

# THE DEBATES

OF THE

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF BRITISH GUIANA.

### OFFICIAL REPORT

OF

*PROCEEDINGS AT THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE THIRD  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.*

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER, 1939.

The Fifth Session of the Third Legislative Council of British Guiana was opened in the Council Chamber, Guiana Public Buildings, at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, 15th November, 1939, with customary formalities but void of ceremonials, the Empire being at war.

PRESENT :

The President, His Excellency the Acting Governor, SIR JOHN WADDINGTON, K.C.M.G.,  
O.B.E.

The Honourable the Colonial Secretary, Mr. G. D. OWEN, C.M.G.

„ the Attorney-General, Mr. E. O. PRETHEROE, M.C.

„ J. S. DASH, Director of Agriculture.

„ E. A. LUCKHOO, O.B.E. (Eastern Berbice).

„ E. G. WOOLFORD, K.C. (New Amsterdam).

„ E. F. McDAVID, M.B.E., Colonial Treasurer.

„ F. J. SEAFORD, O.B.E. (Georgetown North).

„ M. B. G. AUSTIN, O.B.E. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

„ W. A. D'ANDRADE, Comptroller of Customs.

„ N. M. MACLENNAN, Director of Medical Services.

„ E. M. WALCOTT (Nominated Unofficial Member).

„ G. ●. CASE, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

„ L. G. CREASE, Director of Education.

„ B. R. WOOD, Conservator of Forests.

„ W. A. MACNIE, Commissioner of Labour and Local Government  
(Acting).

The Honourable J. ELEAZAR, (Berbice River).

- „ J. GONSALVES, O.B.E. (Georgetown South).
- „ J. I. DE AGUIAR (Central Demerara).
- „ JUNG BAHADUR SINGH (Demerara-Essequibo).
- „ PEER BACCHUS (Western Berbice).
- „ H. C. HUMPHREYS, K.C., (Eastern Demerara).
- „ A. G. KING (Demerara River).
- „ J. W. JACKSON (Nominated Unofficial Member).
- „ F. A. MACKEY (Nominated Unofficial Member).
- „ C. V. WIGHT (Western Essequibo).
- „ G. H. SMELLIE (Nominated Unofficial Member).

Clerk of Council—Mr. Ivan H. Seelig (Acting).

Official Reporters—Mr. H. A. Grimshaw.  
Mr. F. A. Leubin.

The Archdeacon of Demerara (The Ven. W. L. Kissack, O.B.E.) read prayers.

#### PRESENTATION.

THE PRESIDENT presented the Imperial Service Medal to Mr. T. B. Charles, retired Postmaster.

Addressing the recipient the President said:—

Mr. Thomas Benjamin Charles,—It gives me great pleasure to present to you the Imperial Service Medal which, under the command of His Majesty the King, has been awarded to you in recognition of your long and meritorious service in the Post Office of this Colony. I heartily congratulate you.

#### PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.

THE PRESIDENT: Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—The session which opens to-day deals mainly with the Annual Estimates and, as will have been expected in the case of a war budget, the expenditure side of the estimates this year presents few new features. During recent years the growing needs of the social service departments—which however have only been met to a limited extent—and the existing high rate of taxation have combined to place the Colony in a position where assistance from the Imperial Treasury has been unavoidable. The present budget has been framed with the intention, which I know will meet with

the approval of Honourable Members and of the Colony as a whole, that the Imperial Treasury should not be asked to assist us financially at a time when the war has placed such a heavy burden on the taxpayer in the United Kingdom. The deficit for the year, as shown in the Estimates for 1939, was \$858,464, and the problem before us is to improve the financial picture in 1940 to this extent. In entering on a year with such an uphill task we will have a surplus balance which, though small, is larger than was at one time expected. The financial position at the end of 1939 as forecast in the estimates for the current year shewed in fact a deficit of \$299,917, whereas the revised figures of Revenue and Expenditure now shew that there will be a surplus balance of \$292,298. This improvement is due partly to the fact that the Surplus Balance on 1st January, 1939, was \$430,513 more than had been expected when the 1939 Estimates were framed and partly to a reduction in the estimated deficit on the working for the year 1939 from \$858,464 to \$696,762.

