

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Wednesday, 13th December, 1944*

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. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

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. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. J. I. de Aguiar (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. B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

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

The Clerk read prayers.

## MINUTES AMENDED.

The PRESIDENT: I have a note on the Minutes from the Treasurer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Sir, I ask that on page 2 of the minutes the item "b.—2 Official Reporters and Librarians (\$1,200 by \$96 to \$1,920)" be amended to read:—"b.—2 Official Reporters and Librarians (\$1,200 by \$96—\$1,680 by \$120—\$1,920)."

Minutes as amended confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRIME MINISTER'S APPRECIATION

The President: I have pleasure in informing Council of the following telegram received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

"Please convey to Legislative Council an expression of the Prime Minister's warm thanks for their message which gave him so much pleasure."

### INCOME TAX ADVISER.

I would also like to say that we have with us this month the Income Tax Adviser from the Home Government, and it has been suggested to me that it might be very useful indeed if

Members of the Legislative Council took the opportunity of having an informal discussion with him, at which they could ask him any questions and find out what he thinks of some of our arrangements. I will not suggest a day or hour at this moment, but I think that might be pursued, and I will bring it up with a view to fixing such an informal meeting in the next few weeks.

#### THE GENERAL ELECTIONS.

I have two comments to make as regards yesterday's business. One is that I note that both the daily newspapers omitted the announcement of the appointment of a Committee of three Members of Council in regard to the steps to be taken for the new elections, etc. I should like them to take note of this today. I said that the Fourth Nominated Member, Mr. J. A. Luckhoo, had consented to be Chairman, and the Member for East Demerara, Mr. Humphrys, and for the Essequibo Islands, Mr. Lee, to be his colleagues.

I also said that I had had a telegram from the Secretary of State, confirming what I said last week that the Order-in-Council would deal with one part of the matter, but that our Ordinance should deal with all questions touching elections, qualifications of electors, and general procedure to bring in the new franchise, and that this permitted us to take immediate steps. Mr. Luckhoo and his colleagues would put up the necessary amendments or additions to existing regulations and anything else necessary to govern and expedite the procedure which will of course be covered by the new Ordinance.

#### AGRICULTURAL POLICY.

I am grateful to Members for extending yesterday's session for half an hour in order to effect substantial progress. In view of the lateness of the hour then I did not make

any comment on any point raised in passing the Agricultural Department's estimates, but I wish to do so extremely briefly now in reference to the two remarks made by the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member. I am referring to pencil notes before me. He seemed to say a good deal with which I am in general agreement, but also seemed to be making statements in regard to the attitude of the Secretary of State and Colonial Office to agricultural policy in this country, in particular with implications that a great deal of influence was being used to foster sugar estate development to the prejudice of other sides of agricultural development.

I would like to say that that inference must be entirely repudiated, and I would ask Members to take particular note of what I must ask them to take as the latest and authoritative specific indication of Colonial Office policy in the phraseology which I quoted only last week direct from the Secretary of State's despatch.

Members will remember that I invited special attention to the words used, "the balanced farming" economy, "with sugar and rice as the main crops, but with ample food production." I referred also to phrases about mixed farming, but better utilisation of pasture, the improvement of grazing lands with fencing and water supply. There are others in the despatch favourable to land settlement and small holding. I specially invited the attention of Members to those phrases, and I pointed out that in the working out of this Corentyne scheme we have a wide opportunity in this country, such as we have never had, I think, to plan a balanced agricultural economy.

It is very clear to me from these communications which I shall put before Council more fully when I can, that the Colonial Office is taking a very particular and lively interest to ensure that the utilisation of land under such

a comprehensive drainage and irrigation scheme shall be of such character as to produce the balanced agricultural economy of all these other things in addition to sugar production.

I should like to add that since my return I have given very specific instructions to the Departments concerned, in particular the Agricultural Economist, the Local Government Department, the Land Settlement Officer, and the Consulting Engineer, to provide me with the first blue print of agricultural development in the area in order to have as much as possible ready to discuss with the Comptroller on his visit in January.

I should add that these things will be fully put before all local interests concerned in the area, as well perhaps as this Council. It is said that Government has no plans. I can only repeat what I have said over and over again in this Council, that Government has put before itself as a primary objective the improvement of drainage and irrigation throughout the coastlands as a first essential. If Members of this Council are in disagreement with that objective they will have ample opportunity to oppose its further prosecution, but it is surely necessary to bear it in mind in any discussion of the principles of this matter or in criticism of Government's agricultural policy.

The other point as to which I was interested and wish to comment, raised by the hon. Member was his remark on co-operative systems. That remark I welcome because, if there is going to be any success in our agricultural economy in areas of small-holders, particularly touching cane-farming which was mentioned or in fact off large estates, there will most certainly have to be a degree of centralized organization, and that can only be well secured by co-operation amongst the holders with a view here that this not only applies to drainage in general direction, I would like to say

age and irrigation problems, that is sufficiently obvious to all of us. But it is also going to apply in increasing degree, again I say, if there is to be success in our agricultural system, to the developing use of mechanical equipment. If mechanical equipment and mechanical ploughing is to be used successfully and economically on small holding areas there will have to be co-operative organization.

The thing is immensely important and it is not going to be easy. I am in correspondence at the moment with London as to any material I can get hold of as a model. I have myself seen this kind of thing in operation in Egypt and in the Egyptian Sudan on the Nile nearly twenty years ago, where peasant holders lands were irrigated and ploughed by a central organization without their land rights being prejudiced and with immense gain to them. There are models in other countries too. The same principle will apply in the ultimate development of such a thing as the Mahaicony rice area. I record the matter only here, it is being pursued and I will be happy to discuss it with any Member of Council, should he care to do so with me.

Reverting to the main part of Colonial Office policy, drainage and irrigation, as to when there may be prosecution of the actual main works, that, as Members will know, is not an easy matter under wartime conditions. We have done a great deal both in the Corentyne and elsewhere to carry through particular works which will fit in within the main framework and have strained our executive machinery to the absolute utmost. But I have never deluded Members of this Council as to any early possibilities of completion of major schemes. I have said very frequently that I cannot anticipate that much can be accomplished on the larger scale within this particular five-year period.

I would ask Members to bear these very important points in mind when we are discussing agricultural planning.

#### UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

##### COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY INTO P.W.D.

Mr. EDUN gave notice of the following motions:—

of British Guiana having very clearly included in the Supreme Criminal Courts piracy Case that was heard and considered. Whereas the recent Public Works Commission disclosed that grave irregularities in the general administration and in the expenditure of Public funds by that Department are being committed;

And Whereas the very nature of the such and said existing irregularities is absolutely inimical to the best interests of the tax-paying element of the Colony, aforesaid, and that the said tax-paying element continue to experience and exhibit a very deep feeling of uneasiness;

And Whereas not having since or subsequent to the determination of the said case made, in fact, any public announcement or otherwise given any information, knowledge and/or intelligence to the said tax-paying element of any course of action which it may consider desirable to prosecute, with the view to restore the people's confidence in the aforesaid Department of Public Works;

**Be it Resolved,**—That this Honourable Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor the desirability of setting up a Competent Committee of Inquiry to investigate and report on the broad and detailed functioning of the Public Works Department, aforesaid, in relation to all works of a public nature undertaken and carried on by the Department, aforesaid, e.g., the Drainage and Irrigation Board, the Pure Water Supply, the Transport and Harbours Board and other Boards connected and entrusted with Schemes within the Colony of British Guiana aforesaid;

**And be it further Resolved,**—That this Honourable Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor the appointment of a Vigilance Committee comprising of Members of the Legislative Council to act as watch and ward on the expenditure of Public Funds by the Departments, aforesaid.

#### INCREASED LICENCE ON BANKS.

Whereas there is in fact a deficit in revenue to meet the Colony's expenditure for the year 1945,

**Be it Resolved,**—That this Honourable Council levies from the Banks, to wit—Barclay's Bank (D.C. & O.), and the Royal Bank of Canada, the sum of \$5,000.00, five thousands, each, as licence fees, beginning as from the 1st of January to the 31st of December, 1945, and for subsequent years.

#### ESTIMATES, 1945.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1945.

#### ANALYST.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not think there is any point to which I wish to invite particular attention. The notes on page 6 are sufficiently explanatory. Item *a* is a provision in accordance with Legislative Council Paper No. 20 of 1944. The items with respect to other ranks are in accordance with approvals already given by this Council by resolution.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I notice that the maximum salary of the Assistant Government Analyst is \$2,880 while the Government Analyst starts at \$3,600. I have been endeavouring to ascertain whether any mention was made of the post of Assistant Government Analyst in the reports of the various Committees which dealt with salaries, but I have been unable to find anything.

The CHAIRMAN: It is dealt with in Legislative Council Paper No. 20 of 1944.

Mr. WIGHT: That deals with the salary of that post at one-time, but it does not seem to have been re-considered in the light of the other post and in view of the general policy which seems

to be adopted in other cases, of keeping the salary of the Deputy as near as possible to that of the Head of a Department for whom he has to deputize. There seems to be too great a disparity in his case.

The CHAIRMAN: We will keep it in mind. Will the Treasurer make a note?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The salary of the Assistant Government Analyst was specifically approved by resolution on the 7th December, 1943, and I do not think that because the first item has been increased some months after it is desirable to go back on our action in 1943.

The CHAIRMAN: Nevertheless, keep it in mind. It has been raised by the hon. Member.

*Item e — Clerical Establishment \$480.*

Mr. deAGUIAR: With respect to item *e*, perhaps we might hear whether it represents an addition to the staff of the Department. It is something new.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: During the year the Analyst urged very strongly that he needed a typist, and on that ground provision has been made for a typist-clerical assistant. Will the hon. Member look at page 54?

Mr. JACOB: I have always—

The CHAIRMAN: What particular item are you dealing with?

Mr. JACOB: I want to speak generally on the head.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like you to attach yourself to an item.

Mr. JACOB: I see that you are pressing daily to limit our scope of discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: No, I am not. When we are at a business stage we will try to proceed in a businesslike way. If you want to have a discussion refer to some item.

Mr. JACOB: I move a reduction of the whole head by \$100. I had hoped that I would have been saved the trouble of having to say what I have just said, but it appears to be useless for me to think otherwise. I have in my hand the report of the Colonial Audit Department for 1943 which is dated the 10th of August, 1944. I wish to say at the outset that I have always supported this Department and advocated that it should be strengthened; that it should have officers of the highest integrity in the Service, because their duties are exceedingly important, and the whole finances of the Colony depend on them so to speak. I am not going to refer to any particular individual. It is unfortunate that the Head of the Department is not with us now, but what I am going to say does not reflect on any particular individual, because I took the trouble to move the reduction of the entire head by \$100. I observe on page 1 of the report the following paragraph:—

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT—ALLEGED  
CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD THE  
GOVERNMENT.

11. Eleven employess of the Public Works Department are on trial at the Assizes at the present time and are indicted with having on divers days between the 1st April and 15th October, 1943, conspired together to defraud the Government of British Guiana by false representation that they had rendered services for which they were entitled to be paid by the Government.

The report is silent on the details. It is probably not within the knowledge of the Government; it is probably not within the knowledge of the financial experts and the Accountant of the Department that wholesale frauds have been going on. I am not going so far as to say that they are still going on, but

I have my suspicions. I am glad the Chairman of the Advisory Committee is here and will hear what I have to say. I have had various reports made to me and I have always promised people who tell me anything that their names would never be disclosed. I have had information given to me which, if acted upon promptly, would have led to great savings of public funds. I had information given to me which stated clearly that a certain set of equipment was purchased from a particular establishment for erection at the Department of Agriculture, but the equipment was not erected there. I gave the Chairman of the Committee the details and he assured me that he inspected the place and he was satisfied that the equipment had not been erected there, but, of course, that is where the matter stood. I could get nothing further although I tried every possible means to find out what action had been taken. If it had been my business and I had information that the equipment was not erected, I would have taken immediate action and put the matter into the hands of the Police or some responsible people. The plain fact remains that the Public Works Department did not deal with it because nothing happened. My information was so conclusive that I did not want to be told that the Department had to do this and that and investigate. I gave all the details. I merely mention that to show that the Department had full information as to what had happened.

The CHAIRMAN: The Audit Department?

Mr. JACOB: The Public Works Department.

The CHAIRMAN: You must relate your remarks to the Audit Department.

Mr. JACOB: I am dealing with the audit of the Public Works Department.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the report of the Auditor refer to that particular

matter? I think it is a building you are referring to.

Mr. JACOB: This report does not refer to it. I am referring to certain equipment.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you are dealing with something that could not possibly have come before the Audit Department.

Mr. JACOB: I am giving details because I want to connect up the Audit Department with it. After all there must be records. When a piece of equipment is ordered and it is supplied, it must be checked by the Auditor. I was saying that the piece of equipment ordered by the Public Works Department for the Department of Agriculture was not put up; that an order was sent to a store to supply it—

The CHAIRMAN: Now you are on the Agricultural Department.

