security of tenure which the importance of their offices demand, and I submit that the mention of the position of the Commissioner of Labour is sufficient ground for asking that periodically the provisions of this Ordinance be enquired into and, if possible, amended.

I have overlooked the fact of an amendment which took place—Ordinance 43 of 1930—affecting the emoluments of the Governor. So you see we have had two opportunities of reviewing the whole of the Ordinance, and I think that in view of the fact that there were at the time, and there are now, certain vacancies not yet filled, either this Council or the Governor in Council should have some opportunity of being of some assistance in the matter. I would like in this connection to especially recommend that this Ordinance of 1928 should not be regarded as a permanent ordinance, and also to read an extract from the report of the Parliamentary Committee to whom this subject was referred many years ago. The principles have been approved since in relation to one of the Crown Colonies. The Committee's report states:—

The Crown was entitled (if considerations of good faith and public policy required it) to insist upon an adherence to the Civil List arrangement made in 1844, for the full period for which the Civil List was granted, and that no attempt to set aside that arrangement, either by direct or indirect means, could be justified.

That reference is to the action of recalcitrant members of the community. I am referring to the sugar population, who had moved a resolution in an endeavour to bully the Government into giving them a loan for assisted immigrants; they refused to vote the Civil List, the hon. member who sits on my left (Mr. Seaford), is quite capable of imitating the policy of the sugar community, if and when it suits their interest, and I am going to ask his assistance in the support which I am asking the Council in general to give to this motion. The Parliamentary Committee proceeded to state in their report:—

At no remote period the Civil List, be open to review, and your Committee strongly recommend that in the interim, whenever there may be vacancies in offices included in the Civil List no permanent appointment should take place until the circumstances of the vacant office have been fully considered in friendly concert with the Colonial Authorities for the purpose of ascertaining whether the maintenance of such office be necessary; and if necessary, whether the office requires regulation, and whether its emoluments can properly be reduced.

I am not aware that the principles underlying that report are not those which apply to-day, and I am going to ask that you recommend that the resolutions which appear in the motion, if carried, be given effect to.

Mr SEAFORD: I have very great pleasure in seconding the motion which has been so very ably moved by my hon. and learned friend, the member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford). It does not require many words from me to assure hon. members of this Council, or the inhabitants of this Colony, that anyone who has the interest of the Colony at heart—and I include myself amongst those—must definitely be in favour of this motion. I consider, sir, that it is only right that this Colony, which after all has to pay the emoluments of officers of Government, should be consulted as regards these emoluments when the officers are appointed. It is a privilege, sir, that we should have had for some time, and it is a privilege that I think we are all rather jealous of.

The hon. member referred to the position of the Commissioner of Labour. I am entirely in agreement with him in his remarks. That officer of Government is indeed in a very responsible position

to-day and his responsibility will grow considerably, and I do feel with the hon. member that he should be placed in a position where we can have no bickering over or can attempt to withhold his salary. He should be entirely independent of members of the community and any idiosyncracies which they may have at certain times.

The hon. mover also referred to the sugar industry and the episode it had with Government. I am sure he is not quite correct, when he said that they tried to bully Government. I am sure the sugar industry would never do such a thing; at the same time if they did, I agree that if they do not agree with Government in what Government does they are going to say so. I am not going to detain the Council further as I am sure all members present are in thorough agreement with this motion. I feel, sir, that the objects of this motion and the very justice of this motion must appeal to Government, as it does to every right thinking member of the community. I only hope that it will be carried in this Council with a unanimous vote.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Major W. Bain Gray, Acting): I hope it may save the time of the Council if I explain briefly the attitude of Government towards this motion and still more the argument adduced by the hon. mover. The matter is very closely related to the appointment and salaries of senior officers of Government, the majority of whom are members of this Council. It is therefore considered that the official members of the Council should not vote on this motion and should not in effect take part in the debate unless they could be of some assistance. The motion therefore will be regarded as an opportunity, apparently a welcome opportunity, to the unofficial members to express their opinion on this subject. Government will then be in a position to deal with the matter and to take such action as it may decide.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not intend to speak at any length on this motion, I gave the hon. mover of this motion a very hearty cheer for reasons which he knows and I know. When Government attempted to bring forward this Ordinance, I stood here like a voice crying in the

wilderness. I said: "Here is Government propounding a wrong for a long time and coming to this Council to seek assistance to justify what it has been doing." One hon. member, Mr. De Aguiar, who is not here to-day, supported my amendment that the Bill be relegated to oblivion, but we both had to bow to circumstances and withdraw the amendment. The thing was wrong then, and if Government is going to remedy it now we are thankful. Even standing alone, as I did then, I do not take any credit for superior wisdom in my stand. It had only appeared to me as an old member of the Council that it was not constitutional.

