

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 13th November, 1935.

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

PRESENT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. F. J. Seaford (Georgetown North).

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

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

The Hon. M. B. Laing, District Commissioner, East Coast Demerara District.

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

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. E. M. Walcott (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

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

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

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

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

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 8th November, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

PAPER LAID.

The following document was laid on the table:—

Report to the medical and Sanitary Committee of the Colonial Office on Anti-Leprosy work in British Guiana from 1926 to 1934, by F. G. Rose, M.D. (Cantab.), M.R.C.P. (London). (*The Colonial Secretary*).

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.**

Notice was given that at the next meeting of the Council the following Bills would be introduced and read a first time:—

A Bill to establish the East Demerara Water Conservancy for the purpose of making better provision for the supply of water in East Demerara, to provide for the management of the conservancy and for purposes connected therewith.

A Bill to amend the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1934.

A Bill to amend the Pensions Ordinance, 1933, by making provision for the cessation of special injury awards to, and of special awards

to the dependents of workmen in cases where there is a right to compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1934.

A Bill to amend the Estate Duty (Amendment) Ordinance, 1934. (*The Attorney-General*).

A Bill to make provision for the control of public gardens and grounds and Government agricultural stations and for the holding of agricultural shows. (*Professor Dash*).

A Bill to amend the Local Government (Village Councils) Ordinance, 1935, by making provision for the election of a Chairman of a village council if a vacancy occurs during the year of office of a Chairman, and for the resignation of a Chairman. (*Mr. Laing*).

UNOFFICIAL NOTICE.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. JACOB gave notice of the following motion:—

WHEREAS there is no available area of well irrigated and drained land suitable for farmers to grow certain agricultural products which are imported into this Colony in large quantities at present;

AND whereas there are suitable areas of land situate on both banks of the Demerara River, the East Coast of Demerara, West Coast of Berbice, the Corentyne and Essequibo Coasts;

AND whereas it is desirable that lands in the districts named should be tested by officers of the Department of Agriculture to determine what kinds of crops may be successfully grown on these lands;

AND whereas it is necessary to establish model farms all over the Colony so as to provide work for the large number of unemployed, and also to demonstrate to children who have a bias for farming, that well irrigated and drained lands, well laid out and of convenient size are available.

AND whereas failure in settled areas up to the present has been due in a measure to mixed cultivation, difficulties of supervision and transportation and lack of systematic effort;

AND whereas the Agricultural Superintendents of the Department of Agriculture should be able to instruct farmers in the proper methods of preparing the land, the right time to plant, mature and reap:

Be it Resolved,—That His Excellency the Governor be respectfully requested to appoint a Committee with a view to examining the whole question, and to making recommendations therewith.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADVANCE FOR SEA DEFENCES.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): I move:—

THAT, with reference to Message No. 6 of the 19th October, 1935, this Council approves of the

payment of an amount of \$2,913 to the Sea Defence Board in respect of the year 1936 in addition to the maximum contribution of \$50,000 fixed by section 18 (2) of the Sea Defence Ordinance, 1933, as enacted by section 2 of the Sea Defence (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933, and authorises the necessary provision being made in the Colony's Estimate for that year.

The Message, which has been before hon. Members since the 9th October, explains very fully and clearly the necessity for this sum. The contribution by Government to the Sea Defence Board is laid down at a maximum of \$50,000. The estimated cost of the works for next year exceeds that amount by \$2,913, and this sum ought now to be approved so that it can be included in the Estimates. I formally move the motion.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY
seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1936, under Head "Miscellaneous."

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Waddington): I propose to move a reduction of sub-head 24 (Crown Agents charges on store purchases, including commission, inspection and marine insurance, \$5,500). In so doing I have no thought that such reduction will meet the criticism on this item which will probably be forthcoming; but I have discussed this matter carefully with the Colonial Treasurer and we are satisfied, having regard to the probable requirements of Government under this head, that \$5,000 will be sufficient for the year 1936. I therefore move the reduction of the vote to \$5,000.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I do not intend to engage the attention of the Council with any lengthy debate on this item to-day. The matter was fully discussed on the 22nd January last and I just invite Your Excellency's attention to the remarks which were made by me on that occasion, and to

the instances put forward then by me in support of the claim of local traders and the reply of the Colonial Secretary on the 29th January. I feel sure that after you have had an opportunity of studying the case made out on behalf of the merchants, the local Government's policy of ordering goods indiscriminately from the Crown Agents, as was done in the past, would no longer be the subject of complaint. I am very glad indeed to learn that a reduction of \$500 is to be made. As a matter of fact I intended to make a similar suggestion, because I do know that there is likely to be some modification in Government's policy by which the item can be allowed to stand at the same figure as for this year. I really was at a loss to understand why the extra \$500 was put on the Estimates. I do not know whether we have local agents of the Crown Agents, but it seems to me that is the case and that it was the intention of Government to pursue the policy of which I have complained so much about. I can only express the hope that Government will now find it more to the advantage of this Colony to place orders through local merchants, and I am perfectly satisfied that if Government will do what they can to meet local merchants they would also find it very advantageous to the Colony to buy locally.

In what way can Government meet the local merchants? It is a matter I have given very careful consideration to. To merely put in a bald advertisement calling for tenders is not sufficient, especially after local merchants make the claim that if they can only be given reasonable time and assistance they can always meet Government's requirements both as regards price and quality. But it would be manifestly unfair if in considering tenders Government accept prices received from the Crown Agents, say, two or three months before tenders are called in, or if Government first receive tenders from local merchants and subsequently obtain prices from the Crown Agents. In these days prices fluctuate daily and it would be impossible to make a true comparison of these prices. I do not mean to cast any reflection on the officers who consider tenders, but I do not think Government can claim that there is any expert buying knowledge in the Departments. On the other hand it is very difficult to make any suggestion of what should be done to meet the case.

I think the matter might very well be left in the hands of Your Excellency. I would not suggest any strengthening of the Tender Board because it would naturally be said that has come from the people who are themselves interested, but that would prevent a good deal of criticism. For that reason I definitely refrain from making the suggestion. I therefore leave the matter entirely in Your Excellency's hands, feeling sure that local traders would receive what they are truly and justly entitled to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: As the hon. Member for Central Demerara has said, the question of purchases from the Crown Agents was debated very exhaustively early this year, and an account was given of the activities of the Crown Agents and Government's policy was enunciated by my predecessor. What my predecessor said was that Government would always prefer to have articles of local produce if possible, and that in regard to imported articles, if they became necessary, Government would purchase from local agents provided that the price and quality are equal to those obtained from the Crown Agents. I have nothing to add. Government's policy stands exactly at the present time as it was then. When this matter was debated the wisdom of that policy, as far as I can find from Hansard, was not contested by anybody. It was simply stated that local agents could, in the opinion of Unofficial Members, compete with the prices of the Crown Agents, and it was thought that Government's figures might possibly be inaccurate.

This year we have endeavoured to obtain local tenders for every article where price and quality could be considered anything like equal. Very great care was devoted to obtaining accurate figures. There are two main heads where we have gone to the Crown Agents—I am referring to stationery and dry goods—and I would like to state with regard to those two articles that the figures were very closely investigated. To arrive at the correct figure for the Crown Agents every possible item of expenditure, such as freight, insurance, commission, etc., was added, and a percentage of 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ was on that account added to every item on the Crown Agents' indent. I might state that the percentage was slightly more

than the accurate figure, which was not more than 14 per cent., but the figure of 16½ per cent. was taken for facility of calculation. In order to arrive at a proper comparison of the cost from local tenderers and from the Crown Agents, the cost of every item under the head of stationery was multiplied by probable requirements during the year. The totals were then added together and the result of that calculation clearly showed the comparative cost to Government of purchasing stationery from the local agents and from the Crown Agents. On the result it was found that the Crown Agents' figures were 32 per cent. lower than the lowest local tender.

With respect to dry goods, only a certain number of articles were tendered for locally, and in order to see whether it was not possible that those items should be taken out of the general tender and be the subject of a local tender, we carried out a similar calculation to that in respect of stationery on those items only which were tendered for locally, and the result was that the Crown Agents' figures were 38 per cent. lower. Those being the figures I suggest that nobody can say that the policy of Government could be otherwise than that adopted. I make that statement because I feel that Government's figures are frequently criticised and people do not realise how carefully they are worked out.