The revised Estimate of Expenditure for the year is \$6,879,790, showing an increase over the original figures of an amount of

\$391,282; fortunately the Revenue has risen to a still greater extent and the revised figure is \$552,984 in excess of that which was included in the budget for the year. The items, which are mainly responsible for the difference between the original and revised figures, will be detailed to you by the Honourable Colonial Secretary.

Turning now to the Estimates for next year, I should explain that the figures have been prepared without regard to the effect that the War may have on Customs Revenue collections; any adjustments that might be made on that score would be mere guess-work and it has been thought preferable to base the figures on the current year's results and then to allow a margin in the budget to take care of the unknown factors. The only alteration in the basis of estimation is that due to the new duties on spirits and tobacco imposed on October 5th in respect of which \$113,000 has been added to Customs duties and \$62,000 to excise duties. Actually the margin to which I refer does not appear in the printed estimates for, apart from the increased duties which I have mentioned, the proposals for new taxation which will be laid before this Council have not been taken into account in preparing the revenue figures; the details of these proposals will be explained by the Hon. Colonial Secretary when he presents the Estimates, and I shall merely state at this stage that the proposals are expected to produce an additional \$298,000. As the printed estimates shew an expected deficit of \$258,757, the new revenue proposals will enable the financial forecast for the year 1940 to shew a surplus of \$39,273; to this figure may be added a sum of \$48,260 (the difference between the amounts appearing on the expenditure and revenue sides for the Yellow Fever Service) as it has now been decided that the campaign will be financed from the Colonial Development Fund; we therefore arrive at a figure of \$87,533 as the estimated surplus for the year. I am not so optimistic as to think that this amount will suffice to meet the unforeseen factors to which I have referred; but it must be remembered that we will carry forward from this year a balance of approximately \$300,000 and I am averse from further increases in taxation or excision of important expenditure items until the effect of the war on our budget can be judged with a greater degree of accuracy than is possible at present.

On the expenditure side, as I have already intimated, the estimates follow very closely the lines of those of 1939 but have been subjected to such economy cuts as circumstances permit; in effecting the decrease in expenditure no reduction in personnel has been made, as financial considerations have never permitted the provision of staff on a generous basis and in the present circumstances of this Colony retrenchment of officers should, in my opinion, be avoided if at all possible.

The most serious economy measures are to be found in the curtailment of the Public Works programme. It has been found necessary to omit provision for strip roads and to defer an extension of the well drilling programme till happier times. I regret the necessity for the reduction in the extraordinary works votes as they serve to provide employment, but it must be borne in mind that the 1939 provision under this head was far in excess of the amounts in previous years and that the vote for 1940, namely \$248,312, is 50% greater than the actual expenditure under the head in 1937. Important items that have been retained in the programme and will furnish opportunities for employment include the drainage works in Georgetown and New Amsterdam, the completion of the maternity wing at the Georgetown Hospital and the erection of a central Police Station in Alberrtown.

In spite of the need for strict economy it has been imperative, in my view, to make considerable increases under the heads Education, Medical and Labour and Local Government. It was decided some time ago to increase the scope of the Teachers' Training Centre to enable 20 student teachers to be trained annually and to provide for women students; all arrangements had been made to carry the proposals into effect and I would be very sorry to postpone a scheme which is of such great importance for the staffing of our primary schools. The additional cost in this connection is about \$4,000. The other large increases in the votes of this department cover additional grants, which have been approved during 1939 and met from supplementary estimates, and salaries of additional teachers to meet the needs of the growing school population.

The increases in the Medical Depart-

ment are considerable, and explanations will be found in the statement accompanying the Estimates. I am glad to be able to make a start with the establishment of rural Health Centres; it is a modest beginning and I feel sure that the benefits conferred will warrant an extension of the service when funds permit. The additional expenditure in the Department of Labour and Local Government is mainly associated with the new appointments of Industrial Adviser and additional Labour Inspector and their necessary clerical assistance. It is hoped to obtain as Industrial Adviser an officer who is well versed in Trade Union matters, and I feel sure that Hon. Members will agree that a strengthening of this department by appointments to the posts mentioned is a necessary step to take at the present time.