The Civil List had been given as a matter of *quid pro quo*. This Government had pledged itself to support the Civil List, as it stood, in return for the fruits of the hinterland. Government maintained that for fully eighty years they could not collect enough from the hinterland to compare favourably with what was being expended on the hinterland. I cannot help remembering when a certain post was supposed to be necessary and the sum of £900 was fixed as the salary the officer should receive; the moment it was decided to employ a local man the amount was reduced without let or hindrance to £700 right away. Your Excellency, that is the kind of thing which has been going on for a long time, and I am glad the conscience of this Council is awakened at last. I hope Government will see the effect of legislation of this kind. One particular member of this Council has been mentioned; he happens not to be a local man but he is filling a most important position in this community, next to the Chief Justice. Government, taking its power in its own hand in order to hit the local man, shot at what it did see and killed what it did not see. I hope there will be no trouble in having this matter amended.

The hon. member, who has seconded this motion, had supported Government at the time to do this wrong; he was only a junior member in the Council then, but he has now grown to mature manhood and has seen the mistake of his junior days. I congratulate him on having the moral courage to get up and say that he was not right and that the hon. member for Berbice River (speaker) was right that time as usual (laughter).

THE PRESIDENT: I will put the motion to the Council. Official members will not vote as it is a matter in which they are closely and personally concerned. The resolution will therefore stand as carried as an expression of the views of the Unofficial members of the Council, which I shall of course lay before the Secretary of State for the Colonies as such. I may point out that the motion is divided into two parts, each of which differs in quality from the other. One asks that the Civil List Ordinance should be reviewed every five years, and the other is that appointments under certain Ordinances be made, as I read it, by the Governor in Council.

Mr. WOOLFORD: To a point of correction; not the appointments but the salaries attached to the posts; the Ordinance only refers to salaries.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it is not as direct as I suggest, but it does impinge on the question of the prerogative of making appointments, although the power is nominally vested in the Governor, acting on behalf of the King on the advice of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. I can make no prophecy as to the attitude which will be taken towards this part of it. I shall put it before the Secretary of State for the Colonies as an expression of the views of the Unofficial members of this Council.

Motion put, and agreed to.

CIVIL LIST AMENDMENT BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that "A Bill intituled An Ordinance to amend the Civil List Ordinance in certain particulars and with respect to the salary and allowances which may be paid to the Governor" be read the second time. The object of this Bill is clear. It deals with the salaries of two posts—that of the Governor and that of Government Servants in general. As regards the Governor's emoluments they are in accordance with a resolution passed in this Council in December of last year. With regard to the salaries of the Service in general, hon. members will recall that the Medical Re-organisation Committee recom-

mended that the salary of the Surgeon General should be a fixed one, £1,200 instead of at £1,000 rising to £1,200. The question had arisen rather sooner than the expected retirement of Dr. Henderson that effect should be given to this scale or that the salary be fixed at £1,200. Those are the only changes in the drafted amendment and they do not affect the principle of the Ordinance.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause.

Bill passed without amendment.

Council resumed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: As I have already intimated, at a later stage I shall move that this Bill be read a third time.

OFFICIAL DESIGNATIONS BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the second reading of "A Bill intitled An Ordinance to provide for a change in certain official designations." This is a short Bill which enables Government to alter the official designations of two officers named in the Schedule to the Bill, and gives the Governor in Council power to make similar alterations, if necessary, in future. The desire is to make the titles in accordance with modern ideas and practice elsewhere. The office of Surgeon-General has long since become a misnomer owing to the growth of the Medical Service of this and other Colonies, and it is desired that he should be more accurately described as Director of Medical Service. These remarks also apply to the office of Inspector-General of Police. As the burden of organisation and supervision is greater than the duties suggested of inspection, it is desired to bring this change in accordance with the practice elsewhere and to describe the officer as Commissioner of Police and his deputy as Deputy Commissioner of Police. It is proposed

later to make corresponding changes in the Police rank. I move that the Bill be read the second time.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am going to move that this Bill be read this day twelve months. I speak feelingly in this matter. I am surprised at Government finding time to call twenty-nine persons together for a purpose of this kind when there are so many wrong things to be righted. You talk about modern things, do you refer to West Africa or England? Have they in England changed the title of the Chief Police Officer and made him Commissioner of Police?