Mr. WALCOTT: I should like to know what has happened in connection with one firm here who tendered for Government's supplies and after ordering the goods to meet the requirements of the tender found that the Department had ordered from the Crown Agents. It is a very hard case, and I think the Colonial Secretary will remember Mr. Smellie bringing it up in the Select Committee. I think the Colonial Secretary promised to look into the matter, and I thought some reference would have been made to it this morning.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Before the Colonial Secretary replies I must confess that I am somewhat flabbergasted at some of the tenders quoted by him. Did I understand him to say that tenders received from the Crown Agents were in some instances 38 and in others 32 per cent. lower than tenders received from local merchants? If

that is so, I venture to say that there is something wrong with Government's calculations. I would like to see those tenders.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the tenderers have no objection I am quite prepared to let the hon. Member see the figures.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I shall be only too glad to consult the tenderers. 38 per cent. is absolutely ridiculous.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the Hon. Mr. Walcott is referring to a question of paint. It is the case that a certain amount of paint was obtained from the Crown Agents. On the other hand, I believe I am right in saying—and I am going to ask the Director of Public Works to speak after me—that towards the second half of the year paint was taken from the contractor and he got rid of all his stock. I ask the Director of Public Works to verify that.

Major CRAIG: I think the easiest way to reply to the query is to state the value of the paint ordered through the Crown Agents and the value ordered through the local contractor. The contractor supplied paint every month up to October totalling a sum approaching \$2,400 and the amount purchased through the Crown Agents was \$1,400, which leaves a considerable margin in favour of the local contractor.

Mr. WALCOTT: The point is that the contractor, in the first instance, was given to believe that a certain quantity of paint would have been required, and under his contract Government has the right to buy from him. He was given a figure equal to \$3,600 for a year and he imported to meet that estimate. After accepting his tender Government bought \$1,400 worth from the Crown Agents, which I think is absolutely wrong.

THE CHAIRMAN: I may say that this procedure of giving a contract to a contractor and buying outside is new to me. There may be some reason for it, but I do not like it myself. I think a tenderer should get the full advantage of his tender: I cannot commit myself further on this point until I have more information from the Colonial Office where I have already made enquiry.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: May I ask if the

paint is of the same brand? That is the only way that a true comparison can be made.

Major CRAIG: The cost of the paint through the Crown Agents was cheaper. I cannot give the correct percentage, but it was considerably cheaper and the same brand.

THE CHAIRMAN: I ask hon. Members to leave this matter in my hands. I have already said I disagree with the principle of buying outside, but I will enquire what is the reason for the practice.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I challenge the accuracy of Government's calculation in respect of this particular transaction. I happen to know a little bit about the cost of paint and of the kind of paint contracted for, and this item I shall challenge.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will you (Director of Public Works) be prepared to give figures at a later stage?

Major CRAIG: If the hon. Member produces the brand of paint required I will give him the information he requires of the price and brand of paint. I may say that some two years ago, when paint was contracted for, I asked that Hubbuck's paint be supplied and the contractor definitely refused to supply it at the tender price. That was the reason for ordering the material from the Crown Agents.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am sorry to rise again. The contract definitely called for Hubbuck's paint. If the Department order Hubbuck's from the contractor and he refuses to supply it Government has its remedy. If I am not mistaken I think another brand of paint was also tendered for separately.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before I put the question I should like to confirm what the Colonial Secretary has stated. It is my intention to take full advantage of the Colonial Regulations. Those Regulations provide that local purchases of stores should be confined to articles produced in the Colony or to articles which, owing to special circumstances, can be purchased as advantageously in the Colony as they can be ordered from abroad. It would always give me pleasure to see contracts placed locally, but it is my duty to see the tax-

payers' money is spent to the best advantage.

Question put, and agreed to.

MILITIA.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I ask Your Excellency's indulgence to recommit Head XXIII. (Militia). I omitted to say something on sub-head 20 (Instruments and Music, \$300) when this Head was passed.

Agreed to.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have a shrewd suspicion, sir, that the reduction of this item is at the cost of New Amsterdam. For many years we had a Militia Company in New Amsterdam and when the Militiamen had a route march they had to whistle. An enterprising officer was brought from England and he suggested that the Company should have a Drum and Fife Band and that Government should assist in maintaining that Band. Representations were made and Government very kindly allowed \$180 to go toward the Band, but although the amount was voted it was found that the Militia Company did not get it. The reduction of this vote seems to indicate that somebody has prevailed on Government to withhold the grant, and I am asking Government to add the amount to the vote for the upkeep of the Band. In Georgetown there is in addition to the Militia Band the Police Band, which gets a small amount from Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: I observe that in 1934 the sum of \$24 was spent on this sub-head.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I suggest to the hon. Member to speak to the Commandant about this matter, and I think he will be entirely satisfied.

POLICE.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Under this Head, sir, I would like to make some general remarks. Within recent times it is remarkable how Police power is being abused. Policemen seem to forget that their duty is to preserve public order and not to pile up prosecutions. Magistrates are as a rule very credulous of Police evidence, and there are members of the Police Force who are becoming a menace to certain of

His Majesty's subjects. That is the general comment I desire to make with regard to the Department.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has made very serious allegations against the Police Force. I take it that he would be prepared to substantiate them.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am always prepared to do that. I am not speaking against the whole Police Force but a certain portion of them. That is what I desire to say against the Police. Now the points in their favour. I am of opinion that Government does not deal with members of the Police Force in the way one would expect. In the first place, Government gives a married policeman \$3 a month for his house rent. In the days before the War that amount sufficed for a decent sized room. At that time a cottage which would accommodate a family of three or four could be rented for \$5 or \$6 a month. Today the rent of that cottage is from \$15 to \$20, but the policeman gets his \$3 and he has to make up the difference from his small salary. What would be rented for \$3 would be a room 6 ft. by 8 ft. square and can be compared with a pig's sty. Policemen have another grievance. A policeman is compelled to travel about. What does he get when he is travelling? He is told "You cannot get travelling money for your furniture for more than 10 pieces." The cost of anything beyond that is taken out of his salary. If you are removing a man he ought not to be limited to carrying 10 pieces of furniture as is the case at present. It is also a hardship on a policeman that when he takes leave he is compelled to spend that leave out of the Colony, especially when Government would not lend the ordinary policeman one cent when he takes leave. I do not see why a policeman should not spend his leave on the Corentyne or in any other part of the Colony. That is a real hardship, and a policeman should not be compelled to undergo such a restriction. A man should go abroad if he so desires, just as he should be free to go elsewhere according to the depth of his purse. Policemen would not take leave to go abroad because they cannot afford it. I ask that something should be done to remove these hardships.

Mr. JACOB: I desire to endorse what

has been said by the hon. Member for Berbice River. Statements have been made of maladministration and other irregularities and the Press has had a lot to say about the Police Department. I do not wish to repeat those statements but to make general observations. Knowing that the majesty of the Law must be respected, the Police and the Judiciary must work together for the common good of the Colony and the liberty of the subject must be preserved, and I consider it is absolutely necessary that this Department should be thoroughly investigated and something done. I have seen in the Press recently when a prosecution was going on that evidence was being relayed. Evidence of policemen and their officers carry a good deal of weight, and unless the community can have confidence in the Police Department there would be a very sad state of affairs.

I have another complaint. It is that certain officers—Heads of Departments particularly—believe that they can treat the public as they choose. Your Excellency does not refuse to see anyone, and I cannot understand why Heads of Departments should refuse to see individuals, especially individuals of repute, where public matters are concerned. That complaint affects the Police Department particularly and I hope it would never recur. Apart from that, the discipline of the Police Force is far from being satisfactory. I wish to say no more. I think I have said enough to give some idea that all is not well with the Police Department.