I do not propose to deal further with the details of the expenditure estimates, as a full statement has been given in the explanatory memorandum and the Hon. Colonial Secretary will speak on their main features. I should explain, however, that the volume of official work consequent on the war both here and in the Colonial Office has made it impossible to obtain the Secretary of State's approval for all the items included in the estimates and that it is possible, therefore, that some of them though accepted by Council may fail to receive final approval. The more important items falling into this category will be specified by the Hon. Colonial Secretary.

The figures that I have given of Customs revenue are a reflection of the trade position in the Colony, which maintained a uniformly higher level this year than during 1938. Imports for the nine months ending September 30th were valued at \$7,806,165 as compared with \$7,612,625 in 1938, and domestic exports rose during the same period from \$9,755,551 to \$9,873,353. The improvement in exports was actually rather better than these figures shew, as owing to the incidence of shipping a smaller tonnage of sugar appears in the returns for 1939 than in 1938, whereas, in fact, the annual export figures have increased. The exports of Rice, Timber, Gold, Diamonds and Balata have remained at approximately the previous year's figures but Bauxite shows a sharp rise and is becoming, year by year, of greater consequence in the economic

structure of the Colony. While it is not yet possible to gauge the effect of the war on the import trade, it is clear that our export trade should increase, for the raw materials which the Colony produces are of vital importance to the struggle in which the Empire is engaged, and the national interest as well as that of our local trade demands an extension of production. As Hon. Members are aware the Imperial Sugar Comptroller has purchased our sugar crop up to the end of August, 1940; in accordance with general policy the price has been strictly controlled, and after taking preferences into account the producer will be paid during 1940 approximately \$51 per ton.

Before turning from financial to departmental considerations, I wish to recount shortly some of the more important special activities, owing to the war. At the outbreak of hostilities the Militia were mobilised and entered with zest into their military duties which consisted mainly of furnishing guards at strategic points. As time progressed it has been found possible for the Police, whose ranks have been temporarily increased to a small extent, to take over the guard duties and the Militia have returned to their civil duties but they are liable to be called up at a moment's notice, and I am confident that they will respond instantly to any call that may be made upon them.

One of the more important functions of Government in an emergency is to ensure, so far as it may be possible, that the necessities of life are obtainable by the general public at prices which are not higher than the circumstances demand. Action was therefore taken at the outbreak of war to control prices and I think that I can confidently say that the efforts of the Competent Authority and his Committee have proved of great benefit to the Colony. In this connection I wish to acknowledge much valuable advice from unofficial members of the community. We have not yet felt the full effect of war prices of imported commodities and we may expect further increases in certain directions, but I can assure the consuming public that it will be the constant endeavour of Government to maintain the price level as low as possible.

In common with all other Colonies in

the Empire, measures of control have also been introduced with the object of restricting imports as far as possible from countries other than those whose currencies are on a sterling basis or which will accept payment in sterling; the main purpose in view being the conservation to the fullest extent of the foreign exchange resources of the United Kingdom and the Colonial Empire. To this end any economy in exchange resulting from the non-purchase of non-essential goods, normally obtained from foreign sources, is a valuable contribution to the general war effort. I am aware that these restrictions may impose some degree of hardship but I believe that they will be loyally accepted, forming as they do an important part of the general effort towards the successful prosecution of the war.

Complementary to the policy of price control and reduction of imports from foreign sources is that of self-sufficiency, and I have appointed committees to direct the activities of the population in an endeavour to provide local substitutes for our imported foodstuffs. I am informed that the cultivation of ground provisions by employees on sugar estates has already increased by 25%; I mention the sugar estates as being the only areas in which such an assessment has so far been made, but local authorities are keenly alive to the necessity for extended production and I feel sure that their activities are producing very useful results in village communities. Progress is also being made with allotment schemes for town areas under the supervision of their respective committees.