Mr. JACOB: It was ordered by the Public Works Department from a commercial house for the Agricultural Department, and I maintain that the Auditor in checking and passing the accounts should have some information as to where and why goods are ordered, and why they have been erected or not erected. In fact I go further and say that the Auditor should be able to know what are the estimates, just as he knows the estimates for every head. Every item ordered by the Public Works Department should be inspected by the Auditor who should see that the estimates are carried out, and that these things are accompanied by some certificate. It is the duty of the Auditor to see that goods are ordered by certificate, and when things have been erected there should be some certificate from the Public Works Department.

I maintain that in view of the irregularities which have been going on, and in view of the fact that the Audit Department has not been able to give details

in its report (perhaps Government has some special report from the Auditor as to these irregularities), and they have been occurring with such frequency. I think the time has come when the Auditors should be made to understand that they should carry out audits of certain Departments in a particular form.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you want the scope of the Audit Department widened?

Mr. JACOB: If it comes to that. I would like to know if the Auditor looks at the estimates submitted by the Public Works Department and if the officers of the Audit Department check those estimates with the goods ordered and the amount paid for them? For instance I will take the head "Analyst" which is not a very complicated head. The estimate for 1945 calls for an expenditure of \$14,774. The Auditor should see that all the entries at the end of the year, wherever the accounts are kept, are in agreement with that estimate of \$14,774, and if the estimate is exceeded there should be explanations.

I think there should be sufficient control on the administrative side of the Government to check Heads of Departments doing exactly what they like. I must make reference to this. It has been public property that accounts have been paid when proper authority had not been given to the Public Works Department to pass those accounts for payment. What did the auditors do? They never looked at them or examined them and reported beforehand. The paragraph I have quoted from this report states that the defalcations extended from the 1st April to the 15th October, 1943. I think the Audit Department has always been fully staffed. I have always asked that it should be fully staffed. I think I suggested that it should be strengthened, but it did not suit certain

expert advisers of the Government to admit it. Whether the Department was strong enough or not I maintain that there was something seriously wrong, and the whole system of Government audit requires going into very carefully.

I have information now. I have a source that gives me information, and it is very authentic and very correct. I have a source that gives me information now as to works that are now going on. I hesitate to give that information because I have given information over and over again. I have given information to the Head of the Administration, to the Public Works Department and I have as far as the Auditor who definitely but courteously declined to go into the correspondence. I have gone to the Advisory Committee. In every instance I have got little or no redress. I have gone to the Secretariat without redress. When I gave the hon. Member information I thought he would have come to me with something definite.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member brought this matter to the Legislative Council before, and at that time as President I assured him that if he would come and see me and give me the facts and the names of the people who supplied those facts, the matter would be immediately taken up and pursued to the hilt. He has referred to the Secretariat. If the hon. Member has written to the Secretariat and given the facts and has not been given an answer I regret that, but I rather think the hon. Member means that he brought it verbally to the Secretariat and the answer was "Would you give the information and the names of the people who reported it?"

Mr. JACOB: I did not refer to the hon. Member who has spoken. He did invite me to give him certain particulars and names but I definitely declined. I am giving the information and that is

sufficient. I am not going to give names because I know those persons will be penalized. If Government would not do as I suggest, then the matter would remain as it is.

The CHAIRMAN: The transcript of your remarks will be sent to the Auditor. I quite appreciate the hon. Member's point as I know what limits they set themselves.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It is rather unfortunate the hon. Member brought up the episode to which he referred. I made three trips at the hon. Member's invitation. I went with the Director of Public Works and we made an inspection. The hon. Member was then communicated with by phone and told that he was not quite correct. I then went with two Engineers within the space of a quarter of an hour and visited the spot and made an investigation. On my return I got some more information from the hon. Member and I returned to the spot again. The hon. Member says he gets no assistance. The hon. Member gets up in this Council as the champion of democratic rights and the liberty of the subject, and expects people to be arrested merely on his suspicion or on information given by him without divulging the names of his informants and without giving the necessary statements on which action can be taken.

Mr. JACOB: I never suggested to the hon. Member that anyone should be arrested. I suggested that departmental action should be taken. I even went further and said that I had gone to the Police on three occasions and they declined to take action on the information I gave.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Does the hon. Member seriously suggest that we should jeopardize any person's liberty by dismissing him merely on information given by the hon. Member?

Mr. JACOB: I must rise to a point of correction! I never said dismissal! The Department should have investigated the matter to see who was culpable

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Not only has the Department investigated the matter, but a full report on the subject was placed before the Public Works Advisory Committee. They are definitely satisfied with the explanation given. I went so far as to ask the Director of Public Works to follow up this matter and he did so. One hon. Member of this Council promised to give the name of a witness and to send that witness to the Police to connect this up, but we have heard nothing since. I pursued the subject, and the Director of Public Works told me that he had spoken to the hon. Member who informed him that the person who was to give evidence refused to do so. I met the hon. Member myself and asked him about that individual. I told him that we were still pursuing the matter and he then told me that the person had refused to give a statement or to give evidence. What can we do in such circumstances? What other departmental action is expected of the Department? What are they to do — just lay the blame on somebody without any concrete statement but merely on a charge laid against that somebody by some anonymous person? Is that what the hon. Member suggest should be meted out to Civil Servants or anyone else? Is that person to be charged on mere suspicion? The facts were fully investigated by the Department concerned, all the documents were submitted and examined. We even went to the store or stores from which the purchases were made, and the explanation given was perfectly satisfactory. Had the hon. Member who promised to supply a witness produced that witness, then of course we might have had a different outlook, but presumably the witness was merely to give hearsay evidence or his suspicion. We who practise in the Courts in this Colony know fully well



that time and time again witnesses have gone into the witness-box and informed the Magistrate or the Judge that this or that was done out of spite because of some row. Are we to take that and make a Departmental deal departmentally with a person on evidence of that sort? I submit that cannot be as long as British justice is being administered in this Colony.

Mr. FERREIRA: I think I can elucidate this matter.

The CHAIRMAN: What we are really discussing is, what is the scope of the Audit Department.

Mr. FERREIRA: I think it arose out of a wash basin which was missing.

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction! It is not a wash basin. As a matter of fact the hon. Member—

Mr. FERREIRA: The item that has been missing has been erected at the Colonial Secretary's house. That is the information which reached the Public Works Advisory Committee.

Mr. JACOB: We have had an explanation by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and a further explanation by a Member of the Advisory Committee. It was not a wash basin.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has made his point that the Audit Department must extend its scope as its staff is increased. Do not let us waste further time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There are necessary amendments to be made. The Head was passed subject to necessary amendments in accordance with the recently enacted Audit Department (Amendment) Ordinance No. 36 of 1944.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

Item 1 (b) — *Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary*, \$4,320.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I desire to draw attention to something that is shown in the Marginal Notes—

“Increase due to normal increments and substitution of a Principal Clerk for a Senior Clerk.”

Two additional Senior Clerks were moved into last year's Estimates when I was authorized to invite this Council to approve of an amendment under Item 1 (b)—Principal Assistant Secretary — which was carried out at \$4,320 in the Estimates as shown. I now move that the item be increased to \$4,800.

Most hon. Members are aware that the substantive holder of this post has not actually taken his seat since his appointment because he has been engaged on other important duties as Controller of Commodities and Prices. In that post he now receives an emolument of \$4,800 per annum and has been receiving it for some time. It is hoped that he will be able to return to the Secretariat, but if he does not and instead is transferred on promotion out of the Colony it is quite obvious that the salary which will be required to replace him will not be less than £1,000 for the reason that it will be necessary to secure an officer from the Unified Service and a salary of \$4,800 per annum is the appropriate point in the salary scale for such an officer. If on the other hand Mr. Macnie does return to the Secretariat, it is inequitable to pay him less than the salary he now receives in his present post. I think it is recognized the importance and amount of work he has done in the present post, and it is very desirable that the pensionable emolument of his substantive post should be raised. I move that the salary of the post be carried out at \$4,800.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Heape): In seconding this motion I

would like to explain to hon. Members that it is my intention when Mr. Macnie returns to the Secretariat in his substantive post, or if he does not and a new appointment is made, to recognize the office to this extent: Without casting any reflection on the holder of the acting appointment who gives his very best, the present acting officer is unable to cope with more than one-half of the work. I would rather like to explain in detail. My own view is that the Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary should deal with every paper that comes up from the Junior Section of the office, and those papers that he cannot deal with he should then submit to me. The Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary should be of a calibre to be able to act as Colonial Secretary. I should be able to travel about the country for some days or weeks and feel confident that the work is being kept up to date and that despatches are submitted to His Excellency and papers are going forward just as if I were there. One of the greatest handicaps in the present set up is that I really cannot leave my chair and go about the country. I do ask hon. Members to agree to the provision of a salary which will be suitable for a man properly qualified to fill that very important post. I therefore second the motion for an increase of the salary to £1,000 a year.

The CHAIRMAN: I would just like to comment on the discussion on the Colonial Secretary's Office. Hon. Members will remember that more than once in this Council I have called attention to the extraordinary pressure of work on the Secretariat and the time of the present occupant's predecessor, Mr. Owen, and how much he was handicapped through that. The other point is that the present holder of the post of Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary, Mr. Macnie, is now being paid \$4,800, as a Senior District Commissioner, and he should not lose by being placed in this present post. Another point, one that

came up when I was at home, is the staff of the Secretariat here. Mr. Macnie is obviously in a straight line for promotion at any time. Should he go, we would simply have to apply to the Unified Colonial Service for an officer from another Secretariat, and the figure we shall have to give him will be \$4,800, because it is that of the long grade in any of the larger Colonies. We have Mr. Macnie at the moment, but he may be called away to-morrow and we will have to make a change on his transfer. It is just that the substantive salary should be what he is actually getting.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I support this item wholeheartedly for the reason stated by the hon. the Colonial Secretary. At the same time I must express regret that it is not possible to have the services of this valuable officer in the Secretariat. On the other hand, why I have risen to speak is that I do want to urge on Government not to remove this particular officer from his present post. I happen to be in a position to know that he is doing very valuable work there. I think Your Excellency is aware that the Chamber of Commerce on more than one occasion has stated that he certainly has got on very well in the job, which is a new undertaking arising out of the war and which has several problems to deal with in connection with the question of supplies and distribution and, even allowing for mistakes from time to time, there can be no doubt that the job though difficult is being done very well indeed. We hope that the war will end very soon but in the meantime I do not think this Officer, if he is not removed on promotion elsewhere, should be removed. I trust that no delay will be caused in taking him back to his substantive post in view of all the circumstances.

The CHAIRMAN: The Colonial Secretary and myself are the people who are making the sacrifice all the time.

I had to say that to the hon. the Colonial Secretary when he came. I told him "Your Principal Assistant is not here."

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I cannot agree with the hon. Member who has just taken his seat. I feel that the offices should be filled by their substantive holders. If at this stage we are to increase the salary of the post to \$4,800 it should be filled by the officer. No one says this officer has not done a good job as Controller of Supplies. It is recognized that he took it on when it was new and has made a success of it, but I am yet to believe there is no one in this Colony capable to carry on the policy which he has laid down. He will be in the Colonial Secretary's Office and can be consulted in any case which arises presenting difficulty. There is another point. This officer's salary is being placed at \$4,800. What will happen to the acting officer? Does he not get payment according to the salary which is attached to the post?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The acting officer gets pay in accordance with the Colonial Regulations—a portion of the difference between the substantive pay and his. If the salary of the post is increased to £1,000, the present holder would get a proportion of that increase on his acting salary.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: And thereby up goes the expenses. That is what is causing a great deal of expense to this Colony. I am going to state under other Heads when the time arises that there are certain offices in which the substantive holders are doing other duties and others have to be employed to carry on all the time. I think the time has arrived when we should have these officers filling their substantive posts. I do not grudge the Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary his salary of £1,000. I think it is necessary as we want a good man. I have already intimated that Your Excellency has

taken on too much and, as stated, too much falls on the Colonial Secretary. What will happen if the officer is promoted? There will be a vacancy and we will have to wait for the new man. I have no objection to the increased salary, but if it is to be £1,000 the substantive officer should be called upon to fill the post immediately.