Mr. JACKSON: I have not risen to make an appeal on behalf of the Police but to appeal to you, sir, for a concession in the interest of law and order. My appeal is for the re-opening of the police station at Fellowship on the West Coast, Demerara. Some years ago a cry was made that the police compound was insanitary and dangerous to the lives of the policemen who lived there. Government asked the custodians of the public health to see whether anything could be done to improve the sanitary conditions of that compound. It was then stated that even a sum of \$5,000 would not be sufficient to render the place sufficiently sanitary. As Chairman of the Council of that village I offered to undertake the sanitary condi-

tions with the amount of \$5,000 and I felt quite sure that I would have been able to spend half of that amount on the general sanitation of the village. The Council also offered Government a healthy and salubrious spot near the sea for the building of the station, but later on that station was closed on the grounds of economy.

I would like to assure you, sir, that that village is deteriorating consistently. It is the village in which I have spent nearly all the days of my life. I was born there and, with the exception of nine years spent on the East Coast, I have taught and lived there continuously. Anyone who knew what the village was prior to the removal of the station, if they would take a toll of conditions existing there with respect to law and order, would tell Your Excellency that the place has gone down considerably, and there are some people who believe that it is dangerous even for anyone to live in it. Not so long ago a murder was perpetrated on the public road just 10 or 20 rods from where the station had been located. I do not wish to refer to instances of disorder well known to the Police which have occurred there. I want to assure Government that any money spent on the re-opening of the station at Fellowship would be money well spent and I am sure would produce the best results.

I raised this question in the Select Committee and the Colonial Secretary promised to ask the Inspector-General of Police to write a minute on it. I raise it now in order that that policy might be pursued. I have no doubt that if enquiries are made from the Police themselves, the Magistrate of the district and the residents there, there would be an abundance of evidence as to the necessity for re-opening the station. I am quite sure that the present Magistrate would tell Government that the closing of the Court at Fellowship has also been a menace to the peace and order of the community. I trust that some enquiry will be made into the circumstances and that Government will make a reasonable attempt to restore to that community the peace and order that obtained there.

Dr. SINGH: I join in that appeal for the re-opening of the Fellowship police station. This station was situated in a thickly populated area; it used to provide protection to about 12,000 people. The

station was about six miles from Vreed-en-Hoop station and about four miles from the Stewartville station. Since the closing of the station several cases of serious crime have occurred there and lawlessness is increasing day by day. I do not think it would cause Government very much to re-open the station. Stewartville station is well staffed, and if a Corporal is taken from there and two constables are recruited from Vreed-en-Hoop and La Grange, that staff would be sufficient to maintain law and order. The station used to do very good work because Pln. Windsor Forest came within its scope, but there is no protection to Windsor Forest now.

Mr. GONSALVES: I appeal to the Police for further help to the inhabitants of Georgetown in maintaining peace and order with motor traffic. I appreciate that the Department has been doing something in that direction, but sufficient is not being done at the present time. I appreciate further that the law at their disposal is not as complete as they would like it to be. In answer to certain questions I was told that a Bill dealing with vehicular traffic was being prepared and would be shortly available. That was nearly a year ago and we are still hoping that that model Bill, which is being prepared by someone beyond the seas, will be brought before this Council. I shall probably be told that the Georgetown Town Council has been asked to co-operate, and I suppose Your Excellency will be told that the Town Council is trying to co-operate with the Police Department. But there seems to be two sets of regulations dealing with vehicular traffic. If the model Ordinance has not yet reached Government, I am appealing that something should be done to get it so that we might be able to have something by which we would be better able to control traffic of motor vehicles. Your Excellency must have seen reports of prosecutions from time to time and of complaints of old members of the Town Council being made young athletes in trying to get out of the way of busmen. I think that is sufficient ground for Government to make some real and serious effort to get the new legislation through.

Mr. ELEAZAR: When the question of closing police stations was first mooted I protested and pointed out that they were at specific points and it would be danger-

ons to close them. That led to the formation of a Committee to consider the question, and I think that Committee protested against the closing of Fellowship station. Its report was not followed generally. Although Government was warned Fellowship and other stations were closed. Government has heard the views of the hon. Member who lives in the district and I hope Government will accede to the request.

Mr. LUCKHOO: This matter must be considered from the point of view that it is a mistake to have an insufficient number of men on patrol duty and to keep order in the outlying districts. I protested against the closing of the station in the Canje Creek, which was in a position where the Police were able to control in a very large measure illicit distillation of spirits in that locality. A good deal of loss of revenue occurs through illicit distillation of bush rum, and I should like to have an official statement of the amount of revenue that is being lost. Prosecutions are instituted from time to time and large penalties are inflicted, but the trade is still carried on with a great deal of success. The only way to stamp out the "industry" is to increase the number of policemen for that specific duty; and I suggest that a special staff be detailed for that particular purpose. With it there would be a reasonable chance of suppressing the illicit trade in bush rum and possibly also be to the advantage of the revenue. Government should make it a point to see that the illicit distillers are rounded up, and the only way to do that is to give policemen facilities to make sustained efforts to get the offenders brought to justice. The outlying stations have been reduced but discipline on the whole is satisfactory. I do not subscribe to the view that the Police compromise themselves in order to obtain a conviction. If one or two members of the Force lapsed in that way it was no justification for condemning the Force as a whole. With the meagre material at their disposal they always endeavour to do their best. In Berbice we can do with a few additional men here and there, but I ask that the question of illicit distillation of spirits be gone into thoroughly.

Mr. KING: I cannot subscribe to the general condemnation of the Police Force

suggested by the hon. Members for Berbice River and the North Western District. It seems to be the law of Nature that there must be some black sheep, but I do not think the criticism has been fair to the Force, which in my opinion has reached a very high standard, and all credit is due to the respective officers. I take exception to the remarks of the hon. Member for Georgetown South about the buses. The Police are doing their utmost to bring the bus service into line with the bus services in other parts of the world. The bus service is supplying a much needed want, and perhaps its present condition is due largely to the tremendous competition. I do not think it is fair to describe the bus owners or drivers as people with murderous ideas in their minds to destroy the citizens of Georgetown.

Mr. GONSALVES: I do not think I suggested that, but I appreciate my hon. friend's grievance knowing what I do now.

Mr. KING: I do not know what else the hon. Member meant when he said that old members of the Town Council were becoming athletic in trying to get out of the way of buses. I have the utmost respect for the way in which the Police are taking care of the City and of the Colony generally, and I think very much credit is due to them. I certainly join in the appeal that the police station at Fellowship should be restored. I understand that its closure has caused general dissatisfaction on the West Coast. While on this subject I would like to express the opinion that it is very desirable to maintain law and order in the outlying districts. Very often trouble is started in outlying districts and gradually extended, and Government would be well advised to consider very seriously any question of closing down police stations in outlying districts.

Mr. SEYMOUR: The present system of paying a reward to informers of the manufacture of bush rum is a vicious one. To my knowledge in Essequibo there has been grave injustice as the result of that system, and it is a matter that calls for the closest investigation. The Police are doing their duty; the danger is in the vicious circle in which they move. The only solution to kill the manufacture and sale of bush rum is the adoption of a cheaper system. If Government would only be wise and reduce the

rum licence all bush rum would disappear. I hope Government will give consideration to that suggestion. Let everybody have his schnappe if he wants and let the Police carry out their duties.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I have no desire to join in this debate, but I have heard so much of rum and over zealous policemen that I rise to correct what appears to be an erroneous impression. I did not understand the hon. Member for Berbice River to condemn the Police Force but over-zealous policemen. We do know that what he indicated existed, but his remarks should not be taken to mean that he was condemning the Police Force as a whole. On the contrary, the hon. Member went on to make an appeal on behalf of the men in the ranks. He was only illustrating to the Council what an over-zealous policeman could do, has done and is likely to do.

When the subject of closing police stations was discussed very great stress was laid on the fact that the closing of the Fellowship station would be to the disadvantage of the district. Events have proved that to be the case and that the time is overdue for its re-establishment. Government should not lose sight of other districts that are important both in size and population. The mere presence of a man in uniform has a considerable effect on the average individual, especially in the outlying districts.