An important aspect of the matter is the replacement of some of the imported flour by rice flour, and experiments have been conducted to this end with encouraging results. Investigations are now being made in regard to suitable equipment for the milling of rice flour on a commercial scale, and as soon as these are completed I have in mind to order by regulation that all bread offered for sale should contain a stipulated percentage of rice flour.

A few days ago this Council approved a proposal that a sum of \$8,000 should be utilised for the purchase of stocks of peas with a view to acquiring a reserve in the Colony; the distribution of planting material

is being undertaken by the Agricultural Department and it is the intention of Government to guarantee a price for such peas in order to encourage the production of adequate supplies.

I am aware that Government's proposals for the control of the Rice industry had been the subject of much speculation, and I regret that it was not possible to give an earlier intimation of Government's intentions. The scheme presented many difficulties which only my advisers in the matter and myself, who spent many days in considering them in all their details, can assess at their full value. It has been our aim to formulate a scheme which would ensure the disposal of all rice available for export to West Indian markets on a quota basis and at the same time to safeguard supplies for local consumption. In fixing the prices we have had these objects in mind coupled with the two requirements, that the price to consumer should not be unduly inflated and that those interested in the production and manufacture of rice should obtain adequate returns.

Administrative difficulties will undoubtedly be encountered, but I am confident that a scheme of this nature is necessary in the present emergency, and I invite the collaboration of those interested in the industry in making the scheme a success.

In all aspects of the work in connection with emergency measures members of the public have readily offered their services, and I wish to make a grateful acknowledgment of the assistance they have given. For many Government officers the additional responsibilities have entailed very arduous work and, though the extra duties have been cheerfully carried out and in fact eagerly sought, I would be lacking in appreciation if I did not pay a tribute to the able way in which the heavy volume of work has been performed.

I wish also to make special mention of the enthusiasm displayed by large numbers of our young men in volunteering for active service in any capacity. It has already been explained that increases in the fighting forces in the United Kingdom are being made according to an ordered plan, and that at the present time it would not be in the national interest to enrol volun-

teers other than those who have had some specialized training. I know that such a decision has been a severe disappointment to many, but I think that it is unnecessary for me to repeat that, in the very grave struggle in which we are engaged, we must be guided by those who are in the position to know how best we can serve. For the time being, that can be achieved by exerting ourselves to the best of our ability in the several avocations in which we are engaged, and I feel confident that when more direct war service is required the response will be as ready as it has already shown itself to be.

In reviewing some of the more important of the departmental activities of the year I express the hope, that improvements in our social services may not be too severely restricted by the necessary concentration of effort on matters concerned with the national emergency. Dealing first with Medical and Health Services, I am glad to place on record our indebtedness to the Rockefeller Foundation for their most valuable assistance in two research schemes.

In the last week of 1938, Dr. F. L. Soper, the South American representative of the Rockefeller Foundation, and Dr. Mark F. Boyd, Malariologist with the same organisation, arrived here to enquire into the problems arising from Malaria and the jungle form of Yellow Fever.

As a result of this enquiry, and with the collaboration of the Rockefeller Foundation and the British Guiana Sugar Producers' Association, a two year programme of research on Malaria has been financed and undertaken. The medical adviser to the Sugar Producers' Association, Dr. G. Giglioli, has been temporarily released by that body to take charge of this investigation and a free grant from the Colonial Development Fund has been made to cover the necessary expenditure.

Evidence as to the distribution of immunity to Yellow Fever in the interior of the Colony has recently been published in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, and a situation is indicated that demands the institution of special precautionary measures on the settled coastlands of this Colony. A Yellow Fever Service com-

menced active operations in September and will be financed by a free grant from the Colonial Development Fund and a contribution from the Sugar Producers' Association. In this connection the Colony is further indebted to the Rockefeller Foundation for the training at Rio de Janeiro of supervisors of the Service who were recruited in the Colony, the provision of free laboratory services for immunity surveys and diagnosis and the free supply of immunizing material. This material has been made available to volunteers and persons liable to special exposure to the disease in the interior.