The CHAIRMAN: I agree, but I have not yet summoned up sufficient artillery to defeat the hon. Member for Central Demerara. I only wish I had, for I will willingly pass him back to the Secretariat tomorrow.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I am not going to sit here and hear statements made about an officer being indispensable. I know this officer. I have sat with him on committees, and I think him very capable. I have heard the remark made by the last speaker but one, but there is no one in the world who is indispensable. This officer from the position he occupies should get a salary of £1,000. I may mention that I have heard rumours which certainly embarrass the officer tremendously, and I desire to make it clear that there are other people in the Service quite as capable as that Officer. Do you mean to tell me that if death took away that officer we would not be in a position to fill this position? It is too ridiculous for words to say there is none. It seems that we come here to serve ourselves more so than anyone else when we make such statements. It is as the result of kind favours granted by officers that one hears about certain individuals being indispensable. The gentleman in question is undoubtedly an administrator, but his department is the most ill-spoken of in this Colony. There are instances, I know, that have come to my knowledge where persons had applied to that department in order to get certain things and could not get them. It has been brought to the notice of that officer—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of order! Anyone who administers Commodity Control in time of war and does his job properly cannot remain popular and his department is not well spoken of. There will always be some dissatisfaction.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I do not concur with that view. I would like to give an instance which is perfectly clear, and I can prove it. The items were at the railway station at Mahaicony and I had a witness to count them. Certain items were refused to people who needed them, but were granted to two persons whose names had just appeared in the *Official Gazette* as buying lands. They were given those items. That is an appalling statement to make, and I do not like to lash out at anyone. I do not attribute the blame to the Officer himself but to his department. I drew attention to it and was told that the people had bought 100 coils of barbed wire to fence their place, and not half of that quantity—

Mr. JACOB: To a point of order! Are we discussing barbed wire or the Colonial Secretary's Office?

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: This is an officer to be transferred to the Colonial Secretary's Office. I have no objection to the increase of his salary.

The CHAIRMAN: I must express gratitude to the hon. Member. I have another gun to turn on the hon. Member for Central Demerara.

Mr. EDUN: I also have something to say about this office. I remember very well indeed when Your Excellency told us in Finance Committee that the Colonial Secretary's post requires some one with experience of a continental country and you had in mind the present Officer who is now our Colonial Secretary. I agree with that and in the Civil List I did my utmost to grant as much money as was required. But, sir,

this is a continental country and its problems are varied, and I do expect, as the hon. the Colonial Secretary himself has just said, to see him travelling about the country interviewing people, seeing conditions for himself and reporting to the Head of the Administration. I expect him to have as a deputy in the Colonial Secretariat a man in whom he will have confidence, and I am prepared to vote £1,000 salary for that man. But I want to know this: Why did not the Anomalies Committee suggest this increased sum? Why was it left out? Why is it brought forward now?

The CHAIRMAN: I think the explanation in this particular case is that is a post on the Civil List; it was considered when the Council debated the Civil List, and it was decided to take it off and put it on the ordinary estimates.

Mr. EDUN: I am going to vote for a salary of £1,000, but, as I have said over and over, I am going to watch the Officer. I want this to be understood. Many things have been said regarding the post this Officer happens to occupy now. I am in constant touch with the public and can definitely state here that the Control Department of which this Officer is presently the Head stenches and stinks in the nostrils of the people. I have to tell this Council this: The Man Power Citizens' Association made application for machinery and types. I particularly took the opportunity to sign that application. It was refused. But I have learnt that this Officer went to Canada in order to purchase machinery for a big firm. He is a public servant and why should he do that when in my case he refused.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no knowledge of any such thing. Is it worth while flogging that out here or awaiting another opportunity to bring it officially or unofficially?

Mr. EDUN: As you desire it, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not want to stop the hon. Member from bringing it.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think I am correct in saying that all the items of the Colonial Emergency Measures have not yet been approved in Finance Committee. I think it was generally understood that all these items of Commodity Control would be further considered.

The CHAIRMAN: I was going to suggest that that is the position.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: While it is not correct to say that all the items were not approved at the last meeting of the Finance Committee there was general discussion of all the items, and I undertook to invite His Excellency to meet the Committee at the next or subsequent meeting for a general discussion of the Colonial Emergency Measures, and particularly the Control organization. I have written a letter to that effect but I do not know if it has reached His Excellency yet.

The CHAIRMAN: This is new to me but I am perfectly prepared to meet the Committee.

Mr. EDUN: I was pointing out that I expect to see the Colonial Secretary at his administrative post; I do not expect him to be in his office all the time writing minutes. I therefore agree with him that he should be given a deputy, but what I am afraid of is that if we add another £100 to the salary of this post we will find at the end of the budget that our deficit will be larger. For that reason I want to warn the Government. We must stop somewhere. I thought these increases would have stopped after the adoption of the Anomalies Committee's report.

Mr. JACKSON: I am supporting the increase on another ground. I take it, and I am satisfied that the office is such an important one that £1,000 is not too much to pay for it. I do not wish to say anything with regard to the substantive holder of the office. If I had desired to do so, and if this was the time and place, I would be able to give my testimonial to his able services in whatever capacity he is placed. All I want to say is that I support the item because I feel that anyone filling that important office, especially in view of what has been stated by the Colonial Secretary, should be paid a reasonable salary, and I do not think £1,000 would be too much for that office. Whether the substantive holder of the post returns to the Secretariat or not is not my concern. I want to be satisfied that the amount placed at the disposal of the Secretariat for that office is such as will entice a man capable of carrying out the duties of that office to go to it. That is the condition on which I support the increase. The office demands it. The officer who fills it should certainly be able to deputize for the Colonial Secretary if he went off visiting the country. I think an office of such importance should be filled by one capable of carrying out these responsible duties, and that he should be paid a reasonable salary.

Mr. JACOB: On the general principle, if the Colonial Secretary gets £1,650 it is definitely unfair to pay his deputy less than £1,000. As a matter of fact I think it should be more. I stated when the Civil List was being considered, that British Guiana was a first Class Colony now. I do not see why the Colonial Secretary should not get £2,000 and his deputy about £1,500, and so on. I think we should get up to the Jamaica and Trinidad standard. I therefore leave it to Government to decide what it will do. I have nothing to say for or against this item. Government has started and it must continue.

It was very refreshing to hear the Colonial Secretary say that he was casting no reflection on the officers but things were not very well. I said so over and over again in open Council, and I think I said last year that something was definitely wrong with the Secretariat. We have had the Head of the Department admitting now that something is wrong.

Mr. de AGUIAR: To a point of corrections—I do not think I heard the Colonial Secretary say that things were wrong. I do not want the hon. Member to get away with a thing like that. The implication of the hon. Member is that things were wrong.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What I implied was that I had to remain in my chair to see that things went right.

Mr. JACOB: If the Colonial Secretary is not there things do not go right. They do not go wrong but they do not go right. (laughter). I want to say something about the officers of Government but I do not know what to do. I was a member of the Committee which reported on the salaries of the Administrative, Professional and Technical Officers, and I attended every meeting. My friend, Mr. Dias, was also a member of the Committee, and Mr. Austin attended one or two meetings. I think Mr. Dias and I formed the impression that there was general dissatisfaction in the Service, which is borne out by par. 5 of the report which states:—

. . . The official members of the Committee, with the exception of the Chairman, were of the opinion that the following factors should be taken into account:—

- (a) The general level of salaries of administrative, professional and technical officers in British Guiana, in the Caribbean Colonies and throughout the Colonial Empire.
- (b) The absence of provision in British Guiana for

- (i) assisted passages for officers proceeding on leave, and
- (ii) Government quarters at a reasonable rental, amenities which are provided in many Colonies.
- (c) The impossibility of attracting suitably qualified officers unless salaries are kept in line with those in other Colonies. It is realised that officers of this type in the British Guiana service will take the first opportunity to go to Colonies offering higher remuneration.
- (d) In the Caribbean area, Trinidad and Jamaica have realised the necessity of improving their salary scales, thus bringing them more into line with those operating in other parts of the Colonial Empire. Consequently, new scales have recently been introduced—quite independently of the war bonus schemes applicable to Civil Servants in those Colonies.
- (e) That anomalies exist in the present scales in British Guiana.

We have had Your Excellency's visit to the Colonial Office. We have had it stressed that British Guiana must be rated as a first-class Colony, but only last night or the night before I heard over the radio that Trinidad's expenditure was 28 million dollars while British Guiana's is about 12 million dollars. I think we should raise the salaries of everybody here and put them in line with those of Trinidad. I want Government to think about what I have said.

Reverting to the permanent holder of the office I must say that he is an officer who has won the admiration of many people. He is not an officer who can be led by the nose or bossed very easily. I am afraid that many officers in the Service are being bossed by one or two people in the Service, and it is high time that the Secretariat should be bossed by no one at all.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Secretariat is under my control. Somebody must control it, and I am that person.

Mr. JACOB: I hope it will be controlled only by the Head of the Department. Prior to the coming of the present Head of the Department the Secretariat was being bossed, and I think Government was in a very sorry plight. I say nothing more.

The CHAIRMAN: We have general support for this amendment. I thought myself there were two sides to the question, and after a good deal of hesitation I authorized the Treasurer to move it. It has met with a fair amount of support.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

#### PUBLICITY BUREAU.

Mr. EDUN: I want to pay tribute to the good work being done by this office, and I am thinking whether we should not put some more work on the Publicity Officer, even if we have to pay him a little more. I think hon. Members are fully aware that the Superintendent of Government Archives, Mr. J. G. Cruickshank, is dead, and I am thinking whether the Archives cannot be amalgamated with the Publicity Bureau. I think some saving might be effected in that way, and I commend the suggestion to Government's consideration. In doing so I would take the opportunity to pay tribute to the good work done by the late Mr. Cruickshank when we come to that item, and also to the acting holder of the post, the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member (Mr. Roth.)

Mr. DIAS: I would like to ascertain whether this Department also employs married ladies? I have been so informed. This matter is going to create a good deal of discussion in this Council. People are becoming very dissatisfied.

The CHAIRMAN: I will look into it. I am not personally aware of it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. the Sixth Nominated Member said that the post of Superintendent

of Archives was being filled by the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member (Mr. Roth). I do not know of it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not aware of it. As far as I know the post is vacant, and surely no Member of the Council could fill it and retain his seat.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is why I mentioned the point.

Mr. EDUN: Isn't he Curator of the Museum?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but it is not a Government post. He is not paid by Government at all.

Mr. JACOB: If we are to have publicity and information in a comprehensive Department I think the suggestion a wise one, that the Publicity Officer should supervise the Government Archives and the Library. I think Government should consider that suggestion.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, we will be glad to. We will take a note of the suggestion that the vacant post of Archivist might in some way be included with publicity. In fact something has been put up to me but I have not yet dealt with it, and there is also the question of the re-employment of married ladies.

#### CUSTOMS.

Mr. JACOB: I move a reduction of \$100 on the whole head in order to say what I want to say. I did not comment on the high increase in the Secretariat vote; I just left it at that. In this case the total vote in respect of the Fixed Establishment shows an increase of \$13,931 for 1945.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but there is a decrease of about \$6,000 on other than the Fixed Establishment. You have to take the two together.

Mr. JACOB: I am not at all certain that this Department was properly administered in the past. I do not know what is the position now. I do not know whether the Comptroller of Customs is due to retire or not. I am not satisfied.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. D'Andrade has retired on pension, and we have been trying for a year to get a nominee for his position. I telegraphed again three weeks ago but I have got no reply.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Mr. D'Andrade is on leave prior to retirement. He will retire towards the end of the year.

Mr. JACOB: This is the biggest revenue-producing Department of the Government, and I am not satisfied at all that things are very well with this Department. In the Budget Statement we have, of course, the Colony's total expenditure as against the total revenue. Under "Customs" I cannot comprehensively deal with the subject, because I would like to deal with the entire expenditure. Page iii of the Estimate shows that the actual revenue of the Customs in 1943 was \$4,824,137, while the estimated revenue for 1945 is \$3,775,000, a shortage of over one million dollars. I have heard so much about planning. This morning Your Excellency was at pains to say that you are planning. What are we planning to do? Are we planning to reduce Customs revenue and to reduce everything, or to increase revenue and go forward? I hope we are attempting to go forward and not to go backward. Customs duties contribute a large proportion of our total revenue. While the actual revenue from Customs was \$4,824,137 in 1943, the revised estimate for 1944 is only \$4,061,000, and I doubt whether that figure is not very conservative. I congratulate those responsible. The Colonial Treasurer did not accept responsibility for the estimate of Customs revenue last year.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you mean that we estimate too low? We have estimated for 3½ million dollars next year, so we have put the estimate up a great deal.

Mr. JACOB: I will not accept the revised estimate for 1944 at all; that is another figure. I do not know why two million dollars was not put down. I am accepting the actual figure, and I wish to impress on Government that it should follow the actual and not the estimated figures. The actual revenue in 1943 was \$4,824,137. The years 1941 and 1942 may have been lean years, but 1943 was a fairly normal year. The year 1944 ought to be normal and 1945 ought to be better.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. Member will remember that we passed legislation reducing certain Customs duties to the extent of about \$364,000. Surely that must have some effect on the position.

Mr. JACOB: It might have some effect, but the difference is still over a million dollars, and shows a deficit here. Certain Members say that Government deliberately puts down very small revenue so as to let the ordinary man know that he cannot expect more salary or wages because the Colony is not making money. That is the technique.