THE PRESIDENT: He is Commissioner of Police.

Mr. ELEAZAR: You have to go a long chalk before getting Commissioners here. Sir Gordon Guggisberg once said: "A Commissioner is a governor in his own country; he is the last word." Nobody knows the Inspector-General will be the last word at any time; nobody knows that the Medical Chief, however capable he may be, is going to be the last word in that service in this country. British Guiana has gone too far for that. You have to change so many forms and the official designation of so many Ordinances; you have to convert 800 policemen not to say Inspector-General but Commissioner of Police. One hundred and one times when they get before him they will begin by addressing him as Inspector-General and then end it up with Commissioner. A rose by any other name smells just as sweet. As a matter of fact this is done to bring what is done in Africa here and so save someone from thinking. The whole thing is such a monstrosity that one is ashamed to talk on it. What good is going to accrue from it? Is it going to improve the Police Force or the Medical Service by this change of names? Why change names the people of the Colony are accustomed to? It is a mere innovation without a foundation. That is why we are where we are; we act to no purpose at all. We have always called the Chief Police Officer the Inspector-General of Police; the importance the designation carries and has been carrying all the time is there. I do not know if taking it from mere sound that "Commissioner" sounds as

lofty as "Inspector-General." That is all in it. What is the use of the change?—I do not know and I cannot see.

Once more I am attempting to remedy a wrong if I stand alone, and I am going to record my vote against it. Before very long you may come back to change this; my sun is westering, as an hon. member of this Council once said of himself, and I may be gone, but somebody is going to say: "Look at these people, they have to take a solitary instance in Africa." People have pointed out to me other matters which need remedying. A man owns a house on lease land and the owner, if he does not care to pay the taxes, never does as he knows that if the lessee does not pay the taxes his house will be lost to him. Matters like that need remedying and Government sits silently and does nothing but finds time to carry on fads of this nature. That is only one solitary instance, but there are known to me scores of other matters which should be rectified; nobody however cares a hang, but when you want to get somebody in Africa here you take action. Perhaps I had better tell you what I have said in this Council before. There was a man who used to repair brains, and one fellow took his brain to be repaired. The repairer took it and told the customer to return on a certain day. The day came and passed and the customer never returned for his brain. Eventually one day the repairer saw the customer passing and called out to him: "Hello, man, what about your brains you have left here to be repaired; it has been done and you have not returned for it?" The man replied: "I do not need it. I have joined the Government Service." (laughter). Just to prevent an officer using his brain Government changes a lot of laws and forms. Government has the majority and is going to carry it, but it is a waste of time.

THE PRESIDENT: In order to remove any misapprehension, I may explain that the Bill does not emanate from Africa but from the Personnel Branch of Downing Street, and the proposed title is adopted almost universally. I am sorry the hon. member considers it a waste of time, but the amount of time the Council wishes to waste on this Bill is a matter for the Council. (laughter),

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause.

Bill passed without amendment.

Council resumed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING RULES AND ORDERS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In accordance with the announcement I made earlier in this meeting, I move that the Standing Rules and Orders be suspended to enable the Council to have read the third time the two Bills just considered. The Civil List (Amendment) Bill, 1938, and the Official Designation Bill, 1938.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I beg to move that the Standing Rules and Orders of the Council be suspended so as to permit of the motion standing in my name being moved to-day.

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

CIVIL LIST (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that the Civil List (Amendment) Bill, 1938, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question "That this Bill be now read a third time and passed" put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time.

OFFICIAL DESIGNATION BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that The Official Designation Bill 1938, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question "That this Bill be now read a third time and passed" put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time.

HINTERLAND DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I beg to move the following motion:—

That this Council respectfully requests Government to appoint a small committee of the Council to consider the whole question of the development of the interior and to recommend to Government the best methods for the economic exploitation of its resources.