I regard the Yellow Fever Service as a matter of such great importance that I consider it desirable to say a few words on the subject as a guide to public opinion. A short time ago I noticed in the Press-reports of a case, in which the campaign was indirectly concerned, that the suggestion was made that a householder was adopting a reasonable attitude in refusing permission to members of the campaign to enter his house. Such an attitude is, in my view, nothing short of deplorable. The officers in charge of this service are always ready to study the convenience of householders but if they are to be hampered in their investigations, the campaign, which may be of vital importance to the Colony, will be deprived of all its value. The services of Dr. Burke have been placed gratuitously at the disposal of the Colony by the Rockefeller Foundation, and I trust that public opinion will see to it that he and his assistants are welcomed wherever they go in their important work.

Drs. Washburn and Crawford of the Rockefeller Foundation recently visited the Colony to assist in the inauguration of both the Malaria Research and Yellow Fever Services, and gave much valuable advice in regard to these investigations.

Special mention should be made of the completion of the new bacteriological laboratory and the establishment of this branch of the department's work on a firm scientific basis.

*Agriculture* : I have mentioned elsewhere the emergency measures in regard to rice, but I think that some further reference to this important industry is necessary particularly in respect of the proposal to establish a central milling plant in Essequibo.

The report of the Committee was very carefully considered, and facts and figures were compiled for the presentation of a case for assistance to the Colonial Development Advisory Committee; that Committee viewed the general scheme with favour but required some further information before giving final consideration to our request. At that point the war intervened and I am unable to say at present whether further progress will be possible in the near future. I had feared that the scheme for the employment of an expert to demonstrate proper methods of curing tobacco might have to await better times; but I am glad to say that it has been decided that the promised assistance from the Colonial Development Fund will be forthcoming in spite of changed conditions due to the war and that Mr. Bradshaw is on his way to the Colony.

Hon. Members will remember that proposals had been made to assist the coffee industry, and I am in a position to say that the recommendations had been sympathetically considered by the Secretary of State, but in the meantime the price of raw coffee had risen to a point above that which, in the opinion of the Committee, made Government assistance necessary and no further action has therefore been taken.

*Education*: The enrolment and average attendance figures at the primary schools continue to grow rapidly. Since 1936 the number on the roll has increased by 3,727 or nearly 8% and the increase in average attendance is 9.5%. This growing demand for educational facilities creates a financial problem in regard to the provision of accommodation and of the necessary teachers, and we have accustomed ourselves to a large annual increase in the vote. The number of teachers still falls far below the standard recognised by Educational authorities for the number of pupils in the school, but financial considerations do not allow us to make up previous deficiencies and at the same time to make provision for the large increase in the number of pupils.

The new Education Code has received mention in several addresses to the Council, and Hon. Members are aware that the delay has been due to reference to various authorities, the last of which was the Education Committee. The recom-

mendations of that Committee have now been considered by Executive Council and I hope that I can say that the Code is now on its last lap. Several of the Regulations in the Code dealing with emoluments were given final consideration as a result of an interim report of the Committee last year and were reflected in the 1939 Estimates; others dealing with school grants have been taken into account in framing the estimates for this year.

*Local Government*: The end of 1939 will mark the second two year period of Village Councils under the Ordinance No. 16 of 1935. On the whole the provisions have proved to be satisfactory but experience has shewn that a certain amount of clarification is necessary, especially in regard to the sections dealing with the disqualification of councillors. This matter is now receiving consideration, and it is hoped also that it will be possible to undertake in 1940 the consolidation of the several Local Government Ordinances.

The report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the financial position of declared drainage areas is an important contribution to the study of future policy in this matter. The report discloses that accumulated deferred charges are being carried forward from year to year with no prospect of liquidation and also that there is a necessity for reconditioning some of the areas where maintenance has been neglected. The recommendations involve the write off of large amounts of accumulated interest and sinking fund charges and have, of course, required reference to the Secretary of State. I hope that it may be possible before long to arrive at a decision on the recommendations in regard both to finance and to future control.