The CHAIRMAN: You can say that we estimate too conservatively, but need you say it is done with that malicious intention?

Mr. JACOB: I do not quite go so far.

The CHAIRMAN: You say that Government has adopted underhand methods to discourage the people. That is accusing us of malice.

Mr. JACOB: I say discourage, but not underhand. Government cannot accept criticisms of that kind. I am



fully aware of that. I am so conscious of it that I will make it every time so long as I have the honour and privilege to represent some constituency here. Perhaps if I were on the other side it might be a different story.

The CHAIRMAN: You can say that we are deliberately conservative, but do not say that we do it for all sorts of bad purposes.

Mr. JACOB: The revised estimate for 1944 is over four million dollars, and we are going to receive nearly four million dollars next year. Why not make it two million dollars? I say further that I do not believe Government is collecting all the Customs duties and taxes that should be collected—not that it is deliberately done. I should certainly like to see a proper Committee appointed to go into the whole matter, to see that proper rates of duty are collected, and to see that certain items pay the full rates of duty. I think the acting Comptroller of Customs will appreciate what I mean. I think we should collect far more Customs revenue than we do, and a Committee should be appointed to go into the matter.

This reduction of one million dollars is going to put a different complexion on the whole Budget proposals we are discussing now, and I am asking Government not to repeat this next year. It has done this sort of thing in the last four years. I have here the Budget proposals for 1941 as submitted by the then Colonial Secretary. It anticipated a deficit of \$219,000, while the Budget for 1942 anticipated a deficit of \$402,000. Year after year we have had these deficits, and what is surprising is that we have accumulated a surplus of nearly six million dollars. Surely those responsible must think a little bit. Are we over-estimating expenditure—putting items on the estimate for the improvement of the country and not doing the work—and are we under-estimating revenue, so

that when there is low expenditure and high revenue there must be a resultant large surplus? What is the object?

I am satisfied that necessary improvements, necessary works to ameliorate the very chaotic and unsatisfactory condition in many places, should have been done and not content in spending the money estimated and putting the revenue so slow as to make the whole thing look so unfavourable. I have been accustomed in a small way for the past fifteen years to be looking at the estimated and actual figures in regard to various companies. It has been my life's work. I have not picked it up a few years ago. I say I do not congratulate Government on these figures, and we all know that figures can be made to read anything. Customs—I do not know who is responsible for it—you expect to yield \$1,000,000 in *Ad Valorem* Duties, less than the actual revenue in 1943. The only conclusion I can come to is that you are not going to do what you propose to do and all your plans are merely words; you are not going to import any lumber, any machinery or necessary materials, and so you cannot collect Customs Duties. There is something radically wrong.

Mr. deAGUIAR: The hon. Member who has just taken his seat very kindly stated that his remarks did not mean to suggest that the Government had any motive in framing a lower figure on the Estimates, and then he went on to make some general observations on the Budget particularly in regard to the Head under discussion. Had he confined his remarks to a general character there would have been no necessity for me to rise from my seat. I have only risen because like him I wish it to be placed on record that I have no desire to associate myself with any mean, disparaging remarks made about an Officer of this Government more especially on the eve of his retirement.

Mr. JACOB: I have made no such accusation at all.

Mr. deAGUIAR: The hon. Member stated—and I quote his words—“This Department has not been properly administered for some time.” It is because of the inference that I have risen to make this remark. I want to go further and say this: While it is true that the retiring age of this Officer will soon be reached, the hon. Member like myself has had the pleasure to be associated with this Officer for many years, and I challenge him to say that on any occasion he made that remark in the Officer’s presence or even within the last few months before he retired from the Service. It seems mean to me for any Member of this Council to make such remarks about an Officer because of the fact that he is not present in the Chamber. I wish strongly to dissociate myself from the observation made by the hon. Member that this Department has not been properly administered for some time. I think the time has come when Members in this Council must in no uncertain terms make certain Members understand that it is not only they who can get up and say mean and nasty things of persons and whenever that is done the others will get up and champion the cause of the men attacked who are not here.

To return to the subject under discussion, the hon. Member accused Government of putting up low estimates of revenue. To my mind, and knowing him indeed too well, what has fallen from the lips of the hon. Member in making remarks of that kind I can well and truly appreciate the reason. Although he has not given the reason he continues to say what is in his mind. Why utter those remarks? The hon. the Colonial Treasurer has stated that a recent measure introduced in this Council would mean a considerable reduction in revenue. The hon. Member himself was a party to that decision, because he was in the Council and sup-

ported it. In fact he voted in favour of it. I am not telling him a secret but this matter was not considered in Executive Council. I know from my own knowledge the reduction passed by this Council in normal circumstances will certainly reach \$500,000. I am speaking of Customs and am not introducing into the debate anything that is extraneous. I would invite the hon. Member to take his memory back to what the condition was in 1943, and ask him whether he could consciously say that in 1945 Government can hope to receive from Customs anything near the figure that was received in 1943. The hon. Member knows that under the Head “Customs” you have *ad Valorem* and specific rates of duty. He knows that in 1943 merchandise was imported in this Colony at a very high rate, and I know I am right when I say that as the result of the falling prices of low war risk insurance and general reduction in certain prices, the amount of revenue that is going to be collected under the head “Ad Valorem Duties” is going to be less than in 1943, and the hon. Member as a businessman knows that. Similarly the Bill of Entry tax levied on Invoices is bound to be less but not to the same extent because the tax is only 3 per cent. of the value, but it does mean a lot when the Ad Valorem rate is included at 15 and in some cases at 16 per cent.

There is one other point I would like to ask him to elucidate a little further because I think he owes a responsibility to the Government and certainly to the taxpayers. He went on to say that the proper rate of duty is not being collected by the Department. I would like to know whether in those remarks the hon. Member is suggesting fraud or whether he is suggesting that the Officers of the Department are inefficient and are not doing their work properly, if they are not collecting the proper rate of duty. After all they have a schedule. It is true that on certain occasions, very few, when the

Comptroller of Customs is called upon to interpret whether this or that item falls within certain items of the schedule. Generally speaking there is an import tariff covering nearly every item imported into this Colony. I would like to ask the hon. Member whether he is suggesting that there is fraud in the proper rate of duty not being collected or that the Officers charged with the responsibility of passing those entries in the Customs Department are inefficient. In such a case there is no doubt about it that immediate steps must be taken to remedy such a situation. I do not think the matter should be allowed to stop there. We should stop these wild, loose statements made by hon. Members in this Council, more especially when they refrain from furnishing the information to bring about improvement in the situation, otherwise we would be wasting time day after day listening to nothing less than insinuation of fraud and something personal when we should proceed to do something more of interest in the affairs of this country.

While I am on the floor I would like to take this opportunity to make one general observation in connection with an item which appears under several heads of the Estimates merely for the purpose of attracting Government's attention to something that has occurred to me as the result of my examination of these items with the view of something being done in order to bring about some saving in expenditure. I refer particularly to the item "Transport, Travelling and Subsistence Allowances." I believe they are estimated in one group. In the case of the Customs, my remarks do not apply particularly as the figure there is very small but it appears in several Heads of the Estimates. The point I wish to make is this: In these Estimates there is a very substantial increase in the item of Travelling and Subsistence Allowances. It is true that as a result of an increased service the expense of moving

Officers around in the country districts in particular is bound to be high, but what has failed in that control is this: Also as the result of the increase in the emoluments of the several Officers concerned, whether they be Class I Clerks or Technical Officers, the rate of Subsistence Allowance automatically goes up I think the time has come when this general question of Subsistence Allowance ought to be examined, unless I have a wrong idea or conception of what these subsistence allowances mean if Mr. A. who is a Grade II Officer travelling in the country and is allowed a certain amount per day as subsistence allowance, because this Council increases his status and makes him a Grade I officer or increases his salary scale, then automatically under some regulation he is allowed to draw more for subsistence allowance. That explains the reason why there is such a large increase under that Head. I do not think we can improve the salary conditions of these Civil Servants and at the same time because they fall into certain salary grades permit them to draw increased subsistence allowance to do the same work they did before. I am sure that on examination of these Estimates you will find there is a very substantial increase in that way. I think we ought to be fair. I am making the point because I think the whole question of Subsistence Allowances should be considered. I do not think it is proper that merely by putting officers into a different salary group they are to be allowed to draw this substantial increase of subsistence allowance. I mention that because I would be in sympathy if an officer suddenly has to be called away for a day or so travelling in the country and his expenses amount to so much that he be given that amount. We have a number of Officers of Government whose main duty is to travel. They are bound to travel. I say that if those officers are going to benefit by this substantial increase in subsistence allowance, it might well be that their subsistence allowance would be a very substantial addition to their sal-

ary. I do not think that was intended much as we wanted to improve their status. I mention it and, I think, I know the answer. It is because they have fallen outside the salary scale. The point I wish to make is this: Perhaps when that regulation was changed or when that scale of subsistence allowance was made up, it may well be that the number of officers that fell within the group was very small. I am going to urge, even if an answer is given, that the matter be not dropped. I want it examined after an answer is given.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I desire to answer the last speaker's last criticism. The reason for the increase in the subsistence allowances is the 25 per cent. grant on wages that has been given within the last year. The hon. Member is quite right, the increase in the salary scale also has an effect for the reason that the General Orders provide for the rates of subsistence allowances being fixed in accordance with certain salaries, and I quite agree with him that because an officer suddenly gets a salary scale which takes him above the limit he should not suddenly get an increase of subsistence allowance. What is necessary is a revision of those rates to bring them in line with present salary scales. You may find that some subordinates get a subsistence allowance to which they are not entitled by virtue of their position. I promise the hon. Member to examine it and bring the matter before Government.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I would like to ask whether in the meantime in view of the promise that payment of the allowances under the new rates could be held up pending the examination. I ask that because I am a little worried about your precedent. An officer may well come and say Government has established a precedent by paying this money.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is an extreme case. Take the Police

Force. The salaries were increased since January, 1944. A large number had increased rates and increased rates of subsistence allowance as the result of their increased salary. Whatever we do there must be a deliberate change. We cannot hold up the application of a General Order.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to say that the mileage and number of days travelled by Officers in this Colony are vastly different to that in Trinidad and Jamaica.

Mr. JACOB: I think the difference between the hon. Member for Central Demerara and myself is that he talks about persons and defending them. I talk about measures not men. I made the broad statement that there is something wrong about the administration, and I went on to say that I did not know who was responsible—whether the Colonial Treasurer or the Comptroller of Customs. I want the hon. Member for Central Demerara and the Treasurer to look at these figures again. In 1943 the Estimate was \$3,000,000 but it actually turned out to be \$4,824,000—over 1½ million dollars more. For 1944 the estimate approved is \$3,080,000. My hon. Friend just talks and does not look at the figures. The revised Estimate for 1944 is out at \$4,061,000—another \$1,000,000 more, and the Estimate for 1945 is out at \$3,775,000. If you are budgeting, I am correct in assuming that the 1945 figure is \$1,000,000 out too.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I would like to make an appeal for the Supernumerary Constables and Messengers. I notice they are down for \$20 a month and some of them have a wife and children. That pay is really too small. They ought not to be paid less than \$360 per annum.

The CHAIRMAN: You think the minimum should be higher!

Mr. CRITCHLOW: Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: We had some decision on that. The point you have made was actually included in the Anomalies Committee's report and it was approved that the minimum should not be less than \$360.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is the Senior Grade.

The CHAIRMAN: We will have it gone into.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I was very sorry the hon. Member for North-Western District took the opportunity under the head "Customs" to go into the nature of the Budget. I am not going to make the slightest excuse for any variation in the Estimates between the estimated revenue and the actual revenue of the last few years. I cannot apologise for it because these estimates had to be framed on factors which simply did not exist. In 1942 when framing the 1943 Budget we had warnings of every description with regard to shortage of shipping and supplies. We were told definitely that we had to look for a reduction in the volume of importations and the Estimates were framed with these considerations in mind.

As regards the general criticism, I anticipated what the hon. Member said and I made a statement on that in the Budget Statement. I stand on that. I am not a prophet and I am not going to prophesy. As I said last year, I am perfectly willing to take the advice if the hon. Member persuades this Council to resolve that these Estimates be framed on his advice. \$4,061,000 is the revised estimate for the year 1944. I am assured by the Comptroller of Customs that is not an outside figure and if we get more it would be very little. If you look at the details of Estimates of Revenue, you would see that the principal item of Customs Duties is Item 2—"Specific duties (excluding Wines, Spirits and Malts)." That has risen from \$1,935,712, actual revenue in 1943, to \$2,000,000 as revised

estimate for 1944, and we have carried out the same \$2,000,000 as the estimate for 1945. But the reduction comes in item 1—"Ad Valorem Duties." There the actual revenue for 1943 is \$1,833,693 and the revised estimate for 1944 is \$1,200,000 and the estimate for 1945 is \$1,000,000. It is under that item that the effect of the recent reduction in the Customs Tariff occurs. The hon. Member for Central Demerara gives \$500,000 as his estimate of the loss. That means a reduction of \$333,000. Does the hon. Member really seriously believe that \$1,000,000 is too low a figure to be put in for estimate purposes.