Sir, I owe no apology at all for this motion, which is intended to focus Government's attention on the interior of the country with a view to its development and certainly as a way out of the rising tide of unemployment which threatens to engulf us in this country. Your Excellency, I am fully alive to the fact that Government with the best intentions errs in considering what is best for the welfare of the community, but when one stands up here, as I often do, and addresses this Council on subjects from one's personal experience, apart from what one has gained from those who have been before and also from written sources, and is contradicted in the way that one sometimes hears, it most certainly would break the heart of a weak individual. I am, however, too old to be affected and will continue to shout as long as the enemy is in sight. I would like to enjoin upon Government Officials that I believe it is a good policy, if you see your neighbour's beard on fire to wet your own. That is an old creole proverb. We, however, see our neighbours' beards on fire and stand doing nothing and playing with the situation.

I have heard the Director of Agriculture say from time to time in this Council that we can only grow rice and sugar in this country, and I always say "question." But I really think he believes that himself. When I tell you that no fewer than 57 prizes were won by this Colony at the International Exhibition held in London as far back as 1862 at which exhibition such great countries as Canada and Australia took part, you will want to know how it came to pass, as surely all those prizes could not have been won by sugar and rice

only for we know that sugar and its by-products only secured six prizes. What about the other things exhibited? What about the number of things we know can be grown here? What has become of the great agricultural promise which British Guiana had been obviously showing in those days, and what about the oils, fibrous plants, and other useful things we have? I assure, Your Excellency, not only from history but from personal experience, that we can grow rice much easier and far cheaper than is being done at the present time. Rice had been grown in the River Districts from time immemorial, but the drawback was that you could not grow it in commercial quantities and the reason was that you had not the labour available. A man had to call his neighbours to help him reap his rice for one-third of the harvest, because if he waited to do it himself it would be lost to him entirely. At that Exhibition timber was very well represented, and there were also other articles such as chemical and pharmaceutical products. At that time our gold and diamonds were not thought of. Sir William Holmes who represented this Colony at that exhibition, attributed the lack of agricultural development of this country then to the scarcity of labour which he pointed out was not even sufficient for the staple product, sugar. We only exhibited samples not because the world did not want them, as the moment a man came and said he wanted one ton of guava jelly he was stumped even before he took his hat in hand. (laughter). That state of affairs has continued until this day. We had not the labour and therefore had to concentrate on the major industry, sugar. It is for that reason we are left undeveloped, but now that the major industry has reached its zenith and, as a matter of fact, is beginning to recede it is clear that our duty is to find out other resources for development.

The reason for this motion is that I am aware from my personal experience and from history that there is much known about the resources of the interior of this country, but owing to the scarcity of labour and the difficulty of approach to the interior nothing can be done in the way of development. Both of these difficulties are still there, but I can see immediate relief for one if Government

finds the means of getting rid of the other. If the labour can be got it will be a very easy matter for Government to tackle and find out the best way of approach to the hinterland to get its products.

In mentioning rice, I notice that the hon. apostle for rice is not present. At that exhibition rice took a very high place, and it was then said that British Guiana rice although it did not win prizes came in for honourable mention. It was found to be better than even the best Californian rice, and it was hoped that before very long British Guiana would be able to produce sufficient rice at least to keep the foreign article out of the local market. That has been done since then, but the other things are still untouched, undeveloped and untapped, and a good deal absolutely unknown. Hence my anxiety for Government to get a peep into the interior more than it has done in the past. We do not know how long sugar will be able to maintain itself, and there is no gainsaying the fact that we have more than sugar can maintain. Assuming that sugar is giving 100 per cent. all round to its employees, how will it benefit the man who is not employed? If it increases prices all round that will do very little in alleviating what is coming. People must be born and the world must provide something for them. The interior is there and only a small fringe has been touched in the way of development, but the whole country is locked up for want of proper means of transportation. Not only are the products but other resources locked up. Can we presume any up-to-date country possessing the Kaieteur Fall and treating it as coldly as we have done? If an old man like myself attempts to make the journey to Kaieteur at the present time, he will not be able to come back. I made it once for love, but only a large sum of money can make me attempt it again. (laughter).