In the Select Committee I referred to the fact that the time is now ripe for opening a police station in the village of Kitty, which has between 6,000 and 7,000 inhabitants. At present they are without a police station but have a postal agency. I think a large district like that should receive some consideration. Apart from being entitled to police protection, I think they are also entitled to a post office being established there. I think a police station and post office, with a savings bank and money order business, may be both put under one roof and a saving effected in that direction.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I need not apologise for any remarks I make here because they are all true, but if evidence is required it is to be found in complaints I made continually that a particular individual in

Berbice was a menace to the whole community. That man did havoc until he put bush rum in another person's premises and reported it to the Police, when it was discovered that it had been put there by himself and the prosecution had to be dropped. The Police afterwards got a conviction against him and he was fined \$50 and got rid of.

Mr. SEAFORD: I don't think any Member of the Council disagrees with the principle that it would be to the advantage of the Colony if there were more police stations about the country; it might perhaps improve law and order in certain districts and villages. But there is another side to that question. When we meet here year after year Members always advocate cutting our coats according to our cloth. When we want more policemen and more Judges it is forgotten that we have to raise taxation to get them. It is all very well to speak of false economy, but I don't see where false economy comes in. It was with the idea of saving money that certain stations were closed and not because they were not necessary, and policemen are now used to patrol the districts on motor cycles where stations have been closed.

It is known that Government suffers loss of revenue from the bush rum business. It has been going on in so-called civilised countries for a very long time, and in Ireland I think it has been in vogue for centuries. In the United States and other large countries all over the world it is the same, and those countries have to try and find the best means to combat it. I agree that every person should be given the opportunity to have his drink, but we have to consider how we are to recover the revenue which would be lost by a reduction of the licence. It is a big question and a difficult question, and I am not prepared to say that by doing so-and-so we can get over the difficulty. If Government so desire a Committee might be appointed to enquire into the question, but I am certain it will never be stopped. The only way to combat it is to use in the best way we can the forces at our disposal, but I do not think the establishment of police stations here and there would be the best means of combating the bush rum industry.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir,

it was with very great surprise that I heard accusations of a general character made against the Police. I wish to deny absolutely those accusations. I would add that any individual cases hon. Members wish to bring to the notice of Government will be carefully considered. I had hoped to hear those accusations contradicted by Unofficial Members, and I was not disappointed and was glad to hear the remarks of the hon. Members for Western Berbice and Demerara River to that effect. The hon. Member for Berbice River raised the question of married policemen and their house rent, and he referred to the fact that rents are now very much more than before the War. I would like to explain in this respect that this allowance was only given after the War in order to meet the general increase in house rent. Prior to that the allowance was not paid at all.

In regard to Fellowship, that police station was abandoned, together with several others, at the time when the Police Force was cut down in 1930-31. The reduction of the establishment at that time amounted to 90 men, effecting a saving of \$80,000 or \$90,000, and it became absolutely necessary to cut out certain of the out-stations. I have discussed the matter with the Inspector-General of Police, and he agrees that if it is possible to replace any of these stations and to get an additional amount to provide for them, Fellowship would be the first one which he would recommend. As has been pointed out by other Members, it is a question of finance and I am not in a position to say when it will be possible to replace the station. The recommendation is that the station should be put at Den Amstel and not at Fellowship, but I can assure the Hon. Mr. Jackson that the matter will be fully considered.

With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Georgetown South on the traffic regulations I would like, in the first place, to acknowledge the co-operation of the Town Council in relation to the traffic work of the Police. I am very happy to acknowledge that. In regard to the regulations themselves it is the case that the Police are considerably handicapped by the lack of up-to-date regulations. These regulations are under consideration at the present time and I hope that before very long they will be put into effect.

The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice asked for an official statement of the amount of revenue that is being lost by the illicit traffic in bush rum. If we were able to provide data such as that we would be able to stop the offence. We naturally do not know how much revenue is lost. We are prepared to agree that a certain amount is being lost, and the matter has recently been investigated departmentally. The point raised by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo has been already answered by the hon. Member for Georgetown North. It is quite impossible for Government to forego revenue derived from rum licences to the extent that would be necessary to bring these licences down to a point where rum would compete in price with bush rum.

Mr. ELEAZAR: What I think the hon. Member intended is that there should be a reduction of the duty which would bring the price of rum down to the same price as bush rum. Instead of a duty of \$4.75 make it \$3 a gallon, which would enable the licensed retailer to sell his rum at the same price as the illicit distiller.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will ask the comptroller of Customs to speak on that point.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I did not have any idea of knocking the whole of the duty off but of allowing the shopkeeper to pay his licence. It is due to the heavy licence and competition with the illicit sale of bush rum that many shops have been closed in Essequibo. If the duty could revert to \$3 a gallon I do not think we would lose any revenue as there would be a corresponding increase in the sale of rum. It would stop the iniquitous system of illicit distilling which is flourishing today.

Mr. SEAFORD: If Government reduced the duty to \$3 or \$3.50 a gallon I do not see how it can possibly compete. Bush rum can be bought in certain districts at \$1 a gallon.

Mr. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs): The revenue collected from the Excise duty on rum last year was \$468,000. The suggestion is that the duty, which is now \$4.50 a gallon, should be reduced to \$3 or even \$2, and it is considered

that if that is done the consumption of legitimately distilled rum will be so considerably increased that we will suffer no loss of revenue. The hon. Member who has just spoken has pointed out that the cost of bush rum is so very low that even if we fixed the duty at \$2 a gallon the profit made out of it is so encouraging that people would continue to drink bush rum. Bush rum is drunk very largely, I believe, and it is undoubtedly true that a large number of people who drink bush rum would not be able to afford to buy duty-paid rum, consequently the total quantity of bush rum now consumed would not be diverted to the legitimate source. Some years ago when the duty was reduced from \$4 to \$3 with the same idea in view it resulted in very great loss of revenue. The Financial Commissioners who visited the Colony when the duty was again \$4 a gallon recommended that it should be increased to \$4.50. I very strongly opposed that recommendation and advised Government that it would result in loss of revenue from decreased consumption. At the end of the year I had to admit that I was wrong, as we collected about \$50,000 more revenue. I am absolutely certain that if we reduce the duty to \$3 there would be a loss of not less than \$100,000. I think everything should be done, as at present, to endeavour to suppress the manufacture and sale of bush rum, and, if possible, more money should be spent in the suppression of it. It would certainly be a wrong move to reduce the duty.

Mr. WALCOTT: I have heard about bush rum. I wonder if the authorities know how much bay rum is being used throughout the Colony for drinking purposes.

Mr. D'ANDRADE: The question of drinking bay rum is one which has been raised for some time. Bay rum is undoubtedly being drunk as a beverage. The matter has been considered by Government and for ipecacuanha another substance has been substituted, which it is believed will have the effect of preventing people from drinking bay rum.

Item 21—Conveyance of Prisoners, Lepers and others, \$150.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I wish to direct Government's attention to the necessity

for providing suitable animals for the conveyance of people found on the streets of New Amsterdam suffering from some complaints. I understand that there is no provision and people are taken in carts as it is not always possible to obtain the use of the ambulance of the Mental Hospital. The only remedy is to place at the disposal of the Police in New Amsterdam a similar ambulance to the one in use in Georgetown. I am not suggesting that Government should incur any expenditure but asking them to provide a public necessity.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I observe an item "Class and Examination fees for First Aid, \$400" and another under Allowances "First Aid, \$600." May I enquire to whom are these fees paid?

Mr. ELEAZAR: I support the suggestion of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam. I do not suppose the very poor have any claim to dignity, but it is very undignified to see a man in a donkey cart and another pushing it because he is a pauper. The method of conveyance can certainly be improved.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Is the hon Member satisfied that donkey carts are available?

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have seen a man pushing a cart with some person inside.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The question of the conveyance of people in New Amsterdam is now under consideration and the Surgeon-General has been asked to make a report on the subject. Until that report is received—and it is receiving consideration at the present time—Government can give no undertaking. With regard to the fees for first-aid examinations, the vote represents fees payable to medical practitioners conducting the examination. There is a payment to the St. John's Ambulance Association of Jerusalem of \$14 for each class of 30 men and the payment of the fees is almost entirely to private practitioners.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The Police in Berbice have for some considerable time been asking Government to give them a motor launch to travel up the river where the illicit distillation of rum is rampant. When the money was voted an old launch was repaired and sent up to Berbice and

the new one which was intended for Berbice has been retained in Georgetown. It is the case of the old country cousin again.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I regret to learn that fees for first-aid examinations are paid to private practitioners. Government should take advantage of its own officers and have men trained at the Public Hospital. The Medical Department should also undertake the examinations.