Mr. JACOB: \$1,000,000 out of four?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am speaking on sub-head 1 where the revenue for this year is less than the revised estimate for 1944. Do you seriously believe the figure should be higher than that? I think not. There are smaller items lower down. Bill of Entry Tax.—the actual revenue in 1943 was \$631,069 and the revised estimate for 1944 is \$560,000 and the estimate for 1945, is \$500,000. Here again the effect of the situation is to have a general drop in values and accordingly a drop in the Bill of Entry Tax. I would like the hon. Member to point out what Heads should be increased. On this occasion I would let him be the prophet and not me. The Customs Department is not primarily responsible for these Estimates.

Mr. JACOB: I gathered from your statement last year that the estimates of the Department were submitted to you.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is what I am saying now. They are submitted to the Treasurer, and if he does not agree with the figures he asks the Comptroller to consider them with him, and makes any variations he thinks fit. That has been done on this occasion. In fact I have made several alterations in the revised estimates after the Comp-

troller submitted them, so I hope they will not be used against the Comptroller as foundation for a charge of faulty administration.

On the general question of the Customs the criticisms have been well answered by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar), but I was horrified to hear the bald statement made that wrong duties are being collected by the Customs. What is the evidence for that? Can the hon. Member produce a single voucher to prove that wrong duties are being collected? I can assure the hon. Member that intensive checking of the Customs calculations by the Audit Department, apart from any internal audit, is extremely carefully done, and I think you can rely on the Audit Department to point out the slightest infraction of the rates of Customs duties.

Generally speaking, I do not think there is any criticism of the head itself. All this has been talk on the Budget. As regards the question raised by the hon. Mr. Critchlow, the salaries of messengers have been framed on the basis of the recommendations of the Anomalies Committee which have been accepted by this Council, but administratively Government has made slight variations which give them a distinct advantage. The salary scale for junior messengers is \$240—\$360, and for senior messengers \$360—\$480, and it has been decided that after a junior messenger reaches the top of his grade (\$360), and he remains there for 3 years without getting promotion, he will automatically go to the senior grade. That provision has been applied with some benefit to a number of those messengers. In the particular instance referred to by the hon. Member the average is well up to \$300.

The CHAIRMAN: The supernumerary constable is at his maximum. This evening, if the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. J. A. Luckhoo) is here, we will start with Education, if not, with the estimates for the Essequibo Boys' School.

The Council resumed and adjourned until 8.30 p.m.

#### NIGHT SESSION.

8.30 p.m.—

The Council resumed. Messrs. Lee and Roth present.

The PRESIDENT: When we adjourned shortly after 4 o'clock I said we would take Education if the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. J. A. Luckhoo) was present. We have not yet heard from him, so I propose that we go into Committee in the usual way and take the next head.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates.

#### FIRE PROTECTION.

Mr. LEE: Is it the intention of the Georgetown Town Council to take over fire protection of the City, and if so, when?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: May I suggest to the hon. Member that his question might be addressed to the Town Council?

Mr. LEE: I do not think my friend is right. This is Government expenditure and I should be able to find out from Government whether it is the intention of the Town Council to take over the fire protection of the City. I would like to have an answer.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no personal knowledge but I can ask either the Colonial Treasurer or the Colonial Secretary.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am not aware of any intention whatsoever, either on the part of the Government or the Municipality, to change the existing arrangement by which, as the Council knows, the Government pays one half and the Town Council the other half. The same arrangement holds good in New Amsterdam. It has been a long-

standing arrangement for many years. I have not the slightest knowledge where the hon. Member got the idea that there is to be a change.

Mr. LEE: I thank the Treasurer for the answer. Now that I see certain mechanics are being placed on the Fixed Establishment and will be entitled to pension, I would like to know whether the Town Council will also contribute to their pensions.

The CHAIRMAN: Presumably they were there before. It is only an increase of the salary scales.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Perhaps I may be able to answer that question. There is a proportionate payment by the Town Council, as explained by the Colonial Treasurer, on a 50-50 basis, and as far as I know as a member of the Town Council I have never heard of any such intention by the Town Council to take over the Fire Brigade. There has been correspondence between Government and the Town Council on a matter of a broader issue—the question of licences, etc.

Mr. JACOB: I do not think that is an answer to the hon. Member's question at all. If the Town Council contributes half of the expenditure my friend has asked whether it contributes to the pensions too? Surely these officers will enjoy pension rights sooner or later. What is Government doing about the matter? Is Government paying all the pensions?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The whole of the Fire Brigade is pensionable—all the constables are, so that it is nothing new. As far as I recollect the question was raised some years ago as to whether the Town Council should or should not contribute towards the pensions, but I cannot recollect exactly what the decision was. I do not think any final decision was reached. At the moment I know that nothing is paid in respect of pensions by

the Town Council, and the largest expenditure is on the Brigade itself, not on the mechanics.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I take it that they are asking who is responsible for fire protection in the City? Is it the responsibility of the local Government or the Municipality? I think if the question was put in that form we might proceed a little bit further. It would open the door to a number of other questions.

Mr. LEE: My concern is whether the Colony is liable for the entire pensions of the Fire Brigade or the Town Council should not contribute one-half.

The CHAIRMAN: Can the Treasurer answer that?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have answered it, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I presume Government is liable for the whole pensions.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I said that these men are employed by Government. They are down on the Government estimates, and Government is liable for pensions. At the moment there is no agreement with the Town Council that it should contribute toward pensions. I said also that the question was raised some years ago and I do not think any final decision was reached. The fact remains that Government pays the pensions and the Town Council does not.

Mr. JACOB: I suggest that the matter should be pursued.

The CHAIRMAN: You think the Town Council ought to be called upon to contribute?

Mr. JACOB: Speaking off-hand I do not know whether the Town Council should not pay the greater proportion. After all it is Georgetown that is bene-

fitting and not the entire country, and as the representative of a country constituency I do not see why my constituency should pay for the fire protection of Georgetown alone. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight), who tried to answer the question but left the matter in the air, as he usually does, represents the Town Council in this Council. It would appear so.

The CHAIRMAN: We will take a note of it and see if we can squeeze a little more out of the Town Council. It all depends on the wording of the law.

Mr. JACOB: The law should be amended.

Item b *Chief Motor Mechanic*, \$2,100.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is proposed to increase this item by \$300 to \$2,400. This officer has served, I think, for the last 16 years at the same salary, and having regard to the increased emoluments given to officers of the same status in other Departments it has been approved that the Council should be invited to increase his salary to \$2,400.

Item, as amended, put and agreed to.

Item c — *Chief Engineer* (\$960 to \$1,200 by \$60), \$1,020.

Item d—*3 Motor Mechanics* (\$600 by \$30 to \$720 by \$60 to \$960), \$2,490.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I think that if we take these two items together there is an increase of the number by one. I do not know whether it is considered desirable that there should be an increase in the number of mechanics in the Brigade. There may be strong reasons for it and I would like to know whether that is so. Evidently *c* was elevated from *d* with an improvement in the scale. In order to improve the

status of one deserving case the number below appears to have been increased, and I do not think that is the intention.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. Member is being a little clever. If he looks at the 1944 Estimates he will see that there were then a Chief Motor Mechanic and 3 motor mechanics above the line, and 8 motor mechanics below the line. This year we have a Chief Motor Mechanic, a Chief Engineer, and 3 motor mechanics above the line, and 7 motor mechanics below the line. It simply means that one man has crept up above the line and there is a reduction by one of those below the line. The total number remains the same.

The CHAIRMAN: We ought to have had a note on the other page to show where it came from.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Possibly that would have been clearer. They were revised by Council resolution based on a Council Paper.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I think I will have to pick a little hole in my friend's argument when he refers to a Council Paper. The Council Paper would have nothing to do with it. It would suggest that the salary of the post be increased, and that would be accepted. Perhaps I may be allowed to develop the point I had in mind at the beginning. If you look at these estimates you will find that there are altogether 10 motor mechanics on the land section and 6 on the river section. In addition we have a number of constables. I would like to know whether these mechanics are also constables, or whether they are men drawn from other walks of life. It seems to me that perhaps it would be convenient if your mechanics were also constables. There is no work-shop at all, and I take it that their duties are to keep the vehicles in good running order and condition, which is, of course, very desirable, because a fire does not wait.



It seems to me there is a deliberate waste of man-power to have 10 mechanics on the land section and at the same time have a complete force of policemen.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think that during this year the Commissioner of Police put up proposals for the re-organisation of the Brigade, but he agreed to postpone it to a later date. If the hon. Member desires it I would get the papers and go into the matter with him. The suggestion of the hon. Member that there is a wastage of man-power, and that the mechanics should be constables, has already been reviewed by the Commissioner of Police.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Anyway I do not think I should allow the hon. Member to get away with it. There were 25 employees in 1944 and there will be 25 in 1945. There is no increase but a change in the grading and a change in the number on the Pensionable Establishment. That is set out in the report which the Council considered and then passed a resolution.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The proposal to re-organize the Brigade is not being pursued at the moment, but it is on paper and can be pursued.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I have no desire to press the point at this stage.

#### ESSEQUIBO BOYS' SCHOOL.

Item a — *Head Master* (\$2,160 by \$120 to \$2,640), \$2,350.

Mr. FERREIRA: I observe that the Head Master draws a salary below that of the Second Mistress of the Bishops' High School. One would have thought that a job of this type requires a skilled person, someone with tact, and that the salary scale would have been higher than it is.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think I can answer that. There is a suggestion that the scale should be

increased. When the scheme for the erection of cottages is put through the staff will have to be re-organized completely. I do not think Government has come to any decision on the question of the salary of the Head Master, but it is under consideration.

Mr. JACOB: The comparison made by the hon. Member is not very happy or appropriate. The Head Master gets free quarters, and in addition I think the cost of living in the country is slightly cheaper than in Georgetown. Again, the Second Mistress at the Bishops' High School possesses University qualifications. I therefore do not think the comparison is very happy.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the comparison is very apt. It is a different kind of job, and the Head Master has a very good home indeed.

Item 8—*Bakery*, \$2,200.

Mr. de AGUIAR: With respect to this item I see a marginal note: "Due to increasing demands for bread from customers, staff and Suddie Hospital." I can understand a demand from the staff, but "customers" is rather a wide term. Am I to understand that the School is engaged in trade? There is an increase in the item and there should be a corresponding increase in revenue, but I find that the revenue is about the same figure—\$2,500.

Whilst I am on the question of revenue I will take the opportunity to raise another point I have in mind. Under item 16 I see that a new item has crept in—Maintenance of Estate, \$2,000. I do not know what it means.

The CHAIRMAN: We have put up the estimate of revenue by \$6,044.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Yes, but there is also the rubber experiment. Of course there is this item of maintenance of estate and also the expenditure on the rubber experiment, and I do not know where we are going.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the Finance Committee agreed to

the increase on the recommendation of the Malaria Expert.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Yes, but that is under "Maintenance."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps it is a wrong definition.

Mr. LAING (Commissioner of Local Government): I think the word "maintenance" is right. The position is that we have to cut down a lot of bush growing on the foreshore, on the advice of the Malaria Expert, because malaria was on the increase in the school. We have to keep that area clear, and this \$2,000 is merely to maintain that part of the estate where the school building stands at the present time. It will be used also for the area surrounding the school as far back as the land now used as a pasture.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that all it covers?

Mr. LAING: It will cover a great distance behind the school in order to keep the whole area clear.

The CHAIRMAN: How was it done before?

Mr. LAING: It was not done before, and that is the cause of the increase of malaria. Since the number of boys declined it has been impossible to maintain the estate with the number of boys in the school. The sum of \$2,000 is to provide labour, apart from the labour of the boys.

The CHAIRMAN: I quite agree that it was very badly kept when I first saw it in 1940, especially the land between the school and the Esse-qui-bo river. There was a patch of bush which was causing fever not only in the school but in the surrounding land. How do they pay for the clearing?

Mr. LAING: That is paid for from the small vote granted in 1944 which was the capital cost of clearing the

bush. The sum of \$2,000 per annum is for the maintenance of the area.

The CHAIRMAN: It seems a very large sum.

Mr. de AGUIAR: We are getting on in this matter. I recall that the Finance Committee was approached in connection with the report received in the malarial condition of this particular place. My friend on my left is correct that the Finance Committee agreed that in the circumstances some immediate steps should be taken, and a sum of money was voted, but I have no recollection of any reference being made to the fact that there was going to be a recurrent annual charge. It seems to me that opportunity is being taken to introduce an item under this head involving a recurrent annual charge, and the matter ought to be investigated a little more. Not because the Council agreed to spend money on the clearing of the land so as to improve the condition of the estate there should be a new item introduced here involving an annual expenditure of \$2,000, unless we have further information on the subject.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The amount asked for in the report was \$4,000. It was agreed to put \$2,000 on supplementary estimate in 1944 and insert another \$2,000 in the estimates for 1945. I do not think it is the intention to spend \$2,000 every year.