It is the business of Government to search for avenues of employment and, if they are there in the hinterland, to tap them. However, in order to tap them we want first of all transportation. That is what has made the world what it is, and that is what is going to make British Guiana better. I have heard that a railway was put down in Suriname, Dutch Guiana, to see if anything was there in the hinter-

land, but we know that valuable products are there in this country's hinterland. In 1862 our forefathers exhibited our products before the British Empire at the International Exhibition held in the Mother Country and took away 57 prizes, but to-day only three of those articles then exhibited you can talk about, namely, rice, sugar and timber. Gold and diamonds were not known much at the time as products of this country, and it was thought that if they were explored they would add to the exports of this country. They have been explored and have contributed largely in keeping us as we are at the present moment. Some of our Government Officials—the Director of Agriculture and the acting Colonial Secretary—like other learned men of the world, philosophers, very often are apt to explain something that they do not know anything about. I see the Director of Agriculture smiling, but it is not as ludicrous as sounds. The story goes that a professor made this remark to his pupil: "I cannot explain what we do not know." He gave this illustration: "A man died as the result of an accident and was buried in a certain field. It would appear that during the burial somebody passed along with a grain of corn which fell into the upturned soil and produced a tremendous crop. The idea then went forth that if you want a good crop kill a man and bury him in the field. The philosophers in those days did not know anything about turning up the soil and so decided that the cause of the successful crop was that the man was killed and buried there." That is explanation without any real knowledge. The acting Colonial Secretary will bear me out when I say that discussing with him the utility of teaching children agriculture in school, we came to the point as to what you are going to give them to do when they leave school. He said: "What about cane-farming?" I would not tell you the answer I gave him, but it was not a pleasant one and he turned to the person whom he thought should know—Mr. Brassington—who said: "That is all he could say in reply was: 'I am sorry to hear you say that.' There he was explaining for all he was worth something he did not know. When Government Officials, therefore, hear one speak in this Council criticising measures, they must not judge him as an obstructionist; he is just saying what he knows from

experience or knowledge gleaned from written sources or from individuals, and his opposition is done with the best intention.

Experience even though a hard school is the best teacher. I have lived for a long time in the country districts as a schoolmaster, and from what I have seen I am convinced that with proper transportation and labour facilities the river districts will be able to feed the whole West Indies with rice and to compete successfully against India which has the sanction of distance. When we talk about rice growing here, we simply think of rice-growing on the coastlands. When I stand here and talk about rice-growing, I am talking about what I have seen in some of the river districts. I trust Government will accept this motion in the spirit in which it is moved, and will speedily appoint a Committee to enquire into the best method of transportation to the interior. There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune.

Mr. GONSALVES: I desire to second the motion which has been moved by the hon. member for Berbice River, (Mr. Eleazar) and in doing so I am cognisant of the fact, that we have all heard the hon. mover say more than once that when you want to shelve a matter suggest that a committee be appointed to enquire into it. I do not think that on this occasion when he selects to move a motion for the appointment of a committee, he has at the back of his mind the shelving of this matter. I think the matter is one of sufficient importance to warrant attention. I can quite see the experience of the hon. mover in this Council, as the motion is another way of getting on record by votes the proposition he made a few days ago, when through some misapprehension he did not get the votes recorded by those in favour of it. He is a member of some experience and knows the subtlety and dodges to get round the Council. I however think the subject matter is one of such importance that, perhaps, it is wise to think that a decision cannot be arrived at in this Council as it involves matters which will require the assistance of a committee to go into the various questions involved therein. The suggestion of the appointment of a committee is a reason-

able one, and I hope it will have the support of Government in that connection.

In the present state of things, there is no doubt that development of the Colony is absolutely necessary. We have been waiting quite a long time for development. It is true that we have had suggestions, but really we have had no serious indication of development in this Colony. That brings along with it the need for employment, and there is absolutely no doubt that at the present time there is need for employment in this Colony. So soon as Government can move in that direction, so soon it will be for the betterment of the people who live here. If Government accepts the motion it will be the means of assuring the people that some serious effort is being made to have some thing done in the hope of ameliorating the conditions which are existing. I appreciate, and I think every hon. member appreciates, that the matter is not a simple one as one would like it to be. It requires careful consideration. What is wanted is less discussion—less long speeches—and more action. In that regard I am a bit disappointed in the hon. mover of the motion. I thought he would have shortened his speech by one-half. Let us have action and less words, and proceed to get what we want.