Dr. DE FREITAS: As far as the Medical Department is concerned this is a matter that does not come within their purview. It is essentially work of the St. John's Ambulance Association, and the Young Men's Christian Association has taken the lead in it, which is very praiseworthy of them. The Medical Department has sufficient duties to perform, and I do not think it is advisable that the Medical Officers of the Public Hospital should be burdened with further work. In some cases they have volunteered to be examiners, but I do not think they should be burdened with such work.

Mr. WOOLFORD: May I direct attention to item 23 (Prosecution Expenses, Prevention and Detection of Crime, and costs in appeal cases awarded by the Court, \$3,000), in regard to the provision for payment of witnesses in prosecutions. The Police make arrests and reasonable time must be given them for investigation. Witnesses whose attendance is necessary are either kept waiting for their remuneration or in some cases it is denied them. That is a very undesirable state of things. There is no reason why witnesses should not be paid remuneration. They are compelled to attend the Court and are entitled to be remunerated when they are kept going there from time to time owing to postponements for one reason or another. I am bringing the matter to the notice of Your Excellency in order that attention may be given to it. If the necessity does arise for me to refer to it again I will speak far more plainly than I have done to-day.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not quite clear whether I heard the hon. Member correctly or not, but I understand his objection is to the payment of witnesses.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Delay in the payment of witnesses.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The payment of witnesses does not come under this vote.

Mr. WOOLFORD: If it does not, then what does this vote cover? I don't want to embarrass the Colonial Secretary by his having to reply now. I merely raise the question in order that it may be considered.

THE CHAIRMAN: A note will be made of the hon. Member's point.

POST OFFICE.

Mr. ELEAZAR: This is another Department which requires very serious consideration. Within recent times it has deflected from the foundation which was laid by a very able Postmaster-General who subsequently became Governor of this Colony. With the advent of the last Postmaster-General everything was changed and to-day the Post Office Department is certainly not what it ought to be. When he arrived here the salary of the post was £700, to-day it is £825 per annum. What have we for that? Postal facilities all over the Colony have been curtailed. Officers have had their promotion checked. Others have been placed in slippery places to dance and have fallen—all on account of the manner in which things have changed. It is known that Clerks have been for 12 to 14 years at the top of their class and cannot get promotion. Why?—because Post Offices have been closed and Postal Agencies established with officers in charge of them in receipt of \$10 a month. Instead of promoting Relief Clerks these men have to remain for 10, 12 or 14 years without promotion. That has happened in several cases. Not very long ago a married man with a family asked to be allowed to go to one of these offices in order to save house rent, but he was denied it and he fell and is now in New Amsterdam Prison. That is on account of the system. Take another instance. On the 1st of this month two officers were supposed to be going on promotion from Letter Carriers to Relief Clerks, a position for which they were induced to qualify themselves, and one is in receipt of \$38 while the other has just reached \$40 per month. With promotion and more onerous and responsible duties these men have to begin afresh at \$32 a month.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon recess.

Mr. ELEAZAR: When the House adjourned I was endeavouring to point out some inequalities in the Postal Department. I have known of an officer being transferred and allowed to carry not only his salary but his perquisites with him. It is therefore a great hardship that an officer who is given increased work and more responsibilities should revert to the minimum and lose in one case \$6 and in another \$8 out of his salary. What I deprecate and ask Government to look at in the same light is that Post Offices have been closed and in that way promotion is blocked to officers who have arrived at the top of their class. I do not like the idea of Government re-engaging pensioners when it results in preventing others from getting the promotion to which they are entitled. Those pensioners remain in Government quarters to the exclusion of their successors. There are two such cases in Berbice. Eversham Post Office is now a Postal Agency and because the retired Postmaster is still in charge he is allowed to occupy the building. Carmichael Street Post Office, a prize office which juniors had to aspire to by good and efficient service, has also been converted into a Postal Agency, and the Postmaster who got a lump sum and pension is allowed, with perhaps \$10 or more, to continue his occupancy of the premises and to keep an officer out of promotion and the free quarters he is entitled to.

That is a state of affairs that Government cannot look upon with complacency, and there are very good grounds for complaint. In some cases the minimum salary has been so reduced that it does not matter how long a man serves he can never reach the maximum. That shows a determination on the part of somebody to deprive the men of what they ought to get. So long as there is a maximum there ought to be a reasonable period when a man would arrive at that maximum, but before he could get to the maximum he has already reached the pensionable age. From time immemorial the District Postmaster was regarded as Postmaster and nothing else, and as such he was allowed free quarters. The man in New Amsterdam has been denied that privilege, and

his immediate predecessor was also denied it. His predecessor was a man of exceptional merit who entered the Service at an early age, but he never reached the maximum of his salary although he served in that capacity for about 15 years. That shows that something is wrong and of set purpose. That should not be the case in the Government Service.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I think the hon. Member has correctly represented the cases in New Amsterdam and the Corentyne district. He has pointed out the fact that a good many pensioners have been drafted into the Service and are now in charge of Postal Agencies, practically competing against persons who are desirous of being employed in the Postal Department. That seems to me unfair competition. Men on pension should not be allowed to compete with others. I think there is a serious objection to that form of employment, and Government should enquire into it. The case of the Postmaster in New Amsterdam is a very hard one. It is probably an oversight on the part of Government that he was not allowed his house allowance on his transfer from Suddie to New Amsterdam. Postmasters as a rule are given free quarters, and I take it that the terms of their employment are that they should reside in Government quarters.

This is a case that Your Excellency should look into on the principle that Postmasters are entitled to free quarters, and if the principle is recognised I take it that the Postmaster in New Amsterdam would be equally entitled to free quarters. Apart from his status I understand that he has been in the Service for a period of 40 years, which is a consideration that should weigh with Government in considering his particular case. He should be allowed to carry with him the privileges he previously enjoyed. His emoluments is a matter for Government. The salary has been reduced and the normal increment has also been reduced, and I support the suggestion that he should be provided with free quarters. Sometime ago I drew attention to the case of the Postmaster on the Corentyne. I believe he was given an allowance of \$15 from which he has to pay two assistants, and if that is the case I ask Government to look into the matter. I don't want to burden

the Department with extra expenditure, but the claims of these officers seem to require some adjustment.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: There is a good deal in the arguments of the previous speakers. The substitution of Postal Agencies for Post Offices offers very little hope or encouragement to employees of the Postal Department. But that is not the only anomaly of the Post Office. Complaints about the Postal Service generally are numerous. Not long ago I tabled some questions regarding the Postmaster at Suddie. Subsequently the matter came up for discussion and the Postmaster-General, who was then a Member of this Council, got up and defended the policy of the Department most admirably; but in his defence he held out certain promises and now that he is no longer with us it seems to me that the hope of those promises materialising is very poor indeed. Perhaps you will permit me, sir, to make reference to some of his remarks on that occasion. He said "Not one of the members of the Postmasters' staff has expressed to me any dissatisfaction with those improvements in their salaries in 1928, but now they are beginning to make representations to me for further improvements." Proceeding, he said he was going into the matter in 1935 to see if he could make further favourable representations on their behalf, because he was fully aware that in most cases they are worthy of better pay owing to their financial responsibilities and the work they have to do.

1935 has come and practically gone, the Estimates for 1936 have been framed on the same basis as for 1935, and next year these men will not receive what is justly due to them. What is the case of the Postmaster at Suddie? When the vacancy for a Postmaster at Suddie arose several Postmasters were asked whether they would accept the post. Speaking from memory, I think two or three actually refused the appointment, and the present Postmaster there accepted it because it held out to him some promotion. After accepting the appointment, however, he found that all he would receive was the ordinary increment of \$24 per annum which he was drawing at the office he vacated. I endeavoured to make representations on behalf of that Postmaster, and the man himself did what he could to

have the matter remedied, but up to two or three months ago he was not given the consideration he deserved. What seems to me to be at fault is that the minimum salary of that office was reduced on the new appointment. It seems to me that this officer is entitled to a little more consideration, and I ask Your Excellency when you have time to give the matter some consideration.