The CHAIRMAN: Is this the balance of the \$4,000 recommended?

Mr. ROTH: It seems rather a pity that the amount is placed on the Estimates as "Maintenance," because naturally one does not expect the buildings to be repaired every year. The distinct understanding in Finance Committee, as the hon. Member for Central Demerara said, was that the amount was wanted for a specific purpose. If the amount is being passed on the Estimates as "Maintenance"—the marginal note being: "Estimated amount required for maintaining the estate in good

order during the year”—naturally one is going to expect to see that amount in the 1946 Estimates also. At least, I think, the title should be altered and not placed as “Maintenance of Estate.”

The CHAIRMAN: Reconditioning of the Estate?

Mr. ROTH: Otherwise argument will come up against it in the 1946 Estimates.

Mr. LEE: I think I agree with Government and Mr. Laing. If the Malaria Expert says the place should be kept clean in order to prevent the spread of malaria to the boys, I feel it should be an annual charge. Although the Finance Committee has passed it for two years, I feel that having the boys there you have to keep them healthy. I will support this charge every year. Why are you carrying the boys there to contract malaria?

Mr. ROTH: The hon. Member has overlooked the item “Sanitation and Drainage,” which will cover the point he has raised.

Mr. LEE: That money is not sufficient according to the Malaria Expert. The bush is growing all the time and must require money to keep it down otherwise it will continue to grow. The expenditure of this \$4,000 will be useless.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I do not think the hon. Member understands the position. Is he suggesting that it is going to cost this Government \$2,000 yearly to keep the bush down. The capital expenditure is \$4,000. Is he suggesting that it will require a recurrent annual charge of \$2,000? I am afraid the hon. Member is a little peculiar in his economics.

Mr. LEE: I did not say it will require \$2,000 annually. What I do say is that I will support Government and pass an item for the expenditure to keep the bush down in order to prevent the spread of malaria.

Mr. JACOB: I think the explanation given by the hon. the Colonial Secretary is correct. It was agreed to spend \$2,000 in 1944 and the balance in 1945. No one says that Government has an exceedingly good case. Government did not say it is going to spend another \$2,000 next year.

The CHAIRMAN: It is put in the note—“during the year.”

Mr. JACOB: Next year Government may come back and say it wants \$500 in order to maintain the estate. I do not see what my hon. Friend is quibbling about.

The CHAIRMAN: I will put it under “Reconditioning the Estate” and bring it back again. In that case it will be put down as an extraordinary charge. It does seem a good deal for Maintenance. My opinion is that it should be extraordinary expenditure instead of recurrent.

Mr. JACOB: I do not see the word “recurrent” here.

The CHAIRMAN: In making up the Estimates you have the first block of items or “Personal Emoluments” and the second block of items or “Other Charges.” These are recurrent. Other items the expenditure on which is going to occur this particular year and not in another year are usually put under extraordinary expenditure. If you put an item under “Other Charges” it tends to repeat itself the next year.

Mr. de AGUIAR: That is my point. I intend to keep a strict eye on it.

The CHAIRMAN: I have been accustomed to pick out all the extraordinary items and show them separately. I am inclined to agree that this seems a large sum for a recurrent expenditure. Subject to what the Local Government may decide, it may

not be brought up next year. With that change of title—"Conditioning of Estate"—I put the sub-head.

Question put, and agreed to.

FOREST DEPARTMENT.

*Item 10—Forest Improvement Operations, \$3,200.*

Mr. FERREIRA: Last year I raised this point and I again raise it this year that I do not think the work of the Forest Department, a part of it, should be the re-afforestation of the various timber lands in the Colony. At present no effort is being made, so far as I am aware, in the Berbice area and, I think, it is very wrong. Some time last year there was published in the local papers a description of what was being done in Scotland. They thought it essential to re-afforest areas. We have a Forest Department expending \$40,000 a year. I think that Department should set about re-afforesting our areas so that the time will not come when a timber country like this is void of timbers. I raised the point last year and I do not think anything has been done about it.

The CHAIRMAN: The subject is rather a technical one. My own memory of papers on Forestry is that re-afforestation in this Colony is not by any means necessary. Re-afforestation here is by natural reproduction. That is one point. The other point is that many of the countries you read about as having re-afforestation schemes aim at a certain percentage of the total area in forest and if the percentage is below that they have re-offorestation schemes to bring it up. If on the other hand the figure in a forest country is above the optimum then re-afforestation is not considered necessary. At the present day our country is a long way above the maximum. The optimum figure of re-afforestation in countries I know is 15 and as high as 20 per cent. We are above that. We are well over 50 per cent of forest.

Perhaps I may call on the hon. the Colonial Secretary as Chairman of the Forest Board to support that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency is quite right. This point was raised yesterday and I made a similar reply.

Mr. FERREIRA: If that is so, do we need to have technical assistance? We should then confine ourselves to the marketing of local timbers and dispense with our technical assistants and our experimental station.

The CHAIRMAN: A great deal of afforestation is done?

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): I am a little bit taken back. Sub-head 10—"Forest Improvement Operations"—relates to re-afforestation which is being carried on the whole time. There is no question of it not being done. For quite a few years after we had started it was not done for the simple reason that only research had been done to find out how to do it. It would have been a sheer waste of money to do it then, but since 1937 we have been doing it regularly within the limit of our funds every year. This year we have done 4,700 acres. Hon. Members must remember that in a mixed tropical forest you do not plant things and do not have "Congo Pump" growing up fast and have to be cut every year. I would like to explain that growing trees and crops is a little different to growing wheat or sugar cane. If a planter is going to grow a field of cane he has quite simple problems to consider. He has to take the value of his land for about one year, the cost of maintaining that land for about a year, such as drainage, tillage and things like that. He has to take the cost of sowing, the cost of reaping and the cost of marketing for just about one year. When he has added up these expenses and has taken the money which he has obtained from his crop and has subtracted the one from

the other, which is perfectly simple, he has his profit and loss account. The Forest Officer is not in that fortunate position. If he is given a piece of land and told to re-forest it, he has to prepare the land and write down the cost of that. Then he takes the rental value of the land and puts that down to the cost of that. He digs the land or makes the necessary holes in it, plants it and tends that plantation. He does not at the end of the year reap his crop, subtract one from the other and show his profit and loss account. That crop is not going to be reaped for anything from forty (40) to 150 years, and the cost of maintenance of that plantation is mounting up against him at compound interest the whole time. Therefore no Forest Officer can afford as a business or commercial matter to take land and plant trees in that way unless the crop is going to be very valuable or the cost of tending is going to be very low, and in a tropical forest that method cannot be adopted. It will not be economical unless there are other over-riding reasons. The proprietor of the forest, which normally is Government's, may go to the Forest Officer and tell him not to grow trees on a large catchment area because it must supply an even flow of water for a City. That is a different thing, and various things like that may happen. We may tell the Forest Officer to prevent the forest on a hillside destroying the agricultural land below. If that is the case, the cost is not counted as a commercial proposition. It is important whether it is worth while to get water from the catchment area or to prevent the agricultural land from being covered by erosion or debris.

In a mixed tropical rainy forest which we have in all South America, you have the trees all competing with each other in an endeavour to live—a great number of them. If you go into any particular place you may find maybe 200 or 300 or even more different species on the ground in a definite proportion, and that proportion does not exist by mere chance but exists because every specie has some little peculiar

duty of its own which either helps or hinders the other. All these species fight together and the net result of this struggle for existence is a certain proportion between the different species. In that area there are one or two or three species of trees which are valuable and the rest is largely in the way. Go into a greenheart forest. The greenheart tree is valuable and there may be silverballi and other trees in the way all fighting and struggling and preventing from growing up the trees which we want. As the result of this natural struggle which is going on there is a definite balance between the species, and very little money is needed for re-forestation. What the Forest Officer does is this: He studies all the natural peculiarities of the trees to the point where he can go into the forest and by doing some very simple comparatively cheap operation he can upset the balance of Nature sufficiently as to give an advantage to the particular kind of trees he wants to grow. It is called Forest Improvement Operation, and it is being done out here regularly every year. The amount or area done every year varies according to the nature of the country. Sometimes it is more expensive and sometimes less; it actually works out at present at eighty-three cents (83c.) per acre. By doing just those little things we will very greatly increase the proportion of greenheart in that group in the next generation. As far as we can calculate it so far ahead, the quantity of greenheart will be multiplied slightly more than four times. If hon. Members could see the original experimental area behind the Mazaruni Station probably they would understand it better.

Take a piece of absolutely virgin forest and get cleared about seven acres which we improve and experiment on. You put greenheart seeds in the ground and by the time you can go down the sides of that area you see the little seedlings growing up. On either side you have to push your way

between them. When the greenheart trees are three feet you cannot walk through to them as the growth of ordinary forest in front of you is up to 20 feet high so that you do not know what happens. That is what we are doing and have been doing ever since the experimental work reached a stage where we knew we could do it successfully, and the earlier the operational work we do in that way we lower down loss. Every three years you measure and account to find out what the effect is, and there is no doubt the effect is successful. I would like to say curiously enough how we work out a greenheart forest and not taking all trees. A person has an order for timber for Europe and he goes only for straight trees. The result is that when the area has been worked and abandoned it usually happens that no more than two-thirds of the greenheart has been taken out of it. The effect of what has been done is literally a rough and ready method and improvement fails. We had a very interesting instance of that when work started in an area taken up in 1934, where the forest had been worked by such methods from 1867 to 1869 and where when it was given up some of the old squared logs were still lying in the forest. The interesting thing was that when the forest was worked again in 1934 we actually obtained more greenheart than when the old methods were used. The stumps are still there and it has been possible to reconstruct that forest. It is interesting to see what it was in those days and what it is now.

When the hon. Member says this work of improvement is not being done, he is not correct. It is being done under sub-head 10—"Forest Improvement Operations." When I was asked by Sir Wilfrid Jackson when Colonial Development Welfare was first on the tapis, if I were given \$10,000 more than I got what I would do with it, I at once said \$8,000 would be for Forest Improvement

Operations because it would keep up with the felling. The vote you see for "Experiments and Research" is very closely linked up with that work. Apart from the fullest survey most of the money you see on the Estimates for field work is either directly or closely indirectly connected with the regeneration of the forest.

The CHAIRMAN: In the sense of large re-afforestation schemes?

Mr. WOOD: Afforestation is the converting of land which is not forest into forest. We have more forest than we can use.

The CHAIRMAN: We have had a very lucid discussion on timber. When you talk of re-afforestation in Scotland, I have just seen it when I happened to go home. Thousands of acres, many hundreds of square miles, of timber had been simply cut out. That will need a very large scale re-afforestation plan. Nothing of that kind has happened here yet.

Mr. FERREIRA: What I said was that we have been told that 4,300 acres of forest have been done. I do ask that a few acres be done in the County of Berbice, I take it that other Members are thoroughly satisfied with the experiment.

The CHAIRMAN: Where do you want your forest done?

Mr. FERREIRA: From my personal knowledge it can be re-afforested.

The CHAIRMAN: I went a few miles outside New Amsterdam and could not see my way through.

Mr. FERREIRA: That was bush.

#### WOOD PULP SCHEME.

Mr. LEE: We have heard so much about Mr. Evan Wong's scheme

for a wood pulp industry. I would like to know if this Government has put up that scheme to the experts who have come out here or to the Imperial Government, and whether we can expect anything to be done in that direction either by a grant or by the Imperial Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Your neighbour beside you knows a certain amount about it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: When Professor Simonsen, Sir Robert Robertson and Dr. King were here we had a meeting at Government House with the Conservator of Forests and others, and as the result of that meeting I sent forward a despatch on the subject of Mr. Evan Wong's wallaba wood pulp scheme. I also sent a confidential report and all documents to London for Professor Simonsen to go into on his return to England.

Mr. LEE: Under sub-head 13—"Timber Seasoning Suspense Account"—I see the item "(a) Timber purchases, \$22,400". May I enquire from Government if certain timbers are still being purchased at the Mazaruni Station?

Mr. WOOD: The bulk of timber we purchase when we can do so is from the saw-mills in Georgetown where the principal quantity of timber is obtainable, but wherever we can we get timber also from the saw-pits at Bartica and the saw-mill up there. We do not buy logs. We buy boards and season those boards for re-sale to the Public Works Department in order that Government should have cured timber.

The CHAIRMAN: It is an account which balances itself. \$22,400 is more or less what the total should be. There is no loss on it.

Head agreed to.