*Labour*: The important question of the relationship between employers and employees is one that is constantly in our minds and has received intensive study in connection with the visits of the Royal Commission and of Major Orde Browne, the Labour Adviser to the Secretary of State. A Labour Code has been published as a Bill for general information and has been referred to the Secretary of State. I know that it will be appreciated that the drafting of a Bill of this nature is a matter of considerable difficulty, and it is possible that various amendments may be

necessary. Government will give due consideration to any suggestions that may be put forward in this regard. In the meantime the report of Major Orde Browne has been published and Government hopes that it will be possible to implement some of the recommendations therein at an early date.

*Public Works and Sea Defences:* As in previous years the reconditioning works on public buildings were organised as unemployment relief works, regular drafts for skilled and unskilled labour being made on the Labour Bureau to this end.

The condition of the main roads of the Colony remains a subject for anxiety. Although additional funds totalling \$60,000 were spent in 1938 over and above the provision on the annual estimates, the damage caused by the abnormal rainfall of that year was only partly overtaken with the result that expenditure considerably above the average was necessary to keep the roads in passable condition during the wet weather this year. The amount available in the vote is therefore again insufficient for the remainder of the year and, as I do not feel justified in the present emergency in proposing an additional appropriation, I have felt obliged to suspend the work of strip road construction with a view to the utilisation, if approved, of the amount remaining unspent under that vote, namely \$15,000 on general road maintenance.

I think that it will be agreed that the drainage of Government Lands, Georgetown, is effecting a great improvement. The concrete trench in Young Street has now been completed and work is proceeding on the smaller trenches. When the reconditioning of all trenches in the area is completed, as I hope that it will be in 1941, I feel sure that we will have cause to congratulate ourselves on having undertaken these works.

Considerable progress has been made with the engineering surveys of the Coastlands, which are the necessary preliminary to any schemes for drainage and irrigation. I do not wish to infer that schemes will necessarily follow surveys, as economic possibilities of the several areas in the light of attendant costs will be the first consideration, but we are at least entitled

to hope that in some areas the surveys will indicate prospects of profitable development when the present crisis is past.

The Sea Defences have been well maintained during the year and it is pleasant to think that, at a time when our resources are being taxed to the uttermost, one of our financial bogies is being kindly disposed. This is reflected in a considerable decrease in the Sea Defence vote and, while a surprise in that direction is always possible, the indications at present are that no heavy expenditure on Sea Defences will be incurred.

*Forestry:* The reclamation of lands at the Fort for a timber seasoning ground is nearing completion, and arrangements are being made for the purchase and seasoning by the Forest Department of all Government requirements in boards in order to substitute the local article for imported lumber. If proper measures are taken to provide stocks of seasoned timber, the ban on importations, which has become necessary on grounds of war policy, should have the effect of making us permanently self sufficient in this respect.

*Post Office:* The installation of the new Telephone Exchange in New Amsterdam, which has been a fruitful source of discussion in Council for several years, was completed during the year and has effected a great improvement. I regret that the list of applicants who are awaiting telephone service is now such a long one; it will be realised that considerable delay in supplying telephone apparatus is now inevitable, and 125 telephones which have been on order for some time have not yet arrived. On the outbreak of war some of the depositors in the Savings Bank showed a tendency to panic with the result that during September withdrawals from the bank exceeded deposits by \$120,000; conditions have now returned to normal, and withdrawals and deposits were about equal for the month of October.

*Transports and Harbours:* The new steamer which was ordered to replace the s.s. "Arawana" at a cost of \$168,000 arrived in July and has effected a great improvement in the Berbice ferry where it is in service.

The replacement programme by lighter



units on the West Coast Railway has now been approved in principle by the Secretary of State. The original estimate was \$155,000, but it is not known what addition to this amount will be caused by present conditions. I am advised that the state of the rolling stock and permanent way will not permit the programme to be deferred, and in due course financial proposals for carrying out the scheme will be placed before you.