Speaking on the Post Office generally, not many years ago the offices in country districts were opened on Sunday from 8 to 9 a.m. and from 4 to 5 p.m. That was a distinct convenience. To-day the offices are opened from 8 to 9 a.m., but they are no longer opened in the afternoon, and a great deal of inconvenience is caused to people residing in those districts. When it was decided to close the offices in the afternoon it was stated that the police stations would be available for sending messages, but it is almost impossible to obtain from the police stations the convenience that is available at the Post Office. I do not think the extra hour would involve any considerable expense, while it would be a very great convenience to people in outlying districts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I must make an admission with regard to the statement of the hon. Member for Berbice River that an officer had been promoted and his salary had been reduced. That is the case and it will be rectified. The next question was that of Postal Agencies. A good many Post Offices were converted into Postal Agencies for economic reasons. That is not a practice peculiar to this country. There are Postal Agencies in country districts in England and elsewhere all over the world. It is obviously uneconomic to have a full-time Government officer in a post where public duties will occupy possibly an hour or one and a-half hours during the day, and in those places the policy of having Postal Agencies in place of Post Offices has been adopted.

The question of pensioners competing with Government servants does not really arise if you accept the policy of Postal Agencies. A Postal Agency cannot have a Government officer in charge and obviously the best person to contract with Government for that purpose is somebody who knows the work. It is not because

he is a pensioner that he is chosen, but the work has to be given out on contract and the person who offers the best price and is best able to carry out the work is selected.

With regard to the Postmaster at Suddie, that matter has already had consideration. The officer concerned has had a continuous rising salary, but I gathered from the hon. Member that it is considered not sufficient. As I said, the matter has been considered and it has been decided that nothing can be done.

I do not think a case can be made out for having Post Offices opened on Sunday afternoons. Nor do I see why we should afford facilities here at the expense of Government officers which are not afforded in most places, and I have not heard any real case made out for an exception in respect of British Guiana.

Mr. KING: There is just one matter I should like to draw the attention of Government to and that is the Post Office at LaGrange. There is a Bagotville postmark on letters distributed from La Grange Post Office, which is an anomaly. Years ago there was a Post Office at Bagotville, which has been closed, but the postmark has not been changed.

Mr. ELEAZAR: From the reply of the Colonial Secretary it appears that Government intend to carry on Postal Agencies on the score that they are all over the world. I am not against that; we have had them before. I am speaking of others like Eversham, where you had an office with all the facilities required, telegraph, money orders and so on. The only reason why it was made a Postal Agency was to get the man in charge to do all that work for \$10 a month and block the promotion of other men. What justification can there be for the Post Office at Carmichael Street, where banking exists, to be converted into a Postal Agency? At Sisters Village there was a Post Office at which money order and telegraph services were carried on, and those services are still being carried on by a man in receipt of \$15 a month. I am saying that where you have a flourishing district with all facilities, and you reduce the Post Office to a Postal Agency by name so as to have there a retired Postmaster who is getting a pension, a free

house and \$10, which blocks promotion, that cannot be justified.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: With regard to the opening of Post Offices on Sunday afternoons, I do not think it is correct to make a comparison of British Guiana and highly developed countries. In those countries there are services for telephonic and telegraphic communication. Here we have to depend on the Post Office for both services, therefore a case has been made out for the opening of the Post Office. In the event of a death on a Sunday afternoon one cannot pass on word to relatives elsewhere because the Post Office is closed.

Mr. JACOB: I merely rise to support the hon. Member for Central Demerara in his request. I have myself been asked to make representation to Government that the public should be allowed facilities for sending telegrams on Sunday afternoons.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I think we are all wrong about this matter. I am going to consider the poor Postmaster. Telegraphic work on Sundays is infinitesimal. I don't think we need worry.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It has not been suggested that the Post Offices should be open all day on Sundays, and I do not think the hon. Member listened to the argument.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I quite followed the argument. I do not see the necessity for confining Postmasters to their offices for 365 Sundays (Laughter).

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it would be very unlikely that Postmasters would get work to do every Sunday afternoon. We must consider these hard-worked officers.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: One further point I have not referred to is with regard to the Postal Agency at Eversham. I cannot hold out any hope that any change will be made, but investigation will be made as soon as possible.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I ask to be allowed to revert to sub-head 1 (11—Postmaster, New Amsterdam, \$1,512). The minimum salary of this Postmaster used to be \$150 per month and the increment \$8, but even

that did not enable him to reach the maximum. Now the minimum salary has been reduced to \$107 and the increment to \$6, while the maximum remains at \$190. It will take the Postmaster at least 13 years to get his maximum, which at his present age is impossible. His is a case which should certainly be looked into. I also desire to point out that although the minimum salary and the increments have been reduced, he has lost the allowance that used to be paid for selling stamps and his house allowance has been taken away. It does seem a very hard case.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: There is a Postal Agent at De Kinderen who is ridiculously paid. He gets \$15 a month for doing all the work there. I understand that a contract was entered into with him before a telephone service was installed, and as the result of the installation of that service his duties have considerably increased. I think the Postmaster General recognised that there was something in this man's claim, and I ask that an investigation be made in respect of the work he has to perform.

THE CHAIRMAN: With regard to the Postmaster in New Amsterdam, I assume that the new salary is part of a considered scheme which dealt with the senior Postmasters. It has that appearance to me from the Estimates. I will ask the Postmaster-General to state the facts to me on the file in due course.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I think the case of the Postmaster at Suddie is on all fours.

THE CHAIRMAN: That case came before me and I gave it my consideration and came to the conclusion that in the present financial position of the country I could not do anything for the officer. I am not saying that he is well paid.

POST OFFICE—TELECOMMUNICATIONS BRANCH.

Mr. ELEAZAR: There is tremendous noise in the telephone service in New Amsterdam. I would like to know when we are going to get the new service.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This matter has been considered for some time, as hon. Members know, and it is realised

that the condition of the New Amsterdam Exchange is bad, but on financial grounds it has not been found possible to put any provision in the Estimates. The matter will receive further consideration, of course, as circumstances permit, but at present we cannot agree to put any money on the Estimates for this purpose.

THE CHAIRMAN: I may add that the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (who is not present) spoke to me on this subject, and he stated that he was prepared to put up figures to show that this will be remunerative expenditure. On that understanding I told him I was prepared to leave the head "Special Expenditure" open for a few days until I could consider what he had to say on the subject. If it can be shown that it is remunerative expenditure I shall be very pleased to alter the effect of what the Colonial Secretary has said. When we come to "Special Expenditure" I do not propose to put the total of this Head but to leave the matter open until the hon. Member for New Amsterdam has had an opportunity to put those figures before Government.

PRISONS.

Sub-head 1*h*—Personal Allowance to Colonel W. E. H. Bradburn as Inspector of Prisons, \$480.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move an amendment in the description of this item to read "Duty Allowance to the Inspector of Prisons, \$480."

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am consistently opposed to these allowances, but I desire to give this one my benediction and I will assign reasons for doing so. Your Excellency will remember how strongly I advocated an allowance for the Magistrate in New Amsterdam, my reason being that that officer has saved to Government the salary of another officer of his own standing as well as the salary of a clerk. This officer is carrying on the duties not only of his own office but those of the Inspector of Prisons, and I do not think the Council can deny him £100 for performing duties which heretofore cost £600. I have great pleasure in supporting this particular item.