#### FIRE BRIGADE PENSIONS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I have the opportunity without

actually recommitting the Head,—“Fire Protection”, to make an explanation with respect to the question raised by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) on the question of pensions? I have since been able to look up the papers and to find that my recollection was perfect. What happened was that on the retirement of one subordinate employee, the question of the proportion to be paid by the Town Council against that pension was raised, and after some consideration the Town Council agreed to pay 50 per cent. of the pension to the subordinate employees other than police constables. The only difficulty was the Town Council does not pay lump sum as Government does pay lump sum and gratuity, and consequently some variation in the percentage was arranged. Nevertheless Government gets 50 per cent. on the reduced pension of any subordinate employee of the Fire Brigade who has retired. I have here the estimates of the Town Council for next year and I see that the moiety of the pensions of employees of the Fire Brigade amounts to \$716. Therefore the question has been settled, that a portion of the pensions is contributed by the Town Council.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am able to confirm that. When I made the statement that the Town Council contributes on a 50—50 basis I knew what I was saying. I endeavour to make statements which are absolute facts and not mis-statements. Perhaps the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) is unaware of that principle. I was Mayor at the time when the question was raised and we came to a settlement. The hon. Member for North-Western District was kind enough to say that my statements are usually in the air. I can only say that the statement I made is confirmed by the *Official Gazette*, and I do not know whether the hon. Member will consider it honourable to retract the the statement he made.

Mr. JACOB: I do not quite understand this reference. I think the whole Council was satisfied that the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) did not give a complete answer to the question raised by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee). I merely intervened to point out that while the Town Council may be paying 50 per cent. of the salaries of the Fire Brigade I did not know that it was contributing to their pensions, and I gathered from the hon. Member that the pensions were being paid wholly by the Government. I do not understand what is being said now. If Government pays only half the pensions then the matter is at an end. Government undertook to go into the matter and see whether the Town Council was contributing. Are we to understand that in addition to receiving half of the yearly expenditure on salaries Government is receiving from the Town Council half of the sum paid as pensions?

The CHAIRMAN: The answer is "Yes," I think, with certain qualifications. The lump sum payments are entirely borne by Government.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: What I tried to explain was that as the Town Council does not pay the lump sums it pays a greater proportion than 50 per cent.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am not surprised that the hon. Member is not prepared to apologize. I always apologize when I find that I am wrong.

Mr. JACOB: I am afraid I do not understand. The onus was on Government to give a specific answer. Government has now done so.

Mr. WIGHT: Why should the hon. Member attack me?

#### LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

Mr. EDUN: Sir, only this afternoon I learnt that the Commissioner of

Labour, who was seconded to this Colony from the Ministry of Labour in England, is leaving us. I want to take this opportunity to pay a warm tribute from the trade union which I happen to represent. Mr. Colin Fraser has been responsible for putting trade unionism in this Colony on a very sound footing indeed, and he has been ably assisted by his Deputy. I know that we shall miss him very much. I do not think too many words need be said by me, but I want to tell every hon. Member of this Council how grateful the trade unions are to Mr. Fraser, and that we will remember him for some time—perhaps for all time—in this country. I think that we trade unionists will have perhaps one more opportunity to meet him tomorrow to say "Goodbye." That is my tribute to that worthy officer, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I am glad to hear what the hon. Member has said. I will certainly convey your good wishes to the Commissioner who is leaving tomorrow morning.

Mr. LEE: May I enquire whether it is the intention of this Government to get another officer from the Ministry of Labour to continue this work? As far as I know the Deputy Commissioner of Labour was chosen as a result of certain representations made by the trade unions. I feel, and my Union feels, that if we could get another officer from the Ministry of Labour he would be able to carry on the good work that has been done by Mr. Fraser. At the inception of the Department very good work was done by Mr. Laing, and it has been continued by Mr. Fraser until now. I would be glad to hear from Government whether it proposes to take steps to get another officer from the Ministry of Labour.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope I shall be able to make an announcement very soon. I cannot do so at this moment. One thing we should realize is the difficulty in getting a man from England at the present time. I had



discussions in London about this and other posts. I have noted carefully what you have said. You will notice that the one substantial increase in this estimate is in respect of the Employment Exchange Service.

Mr. JACOB: I take it that the salary of the Commissioner of Labour will remain on the estimate.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. JACOB: Whether it remains or not I do not think it makes any difference. I have no doubt that this Department has served some purpose, but whether it has served the purpose expected of it up to this stage I am not in a position to say yet. There can be no doubt that the officers who were responsible for the organization and the carrying out of the work of the Department up to this day have done fairly good work.

I have been reading the report of the Department and the recommendation of the Royal Commission that Labour Officers should be appointed. I see the Deputy Commissioner of Labour here and I would like to ask a few questions which he will probably be able to answer. One of the main recommendations of the Commission was that trade unions should be assisted in the auditing of their accounts, and that that duty could reasonably be undertaken free of charge by Government. Legislation was passed recently providing that half of the audit fees should be paid by Government. Perhaps the Deputy Commissioner will be able to say whether the trade unions are really able to pay their half of the fees. I have my own views on the matter, but I would certainly like the Department to say whether the system is working, and will continue to work satisfactorily.

The next point I wish to make is under paragraph 10 (b) of the recommendations of the Commission which specifically provides:—

(b) to cover the period before Trade Unions are developed to the point at which they can play a decisive part in the regulation of wages and conditions of employment, action by Governments in this direction through the medium of Labour Departments of Officers. These organisations should be assisted by Advisory Boards representative of employers and employed with an impartial Chairman;

The point I wish to make about that recommendation is this: What progress has been made, if any, in the period I have referred to, in assisting trade unions to really have a voice in the regulation of wages? I think there is only one class of labour in respect of which there are some regulations in force. As regards the other class I do not know what progress has been made, or whether any progress has been made at all. I know that representations have been made from time to time by a certain trade union, but so far as I am aware we have not been able to get any specific answer. I think no progress has been made at all. Perhaps in the interval between the time I am speaking of and the present time some progress has been made.

I do not know whether Government is satisfied that this Department is really filling its particular role in the Colony's make-up. One hon. Member, a nominee of a trade union, has spoken very eloquently of the service rendered by the Head of the Department. I am hoping to hear the other representative of a trade union say something too. As a matter of fact I was waiting until he had said something before I got up. I have no doubt that Government is perfectly satisfied. The trade union leaders are all well satisfied too, but I am wondering whether the workers are satisfied. Time alone will tell and, I think, very shortly. We will hear very shortly what is the exact position.

It would be well to place on record the number of trade unions in existence, and their membership, I think

one of the reasons for the establishment of the Labour Department is to encourage the growth of trade unions, and to encourage workers to become members of trade unions. On page 15 of the 1943 report of the Labour Department there is a table in Appendix XIII which gives a list of the trade unions. They number 17, excluding the British Guiana Trades Union Council, and the financial membership of each union for the years 1941, 1942 and 1943 is also given. Two of the 17 unions were not registered until 1942, so that in 1941 there were 15 trade unions registered with a total membership of 3,505. In 1942 there were 16 registered trade unions with a membership of 5,338. In 1943 there were 15 registered trade unions with a total membership of 9,329, the highest being 4,144 and the lowest 2. The second largest membership was 2,317, while one union had 13 members, another 42 and another 52 financial members. I think that gives a fair idea of the number of financial members of the several trade unions in the Colony.

It would be fair to say that attempts were made to have those unions amalgamated, and perhaps the Deputy Commissioner will say how far that attempt has proved successful. There is a trade union which had 2,317 financial members in 1943, but it would be fair to say that those workers joined that union in spite of the advice given by the Labour Department not to do so. I do not know whether that membership should be included in the total of 9,329 I have mentioned. If that number is taken out the total membership for 1943 would be 7,012. The figures given by the Department include the financial membership of the Clerks' Association which numbered 284 in 1943. I am not satisfied that the efforts of the Department have proved successful in making workers realize that it is to their advantage to become members of trade unions. In fact I am certain that the total financial membership in 1944 will be

considerably less than that recorded in the 1943 report. I am not going to make any strong comments about the membership and the confidence of the workers in the Department at this stage, but I do hope that Government and the Department will bear in mind what I have said, and will do something to create confidence between the workers and the Labour Department, and between the Department acting as liaison between the workers and employers.

Mr. deAGUIAR: I have been trying to follow the figures quoted by the hon. Member but I am still in the dark as to whether he was trying to inform the Council that progress has been made in the number of persons who had decided to join trade unions. I gathered, however, from his remarks that he was trying to impress the Council that instead of there being an increase of membership there was likely to be a decrease. I have really risen to say that possibly those people are saying to themselves "Save us from our friends."

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I join with the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) in saying that the British Guiana Labour Union and the British Guiana Trades Union Council are satisfied that Mr. Colin Fraser, the Commissioner of Labour, was a very good man. He came to the Colony at a time when we had several labour disputes, and some of them might have ended seriously but for the efforts of the Commissioner of Labour and Your Excellency. I can assure you, sir, that Mr. Fraser, the Deputy Commissioner of Labour, and I have done everything possible to get the workers to recognize the value of trade unions.

The question was raised whether the trade unions pay their half of the fees for auditing accounts. The B.G. Labour Union paid its fees last year and I believe other honest unions will pay their half of the fees. I can

assure you, sir, that the honest unions are far more satisfied with the present auditors appointed by Government than they were before. The Registrar recognized certain auditors from which we had to choose one, but we found that the auditors appointed by Government condemned some of the work done by the auditors of friendly societies, and I hope the time is not far distant when Government will appoint recognized auditors or chartered accountants in respect of friendly societies.

The Commissioner of Labour cannot compel workers to join a union and contribute to its upkeep. Some of the workers have not the necessary means. Economic conditions have a lot to do with some workers' ability to pay their contributions. I observe that some unions have over 2,000 members, and others considerably more. I do not know whether they are all financial members. For example, many of our members who were employed at the Bauxite Company have been knocked off, and a good many of them will be unfinancial at the end of the year. Some are willing to pay but cannot pay their contributions. Again, some of the leaders divide the people by trying to make out that their union is the best.

I am glad that the salary of the Labour Commissioner will remain on the estimate. We have a Deputy Commissioner of Labour, and if it is difficult to get another officer from England at the present time I cannot see why the Deputy Commissioner should not be appointed Commissioner of Labour. Personally, I should like to see some of our youths trained so that when we cannot get officers from England we would be able to fill those posts with our own people. I can assure you, sir, that the Labour Department has done very useful work. For years I advocated the establishment of an Employment Exchange, and now that we have one in the place of the Labour

Bureau I am confident that it will prove to be very valuable to the country in process of time.

Mr. EDUN: If my hon. friend, the member for Central Demerara (Mr. deAguiar) wishes to cast pearls I shall not refrain from doing so this evening. Perhaps he will gather what I mean. If there are geniuses in this country who have reported progress of the Colony from time to time I can point to two men in this community, and the time will come when I shall single them out as the type of men who ought not to guide the opinions of this Council at all. The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. deAguiar) has attempted to deride the trade unions by using a peculiar phrase "Save us from our friends." Let me ask him what has he done in the matter of helping the progress of British Guiana except to provide a rumshop in Albouystown where he expects people to drink and waste their money? I can assure him that the Man-Power Citizens' Association is a unique association which circulates more money than the Chamber of Commerce, of which he is a member. It issues a periodical every week.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of order. Are we descending to personalities?

Mr. EDUN: I am taking the opportunity to speak---

Mr. WIGHT: The point of order is that if we are going to descend to personal abuse of each other then perhaps this Council had better be dissolved.

Mr. EDUN: I should have expected the hon. Member to rise to a point of order when the hon. Member for Central Demerara made the remark I refer to.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you are going away from it, and you mentioned the Man-Power Association. Do you wish to continue?

Mr. EDUN: I am certain that the membership has grown considerably, and I want to make a comparison between the Man-Power Association and the Chamber of Commerce.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think this has much to do with the Labour Department's estimates, you know. The Chamber of Commerce is not concerned.

Mr. EDUN: Yes, but Your Excellency, I think I may make a comparison with an organization of which the hon. Member is a member.

The CHAIRMAN: Neither the Man-Power Association nor the Chamber of Commerce comes into these estimates.

Mr. EDUN: Am I not to make comparisons, sir? Members go out of their way to attack trade unions which are doing service to this community without gain or reward. The time will come when we will have to test it out here. That is what I am attempting to do. I will not allow the hon. Member to get back into this Council unless he is prepared to give service as I have done. Just fancy his using that phrase because there happens to be a division between two trade unions—

The CHAIRMAN: I think you have got your point home. Don't you think so?

Mr. EDUN: If hon. Members are prepared to make use of their position in this Council in the interest of progress and to raise the status of the Council, I am prepared to do the same, but if they wish to get down into the gutter I can do that as well as they can. Therefore let them beware.