Mr. JACKSON: I rise to support this motion with very great pleasure. I do not think there is need to say too much to convince Government, that the motion as worded ought to receive the entire support of this Council. We are all agreed on the point that there is absolute need for something to be done to relieve the tension due to unemployment. I believe in the sincerity of the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar), and his persistency in bringing forward this matter of developing the resources of the Colony deserves the support of all. I have no doubt that if a small committee is appointed to go into the question, it would settle once and for all the method that should be adopted for the purpose of opening the interior of the Colony, and I believe that if this motion is adopted and the committee is appointed and sets to work at once, we will be able to evolve one or two schemes for the improvement

of the conditions under which we labour in this Colony.

Mr. AUSTIN: I would like to support this motion. I think, sir, I can speak with a certain amount of practical knowledge of conditions in Georgetown and its environments, and I can safely say that if fifty per cent. of those people who are now seeking work in the docks of Georgetown were removed, there would still be a large number in need of employment. This concerns all of us who are employers of labour, and we foresee that a difficult situation will arise if something is not done to relieve the present congestion in Georgetown. Suggestions have been made that we should divide up the work so that other labourers could share in the wages that are being distributed weekly. I do not think that will be fair to the regular worker or what is known as the casual regular worker. These are people who rely on the wages, which they have been accustomed to get, to meet their family responsibilities; they are renters of houses in various parts of the town and their rents have to be paid regularly. I cannot conceive it would be right to halve their weekly wages in order to provide funds for those who unfortunately have not yet got into the same position as the others. The increased wages which are being paid in Georgetown have attracted many people from the country districts in order that they may benefit by the chance of obtaining the higher wages existing in the City through overtime work which is necessary when steamers, as they do now, have to work day and night while at this port. I do not think the wages paid in Georgetown are high, though they are somewhat higher than those paid in the neighbouring Colonies.

When it comes to how these people can be attracted away from the City, that is a matter which I imagine can be better dealt with by the Committee proposed, and rightly so if it is considered wise to appoint one. I am sitting now on the Coffee Committee, and I can say that we find it extremely difficult to know exactly what to do to save the industry. My own view is, that if we allow coffee to go out of existence in this Colony, it is quite possible that we shall be importing it at no far distant date. Is it right that a country growing coffee, though not of the best grade, should

allow it to drift out of existence in spite of the high price now payable for foreign coffee? We see, sir, from newspaper reports that Jamaica has taken up a line in trying to settle people on the island in order to establish a peasant industry. Cannot we in some way imitate that on a smaller scale? We have not got £500,000 to expend on a scheme of that nature, but we certainly have good lands around the Mahaica and Mahaicony and various creeks and also in the Pomeroy District, where we ought to be able to settle people fairly happily. The sooner we do that, I think, it will be better for the country as a whole and the people of the towns and villages in particular.

Mr. KING: It is a trite saying that "Good wine needs no bush," and I feel sure that the motion put forward this morning by the hon. member for Berbice River in the maturity of his years, which he has told us is on the western side of his hemisphere, finds favour with everyone. I believe that the collection of brains which Your Excellency will appoint a Committee of this kind might be able to evolve some scheme for the development of the interior and so relieve the terrible amount of unemployment which is existing in the Colony at the present time, but which perhaps a single brain is unable at the moment to think of. The interior of the Colony is undoubtedly of great wealth. Only recently I saw in the newspapers a letter written by someone, suggesting that Government finance "pork-knockers" to enable them to get to the interior for the purpose of searching for gold or diamonds. That is a matter which may very well engage the attention of the proposed Committee. Possibly some scheme may be evolved which Government would accept and which would to a great extent, I feel sure, relieve unemployment in the Colony.

It may be said that to a certain extent the agricultural products of the Colony have reached saturation point, and unless the produce can be a seller on the world's markets it is impossible to visualise a relief of unemployment from agriculture. Personally I can never hope for such relief on account of the difficulties that do arise in the way of weather conditions. It is impossible for us to a great extent to produce products at the present time to compete in the world's markets success-

ly. Bananas, of which I had much hope one time, have fallen by the roadside. I am to be convinced that bananas can be produced on a large scale in this Colony almost an impossibility. There are many products which can be produced, but as the hon. Mr. Austin has said, the industry is in a bad way to-day. As a member of the Coffee Committee sitting to advise Government on the industry, I can say that the industry has caused us very grave anxiety and has exercised our minds very much in respect of the scheme to be recommended to Government for the protection of the industry. We do hope, however, to present to Government a scheme which, it is hoped, Government will accept, and we trust that time will prove that it has borne that measure of fruition that hon. members hope it will. If the coffee industry goes out of existence in this Colony, the unemployment situation will become even worse. Speaking as one who represents a large coffee growing district, it would be a very serious matter for this Colony if it should happen, as thousands of people in the Polder areas earn their livelihood on a coffee. I feel that it is important that Government should make every effort to protect that industry and I hope the industry will be saved.