Mr. JACOB: I must confess disappointment at the hon. Member's remarks. I cannot conceive that it is necessary to

have someone supervising the Superintendent of Prisons and I protest most strongly. If we go on at this rate the finances of the Colony will get from bad to worse. Policemen and other subordinate officers are denied a few dollars, yet hundreds of pounds are voted to officers who are highly paid. I am afraid that it will lead us into a state of bankruptcy. The Director of Education has been given an allowance of £50 and it is proposed to give the Inspector-General of Police £100. I cannot follow the comparison at all. In the interest of economy and the people who are suffering so terribly, I suggest that the amount be reduced to £50 but I cannot vote for it.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I regret to say that I take the same attitude as I did on another vote of this nature. I am against all personal allowances. If you are going to give these allowances let us be fair and square. They are the cause of much heart burning. We have a competent Superintendent of Prisons; if supervision is needed form a Prison Board as is done in England. I am going to vote against these items whenever they come before the Council.

Mr. WIGHT: I am against personal allowances, but in this case the officer is earning the money. The position has been created, the officer is giving his time to extra work outside of his own duties, and I think he is entitled to be remunerated for those services.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: If the argument of the last speaker is to be carried to its logical conclusion every officer who does extra work which does not strictly come under his Department should get an allowance of £50 or £100 a year. I cannot see the logic of that at all. Is it not a fact that the late Surgeon-General performed these duties for nine months or a year without any extra remuneration, and was he not expressly told that under no circumstances would he be paid any extra remuneration? I feel that we have an excellent Superintendent and do not see the necessity for an Inspector. I believe that the post was abolished in order to effect economy. Under the circumstances I suggest that the item be not pressed.

Mr. AUSTIN: I regret that I shall

have to vote against this item for two reasons. I do not consider that the Inspector-General of Police and the Inspector of Prisons should be one and the same person. It was condemned by the late Mr. Justice Hewick in a report of an inquiry and also by the Financial Commissioners. I understand that it is done in another part of the British Empire, but that is no good reason why it should obtain here.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Inspector-General of Police took on the duties of Inspector of Prisons as well. He has been carrying on those dual duties and it is considered by Government right that he should draw a duty allowance while performing those duties. I might say in regard to the work which the Inspector-General carries out at the Prison that the efficiency and discipline have improved by leaps and bounds since he took it over.

The Committee divided on the question, and voted:—

Ayes—Messrs. Jackson, King, Gonsalves, Eleazar, Wight, Dr. De Freitas, Laing, Major Craig, D'Andrade, Mullin, McDavid, Professor Dash, Major Bain Gray, Dias, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—16.

Noes—Messrs. Seymour, Jacob, Crum Ewing, Humphrys, Peer Bacchus, Austin, Dr. Singh, De Aguiar and Seaford—9.

Sub-head—Prison Labour Camp—Bartica-Issano Road.

(r) Supervisor, \$366.

(s) Assistant Supervisor, \$262.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Not very long ago this Department was exhaustively discussed in this House and I believe that some of the complaints which were then made no longer exist. I do not know from whom has emanated the idea of a Prison Labour Camp on the Bartica-Issano Road, but I am afraid that the person is not well acquainted with conditions in that part of the country. In Georgetown it is very easy for any Warder to be in charge of 20, 30 or 40 men in any part of the town because there are people ready to come to his assistance in an emergency. It is not the same thing

in the interior. You are not carrying ordinary law-abiding individuals there; you are carrying more or less hardened criminals who have no desire for Government to find work for them. It is because they elect to be in prison so long as they can get everything easy, and there is no hope of reformation in carrying these men there no matter what you do. It is true that the late Captain Baker, a former Inspector of Prisons, built 40 miles of road in the interior with prison labour, but in that instance the prisoners were taken back to the Penal Settlement in the evening. It is undesirable to establish the proposed camp with the object Government have in view, and it cannot work. Government find it difficult to provide for persons who have not broken the law and need assistance, and here is a case of Government waiting until they have broken the law to make a camp for them to have a picnic. I cannot conceive of the idea working at all, and it will be a waste of money.

Mr. CRUM EWING: I share the views of the hon. Member for Berbice River on this question. Sometime about 1925 a scheme was initiated by Governor Rodwell to assist prisoners to reform by settling them in the Mazaruni district, and some very old prisoners were taken up to Kamakusa for that purpose. As soon as they returned to Georgetown back into the prison they went for some offence. This idea of sending prisoners to a labour camp under supervision will have a demoralising effect on contract labour in the immediate vicinity and reflex action on men engaged in that area.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I fail to see how Government are going to keep prisoners in the bush. Some years ago the Superintendent Engineer of the Colonial Transport Service told me that he tried to get one of the prisoners at the Penal Settlement to clean the bottom of a ship by encouraging him by words to do the job. The prisoner calmly turned round and said "I have seven years to do this job in." That is an illustration that you are not going to get them to work in a place where control over them can be by no means as effective. The unfortunate part of these schemes when they are brought forward is that there is no responsibility. In a private concern when a man puts a scheme up he is responsible for it, and if he fails

in making it a success he gets the sack, but here the money goes and no one gets the sack. A lot of people come here and think they know the people and conditions but they do not. Unless you are going to have long chains to chain these prisoners up at night anything will happen.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This scheme is intended for selected prisoners who have had exemplary records during their terms in jail and it is intended that they should be placed in this prison camp at the end of their sentence. I am a little disappointed that the hon. Member for Berbice River should have the idea that no prisoner can ever be reformed. I rather gathered from his remarks that was his opinion, and I do suggest to hon. Members that it is our duty to make such attempts as we can to provide employment for ex-prisoners, especially such prisoners as we have in mind of good record, so that by providing them with good employment after they leave prison we may have better citizens and people who will be much less expensive to the country when they are liberated than they would have been otherwise.

Mr. SEAFORD: The Colonial Secretary said it was decided to send these prisoners to the camp at the end of their sentence. Does he mean to say when their sentence has been finished?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I ought to have said "towards the end."

The Committee divided on the items, and voted:—

Ayes—Messrs. Jackson, King, Walcott, Austin, Gonsalves, Wight, Dr. De Freitas, Laing, Major Craig, D'Andrade, Seaford, Mullin, Mc David, Woolford, Professor Dash, Major Bain Gray, Dias, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—19.

Noes—Messrs. Seymour, Jacob, Crum Ewing, Humphrys, Peer Bacchus, Dr. Singh, De Aguiar and Eleazar—8.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The expenditure on sub-head 3 (Clothing and Bedding) in 1934 was \$1,293. For 1935 the vote was \$1,800, probably due to special circumstances, and I see that for 1936 it is put down at the same figure.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is true that in 1931 the expenditure was only \$1,293. That was a measure of extreme economy, with the result that stocks got so frightfully low that the figure had to be placed at \$1,800. If these people are to be clothed at all properly \$1,800 is necessary.

PUBLIC DEBT.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I move that sub-head 1—Interest (i), be amended to read “(i) Inscribed Stock Ordinance 22 of 1935, \$37,150.”

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. McDAVID: I move that sub-head 2—Sinking Funds, be amended by the insertion of “(i) Inscribed Stock Ordinance 22 of 1935, \$32,350,” to provide sinking fund for the new loan.

Question put, and agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, “(4) Engineering Draughtsman—(\$2,400-\$120-\$2,880), \$1,800.” That is salary for nine months.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): The suggested appointment is simply a replacement of an officer who was retrenched three years ago. He will have the full qualifications of a Civil Engineer and will be capable of acting for District Engineers when any of those officers go on leave. At the present moment it is absolutely impossible for any of my Engineers to go on leave, because I have no one to take their place without serious inconvenience to the Department generally. While I admit that comparisons are odious, I might be excused if I give some details of the work of the Department in the last six years, with the corresponding amount of money spent on the Fixed Establishment as indicated under sub-head 1(1) to (10). You will observe that the total for next year, exclusive of this \$1,800, is \$34,307. In 1929 the total under that head was \$49,080 and the expenditure of the Department for that year was \$811,760. In 1930 the expenditure on the Fixed Establishment was reduced to \$40,212 as one Engineer was transferred elsewhere and his post was not

filled. In 1931 the staff was further reduced and the total amount expended on salaries was \$39,658 with a corresponding expenditure on works totalling \$948,000. In 1932 my staff was reduced by the retrenchment of my Deputy, the Engineering Draughtsman (who was referred to earlier), and an Assistant Engineer. These officers were retrenched chiefly on the recommendation of the Financial Commissioners. The expenditure that year was \$947,883.