Mr. LEE: I would like to ask Government whether it proposes to take cognizance of the recommendation of the Royal Commission that officers of the Labour Department should go among the workers and hold

public meetings in order to educate them? You will find that through the Trades Union Council they are holding meetings or night classes and teaching certain workers in the City of Georgetown alone. Adult Education is being tried out at the Government School at Broad Street, Georgetown. But the majority of workers do not live in Georgetown, they live in the country districts. The Trade Union Movement is one of the best throughout the world and the people have to be educated as to the good it can do, and the only way that can be done in my opinion is for Government to permit an Officer of the Labour Department to accompany the Trade Unions when they are holding public meetings in the country. The Officers of that Department will be able to report to Government the conduct of Trade Unions' Executive and members. They should also be permitted to educate the workers as to the benefits to be derived from Trade Unionism. Unless that is done what the Movement is trying out in Georgetown cannot spread its good influence to the country districts. For that reason Government had asked the employers of labour and the workers to join the Trade Union Movement. The employers of labour consented to that in principle but only when it is applicable to themselves in the country. In Georgetown you find a different aspect of the situation. There is an undercurrent which prevents the workers from joining Trade Unions. Unless the workers get an undertaking from Government as to the education of the people the Trade Union Movement will remain dormant, because the people do not realize at the present moment the good the Movement can do. Following on the recommendation of the Royal Commission I appeal to Government that the Officers of the Labour Department should go into the country districts throughout the Colony and educate the workers as to the good the Trade Union Movement can do for them.

Mr. de AGUIAR : I am not surprised, and I do not think any Member of this Council is surprised at the display of good manners by the hon. the Fifth or Sixth Nominated Member. Of course one is not surprised, because if the cap fits naturally the string will be drawn. The point I made when I spoke immediately after the hon. Member for North-Western District was that I gathered from his remarks there was no progress made in the number of persons willing to join the Trade Unions. The hon. Member endeavoured to make comparison with some particular Unions and also made reference to the fact that there was one Union with two members. It seems to me the point he tried to make was that there was some complaint between two Unions and, I think, it is reasonable for me to come to the conclusion that those people were saying to themselves "Save us from ourselves." When the hon. Member attempts to introduce something that is entirely extraneous to the point I mentioned, it seems that some notice should be taken of it, especially when he attempts to make an attack on hon. Members who are not with him. Like hon. Members I hope never in my life, whether connected with a Labour Union or any organization, to make use of it in the way the hon. Member himself does.

Mr. EDUN: This Council is in Committee and I am privileged to talk as much as I desire.

The CHAIRMAN: Be relevant in what you wish to say! Can you put it in a few words?

Mr. EDUN: If you stop me I am prepared to say nothing more.

The CHAIRMAN: I will not stop you, but I want to get on with the Head in front of us. I have given a little latitude to one and so I will have to give it to another.

Mr. EDUN: There is one answer I will make to the hon. Member and that is this: I am prepared to take any man at his word. I am older than he; I am more experienced than he can ever be, and I know more of human nature and have travelled more than he. I have seen the world.

The CHAIRMAN: Neither of you belong to the Labour Department!

Mr. EDUN: The hon. Member is perhaps attached to a business, but I want him to be a man like myself to go into the open among the public and endeavour to do as I have done, create a creative spirit as I have done instead of trying to live off the substance of the poor people in Albuoystown.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we all want to hear the Deputy Commissioner on any point he wishes to answer.

Mr. ROTH: May I ask one question with regard to item 7, "Employment Exchange Service", I would be very glad if government gives a little information about it. Has it started and how is it progressing?

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member can see the details on the opposite page.

Mr. BISSELL (Deputy Commissioner of Labour): There are one or two points raised especially by the hon. Member for North-Western District. The first question asked was "Are Trade Unions able to pay half of the Auditors' fees?" The only answer I can give to that is, only one Union has complained to the Department and consequently we are bound to take it for granted that no Union has found any difficulty in relation to this matter. The second point is in regard to the regulation of wages and the advisability of the establishment of an Advisory Board. The Commissioner of Labour and myself considered this mat-

ter very carefully and very shortly after we came here, and we came to the conclusion that the Trade Unions in British Guiana and the people in British Guiana were beyond the stage in their development where an Advisory Board of the type we thought would be useful. We thought in fact it would be a retrograde step and we decided on a policy of collective bargaining, and we have not been disappointed. I think this particular point is important. I think it is worthy of saying to this Council that there has been very definite progress in the matter of collective bargaining between Trade Unions and Employers, but it is at a stage worthy of development, and I do not think we should depart from it at this stage.

The hon. Member for North-Western District asked the question "Are they satisfied?" The Department can clap itself on the back, I believe, and can venture the opinion quite confidently that the general working population of this Colony are beginning to have and for some time a good deal of confidence in the Department of Labour. I am entitled to say that because of our relations with the Trade Unions and what happens in the Department and between the Department and the Unions from day to day and between the the ordinary members of the public who attend at the Department of Labour, and the relationship between the people and the Officers of the Department.

The hon. Member for North-Western District also raised the question of the number of Unions, and he followed it up by asking if anything had been done in the way of amalgamation. I do not know what the hon. Member had in mind, but I do want to say this: In my humble opinion we have too many Unions in this Colony. It is not a question of more Unions but rather a question of better Unions. At this stage in the development of Trade Unions in the Colony, the first essential is to have a degree of unity amongst

them. Having obtained that, then we may proceed to amalgamation. It is easy to keep unity among all the Trade Unions but, I think, having accomplished that with a little patience we will arrive at that unity which will make discussion on amalgamation easy and desirable.

The hon. Member for North-Western District alleges that Officers of the Department of Labour advise workmen not to join certain Unions. That is not true. What has happened is this: Officers of the Department on another occasion possibly have intimated to workers that they should be members of a Union which has relations with the Employers' Association and which has an agreement with the Employers' Association. It must be obvious to Members of this Council that if you are going to have any industrial relations, if you are going to satisfy workers, you must surely be in a position to be able to attract those working people to an association that has relations and association with the Employers' Association. There must be a channel or avenue for discussion and, I do not think, there is anything wrong in the Department advising or indicating to them where those channels lie.

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction! Do I understand the Deputy Commissioner of Labour to say the Department did not advise those people not to join certain Labour Unions?

Mr. BISSELL: I made that point specifically clear. I want to say it again that they have not done so.

Mr. JACOB: The Deputy Commissioner of Labour is contradicting himself. He ultimately said they have.

Mr. BISSELL: I am sorry if the hon. Member did not hear me right. The hon. Member also made reference to the financial membership of the Trade Unions. I am afraid I did not

quite follow all the figures he gave, but I want to say that in the last two years it has been a period of consolidation, a period of assisting the Unions and a period of construction. Members of Council will agree that you first have to get the proper machine and, having got that, then get the membership. I do not share the hon. Member's view that the financial membership will be lower for 1944 than for 1943.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River referred to the educational side of the Department's activities. We have for a few years been supervising a Study Circle in Georgetown which is run not by the Department but under the auspices of the Trades Union Council. I agree with the hon. Member and so does the Commissioner of Labour that the Circle should not be confined to Georgetown, and I can tell the hon. Member that there is now a Study Circle at Rosehall, Canje, and one in New Amsterdam, Berbice. We had hoped to have one working at Wales. It is intended to have three on the West Coast, Demerara and the East Coast, Demerara.

Mr. LEE: May I enquire from the Deputy Commissioner of Labour whether the Study Circles at Rosehall and New Amsterdam are under the Labour Department or the Trades Union Council?

Mr. BISSELL: Under the Trades Union Council. All those things should, if possible, be run by the workers' organizations themselves rather than to be attached as it were to an official department of Government. The hon. Member made the suggestion that the Labour Officers might attend Labour Union propaganda meetings in the country districts. I think that is a matter that can be privately discussed with Government. It is a matter of policy. On the other hand I ask the hon. Member for Essequibo River to consider this very carefully; It may

be embarrassing to have a Government Officer at any of those propaganda meetings.

The hon. the Seventh Nominated Member raised the question of an Employment Exchange. All I can say is that the Employment Exchange is in the experimental stage. The Department, I feel, will be unable to give any definite information on the subject except that it is in the experimental stage. We have to make the people "Employment Exchange conscious." We have to get their confidence in the Exchange and the confidence of the employer to go to the Exchange for labour. The Exchange has been in operation only a matter of three months, and it will take a considerable time before we get that degree of confidence to make the Exchange operate as this Council desires it to operate.

Mr. LEE: May I in reply to the Deputy Commissioner of Labour try to point out that the recommendations of the West India Royal Commission threw the responsibility of fostering the Trade Union Movement on the Labour Department or Government? How can a Trades Union Council be expected to do that, when it does not possess the means? At the present moment, as far as I know, it has not \$100. It will not be able to carry on educational propaganda or educational work throughout this Colony among the workers who are in the country districts. I plead with Government that it is the responsibility of Government and it should be done by the Labour Department—the holding of these Study Circles. Let the Educational Officers of the Department who have studied it carry on the good work. The Trades Union Council is catering for the workers in the City of Georgetown, but the majority of the members, 90 per cent. of them, are workers receiving a salary. Can those people give up their work to carry on the work in the country districts? They cannot get leave to go into the country districts and teach the people. I say

that policy is not the correct one. Every part of an educational system is a responsibility of Government, in my opinion, and if Government views it in that manner the Labour Department having trained officers can send them into the country districts to educate the people. I am not saying that the Officers of the Department should be at the propaganda meetings, but I would like the people to be educated. But how can they be educated except they are taken at their face value and encouraged to realize they are doing something good. That is what I am asking Government—to change its policy towards the Trade Union Movement in this Colony.

Mr. BISSELL: Perhaps I should have said the field of labour holds itself responsible for the expense of some of the Study Circles. We intend to make it easy. An officer of the Department is always ready to attend any meeting to assist and advise. It is a well known fact that in Georgetown two Officers of the Department attend the Study Circle meetings regularly. In the Corentyne District the Officer of the Department in that area attends the Study Circles in the two districts—Rosehall and New Amsterdam. As other districts are opened up the Department will be quite willing to assist by getting its Officers to attend the Study Circles wherever possible.

One point, I think, is worth mentioning and it is this: Trade Unions are hampered in their development by the failure of the Trade Unions themselves or of the people themselves to give voluntary work to their own organizations. I think that is something which the Trade Unions should take to heart and what the people of this Colony should take to heart. They should themselves be prepared to give the time and to undertake voluntary tasks without which they cannot hope, I venture to say, to have the type of organizations they are so anxious to obtain.

Mr. CRITCHLOW : I would like to add that the Unions in the Trade Unions Council are subscribing voluntarily to the Study Circle.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: May I ask one question of the Deputy Commissioner of Labour? It is, whether the Labour Department considers it advisable that Unions should be allowed to encourage membership among persons engaged in peasant husbandry rather than in industrial organizations or organized labour.

Mr. BISSELL: I do not quite understand the question. I would like the hon. Member to clarify it.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: What I mean is, do you advise the Unions, for instance, to solicit membership from persons who are engaged in their own work, such as rice planting. They are not employees. Do you encourage that sort of thing?

The CHAIRMAN: Any free person like yourself can join a Trade Union.

Mr. BISSELL: The Department of Labour is mostly concerned with the organization of the Trade Unions, and we expect that those who are engaged as employees or are working on their own behalf will have the good sense to have organizations to suit their own requirements.

Mr. JACOB: I think the Council is grateful to the Deputy Commissioner for his very clear answers to the several questions. I would like to refer my hon. Friend, the Member for Western Essequibo, to the Whitley Council and ask him to think that over. I think he knows whom they cater for, and in the same way they cater for Civil Servants up to a certain class why the rice farmer should not be encouraged to join Unions so as to be able to make collective representation on any matter of importance to themselves. There-



fore I would like to ask the Deputy Commissioner of Labour to look at his files again. If he would like me to refresh his memory, I think he is mistaken when he states definitely that the Department did not advise certain persons not to join certain Unions. It is definitely and specifically stated; it is written.

The CHAIRMAN: The Deputy Commissioner of Labour will make a note of it.

Head agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I had hoped to have done five Heads this evening, but we have only done four and we have but three minutes to go.

Mr. EDUN: I am quite sure we have not finished "Legislature".

The CHAIRMAN: We had put that back until we have had a discussion in Executive Council on one particular item.

Mr. JACOB: If you are going to adjourn at 10.30 I do not think we should proceed further. I am going to plead with Your Excellency to let us understand the position clearly. Let us have specific hours of sitting. We have other arrangements to make. I agree that we should meet from 2 to 4 in the afternoons and from 8.30 to 10.30 in the evenings. If you want to make it 8.30 to 12 in the evenings let us understand the position clearly.

The CHAIRMAN: You do not like overtime!

Mr. JACOB: I do not mind, but I want to know the time I have to work. I think most Members would like the Council to adjourn before we attempt another Head.

The CHAIRMAN: We will take Education first tomorrow afternoon at 2 o'clock when the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member will be present.

The Council resumed and adjourned to 2 p.m. the next day.