As far as the real wealth of this Colony is concerned, I feel that we must look beyond the foreshore; we must look towards the interior where enormous wealth exists. How that wealth can be got and put on the markets of the world are matters that require very grave consideration. I admit that the development of the interior is a matter which will require a large sum of money and, therefore, Government has to be satisfied beyond all reasonable doubt that any development undertaken will be productive of some good to the inhabitants and to the Colony as a whole. I do feel, that the best way for Government to arrive at that decision is to accept the motion moved this morning for the appointment of a Committee for the purpose of going into the matter and advising Government whether or not the development of the interior can take place in this Colony. I heartily support the motion.

Mr. SEAFORD: Sir, I think the hon.

mover of this motion struck a right note when he referred to the rising tide of unemployment. I believe that it is the fear of that tide rising higher and higher that prompted him to move his motion to-day. There can be no doubt that there has been a certain amount of unemployment in this Colony, not perhaps as much as in other places. Unemployment is growing and will start to grow more rapidly owing to the restriction on our export of sugar. That is one of the reasons for the expected growth of unemployment. We have not yet felt the effect of that restriction, but from this year onwards it is going to be felt, and it is going to be very difficult in this Colony to know how to give employment to these people. Not only people in the country districts are going to be affected but also people in Georgetown who have the handling of the 20,000 tons of sugar for export—the porters, lightermen and railway people. I do not for a moment suggest there is anything we can do in the immediate future to meet the situation. It is impossible to produce some scheme that is going to give the employment needed at once, but we may be able to devise some means to give temporary employment until some permanent employment can be found. I do not think for one moment that anybody considers the duties of this Committee are going to be light. It is going to be, as far as I can see, a rather long drawn out task, as information has to be got from various sources and it is going to take a long time. It is going to be a very difficult job. Why I am in favour of the motion is because if we can find any other loophole for employment, although it may take some time, it is our duty to do so.

We know from experience that it is very difficult, and I may say almost impossible, to develop new industries on our coastlands on account of the very difficult natural conditions which exist. We have to expend large sums of money in trying to keep the sea out, and we also have to get the storm water off the land. Owing to the natural difficulties we have to put up with, it is actually impossible to carry on industries to compete in the world's markets. It is therefore hoped that the Committee, if appointed, will be able to find some permanent employment in the interior for the people. I cannot say I am altogether very optimistic, but I

am prepared to support anything that gives a little ray of hope. I therefore have very much pleasure in supporting the motion.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Government is prepared to accept this motion in principle. It is clearly an offer on the part of the Unofficial members of the Council to assist Government in this important and difficult matter. The acceptance of the motion means that the matter will be considered and the Committee will be appointed. Neither the mover nor the other speakers touched the point of the exact terms of reference of the Committee, which obviously call for further consideration. The motion will be considered and acted on by Government.

THE PRESIDENT: May I ask the hon. member if his motion contemplates a Committee of the Council? Do you wish to limit it to the Council?

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think on second thought that Government will do well to add persons outside of the Council—persons, who by their experience and ability, will be able to help Government.

THE PRESIDENT: Then you will like to amend the motion by taking out the words "of the Council?"

Mr. ELEAZAR: With your permission.

THE PRESIDENT: I need not say that Government will most heartily welcome any practical suggestion that Committee of this kind may be able to formulate. It is a matter which has always been exercising the attention of Government, and it is one, as everybody knows, of very considerable difficulty. If practical proposals may be forthcoming, more particularly proposals in the first instance to put us in the position to get definite information to formulate practical schemes, that will be of great assistance and Government most cordially welcomes any suggestion the Committee may be able to bring forward. The hon. member has asked leave of the Council to leave out the limiting words "of the Council" in his motion, and I therefore put the question "That the motion as amended be adopted."

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Council adjourned *sine die*.