I stressed as much as I possibly could the replacement of at least two of these officers, but it was only last year that I was able to get one replaced. That was the Assistant Engineer, but I am still short of the Deputy Director and an Engineering Assistant. In 1933 the expenditure on the Fixed Establishment was \$29,690 and the total expenditure on Public Works was \$966,000. That represents, roughly, 3½ per cent. for supervision, a figure which is quite inadequate for the supervision that is necessary on these public works, and for these reasons I submit that the increase of my staff is absolutely essential to have the supervision desired. Last year, when I was able to get the Assistant Engineer, the expenditure on the Fixed Establishment was \$32,162 and the expenditure on Public Works was \$1,616,000. That was largely due to the extraordinary works at Nog Eens, for which I had the loan of an officer from one of the sugar estates, who proved an exceptionally good officer and did exceptionally good work in the supervision of those works.

The Engineering Draughtsman is required not only for the preparation of plans but also for the general work in the Drawing Office, and he would be able to give me assistance in technical matters as well as provide relief for Engineers when they go on leave. There are two officers in the Department at present, one for eight years and the other for four years, without any leave, and they are not tied down to their work from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. but for nearly the 24 hours of the day. The staff at the moment consists of two Executive Engineers, two District Engineers and an Assistant Engineer. One is District Engineer in Berbice, another is District Engineer of the East Coast, Demerara, a third is District Engineer of Georgetown and the East Bank, and there is an Executive

Engineer on the West Coast, which includes Bartica and Christianburg and the islands of Leguan and Wakenaam. In Essequibo we are fortunate in the fact that Mr. Nightingale, the District Commissioner, was at one time a District Engineer in the Public Works Department, and in availing ourselves of his services Government is saving the salary of an Engineer in that district. The Assistant Engineer, who is supposed to be at headquarters, was for some time in Essequibo supervising special work in connection with sea defences, and for the last four or five weeks he has been in the North West District superintending the construction of a small reservoir for the purpose of supplying water to the people of that district. I do not think I need say any more except to repeat the remark of a Member in another connection—that he did not believe in saving a shilling and sacrificing a dollar. That would be the position if this appointment is not agreed to.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I want to ask if the person who was borrowed from a sugar estate was an Engineer and if we cannot find a competent foreman, so as not to have an Engineer with academical qualifications looking after the reservoir. What have we got in this country for a Draughtsman to be required to do? There must be somebody who can design a thing and hand it over to a foreman to execute. We have got competent foremen in this country begging for work which they cannot get. If we utilise the services of these men more we would be able to save on the appointment of highly technical officers and find something for these men to do.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I would like to assist the Director of Public Works to get more staff, especially if there is the necessity to get an Engineering Draughtsman. What I do not understand is the desire to find jobs—and very good jobs at that—for these people, and to place them above the line instead of waiting to see if they would be successful in their jobs. We have Overseers with 20 or 25 years' service below the line and we are told that we have no place for them. It is rather difficult to appreciate that when we spent \$1,600,000 the staff was sufficient to cope with that work, and when next year we are going to spend only \$546,000 we are told that we must have an Engineering

Draughtsman. That is a very weak argument in support of the case. Clerical Assistants have to wait until the Director of Education reports before they can get \$5 a month more or be placed on the Fixed Establishment. Some of them are in responsible positions and their salary is \$25 a month and they are below the line. Those are the people who are doing a lot of the work in the Public Works Department. It was not only the Engineering Draughtsman that was retrenched but Road Overseers too. Now that we are bringing new staff into the Department, are we going to give consideration to the claims of these subordinate officers or not? That is my complaint. We are invited to approve of this new post and to vote the salary above the line. If we have been doing without this officer for three years we might at least do without him for another year.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Can't we place this officer below the line? In view of the fact that there are officers who have been serving for 20 or 25 years below the line, it is not fair that this Draughtsman should be placed above the line. Perhaps Government would say why he should go above the line. It is far better to have a man on a contract for two or three years unless, of course, he is coming to this Colony from some other Government post. One can understand the officer being placed above the line if he is already in the Service elsewhere, but if that is not the case it would be better if he comes under a contract.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I wish to add to my previous remarks that the figures I mentioned did not include expenditure on sea defences.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the officer is transferred from another Colony his appointment would naturally be pensionable here and it would be quite correct to place him above the line. If he does not come from a pensionable post from another Colony he would be liable to have his services terminated at the end of three years or during that term.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I think an Engineer should come out on a contract. We cannot afford to bring out Engineers or anybody else and put them above the line and

make them a fixture. We have plenty legislation but no money. I know something about public works and take a very keen interest in them. Draughtsmanship is not a simple thing; it is a specialised subject and requires long years of training. There is no doubt that we must have a Draughtsman. You must have a qualified man to do that work, and to utilise him to the fullest extent he should be capable of undertaking engineering work. In spending large sums of money it is essential that you should have men upon whom you can put full responsibility, but if the officer has no responsibility, although he is essential, he should be below the line.

Mr. SEAFORD: I wish to point out that the hon. Member for Central Demerara has forgotten that we voted over \$300,000 a few days ago for sea defence work. I agree that this appointment should be below the line. We have a gentleman who is a qualified Engineer working for the Sea Defence Board. He was one of the Engineers of the Public Works Department when the economy cut took place. He was appointed after that as Sea Defence Engineer. That gentleman is at present under contract. Another Engineer has come out to the Colony and has been placed on the Fixed Establishment, and it is only fair that this gentleman should be allowed to qualify for appointment on the Fixed Establishment. One does not want to lose the services of a man who has been trained on sea defence work and has long experience. He has been doing this work for some time under the Consulting Engineer and the Director of Public Works, and he is of great value to the Colony from his knowledge and experience. It seems to be very hard lines that this officer should be made to suffer, especially when officers who have come out since he has been here have been placed on the Fixed Establishment, and I think it is fair not only to the officer but to the Sea Defence Board that his services should be retained. Subject to anything the Secretary of State might have to say on the matter, I see no difficulty myself in the Sea Defence Engineer going on to the Colony's expenditure estimates and above the line, provided that there was a reimbursement of the salary from sea defence revenue. I think that is only reasonable. The officer would not become pensionable

until he has served three years, as in the ordinary case with any pensionable officers, and the Colony will not be faced with any pensionable liability until he has served the three years.

Major CRAIG: The hon. Members for Central Demerara and Georgetown North have recalled items which have been passed before. There is the Issano Road. Even if the expenditure for the year was only \$500,000 I still maintain that I require the staff I now have with the addition of the Engineering Draughtsman. It would be futile, in my opinion, to hope to carry on satisfactorily unless you have good supervision. The hon. Member for Berbice River stated that there is no necessity for the officer. I can only say with 30 odd years' experience that I am absolutely and definitely sure that he is required. The Engineer will come out on an agreement, and if his work is satisfactory he will be retained, but if his work is not satisfactory he would be dispensed with. It might be news to some hon. Members to learn that two of the District Engineers are locally born men; so I think the Department can take some credit to itself for having locally born men in its higher offices.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That statement of the Director of Public Works urges me to say that it proves the possibility of doing without this officer. The Director also told us that he had to borrow an individual from one of the sugar estates when he was doing large works of sea defences. If that individual was an Engineer and was able to give good service, it stands to reason that we have qualified men who can work as foremen under qualified officers, instead of paying such large salaries to men brought out.

Major CRAIG: The gentleman who has been referred to is not an Engineer. He is an overseer on one of the neighbouring estates and proved himself a very good man for the work under the directions of qualified Engineers, but without the competent foremen that we have it would be impossible for the work to be carried on. The Engineers have more arduous work to do than to stand watching the men working, and the competent foremen have their share in the work just as the qualified Engineer. I have been trying for some time to find a

qualified Engineer locally but there is none available outside the Public Works Department.

Mr. SEAFORD : May I add that in the case of this gentleman it was merely an emergency appointment.

THE CHAIRMAN : I think the Committee would be well advised to keep this

Engineer above the line, on the statement of the Colonial Secretary that the officer will not be entitled to pension until he had been three years in the Colony and his work is satisfactory.

Question put, and agreed to.

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