I shall make only a short reference to the important event which took place in January when we were visited by the Royal Commission, which is investigating social and economic conditions in the British Caribbean Colonies. The Commission spared no effort to obtain first-hand knowledge of our problems and took evidence from persons holding all shades of opinions. We now anxiously await the report, and I am glad to be able to say that, according to recent information, the completion of the report has been pressed forward, despite the demands on the time of members made by the national emergency, and that publication will not be long delayed.

Finally, as this is the last occasion on which I shall have the honour of addressing this Council, I wish to express my grateful thanks to all Honourable Members for the consideration and courtesy that has been consistently shewn to me while I have been privileged to serve as President.

I now commend the business of the session to your careful consideration.

Mr. LUCKHOO: Sir, on behalf of the Unofficial Members of this Council, I desire to thank Your Excellency for the speech you have just delivered. The many points referred to in Your Excellency's speech and the policy of Government in respect of certain matters will certainly receive the earnest, close and anxious consideration of hon. Members of this Council.

In view of the difficult times we are now passing through, Your Excellency has been unable to make any definite pronouncement on the question of drainage and irrigation of the coastlands of this Colony. We are anxiously awaiting the report of the Royal Commission and I hope that report will be welcomed by all members of this community. It is not my desire at this stage to go

into the various points raised by Your Excellency for the consideration of Members of the Council, but I can assure your Excellency that those points will be borne in mind by Members of this Council and given appropriate consideration in time.

I have learnt now for the first time of Your Excellency's intended departure from British Guiana and I wish to assure Your Excellency that the members of this Council have always greatly appreciated the efforts put forward by Your Excellency in the cause of the inhabitants of this country. The position of Governor in this Colony is a very difficult one, and I feel sure that Your Excellency has been doing your very best in order to get conditions improved, in accordance with the finances at your disposal.

Your Excellency's administration, for the short time you have been here, has proved a success, I should say, all things being considered. I feel sure, Sir, that the inhabitants of the town of New Amsterdam will be very grateful to Your Excellency for the keen interest you have shown in their Municipal affairs and for the help given them in respect of their drainage scheme. I do not know whether this is the appropriate time for me to discuss Your Excellency's administration to any great extent, but I suppose members of this Council will be given an opportunity at the appropriate time to say what they think of it. I desire, Your Excellency, on behalf of the Members of this Council, to ask that Your Excellency be good enough to have your speech printed and circulated among the Members of this Council.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it would be for the convenience of hon. Members if the Estimates were explained to them to-day and then an adjournment taken for several days so that they can study them. I propose, therefore, to adjourn the Council until later this afternoon when the hon. Colonial Secretary will explain the Estimates to the Council. I then propose to adjourn until next Tuesday, so that hon. Members will have an opportunity to study them in detail. The Council will adjourn now to two o'clock.

The Council adjourned accordingly.

2 p.m.—

The Council resumed.

## MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 8th of November, 1939, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENT.

## SURTAX ON TONNAGE AND LIGHT DUES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY communicated the following Message :—

## MESSAGE NO. 1.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to invite the Council to approve of the continuance during 1940 of the surtax of fifteen per centum levied, during the year 1939, on the amount of tonnage and light dues collected under section eighteen of the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931. This surtax is not levied in respect of any vessel which lands and takes away cargo not exceeding in the aggregate 500 tons, or in respect of any sailing vessel of not more than 300 tons net register.

2. Honourable Members will recall the enactment of the Transport and Harbours (Temporary Surtax) Ordinance, 1932 (No. 1 of 1932) which provided for the collection of the surtax for the first time in the year 1932, and the passing of the Transport and Harbours Ordinance 1931, under the provisions of Section 18 of which Resolutions have since been passed to enable the levying of the temporary surtax.

3. The reason for the subsequent continuation of this surtax is that it is still impossible to dispense with the additional revenue. The financial position is not such as will allow of any taxation imposed during 1939 being reduced, and I accordingly invite the Council to approve of the collection of this surtax being continued during 1940 after which the position can again be reviewed.

E. J. WADDINGTON,  
Acting Governor.

7th October, 1939.

## PAPERS LAID.

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

Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 1940.

Explanatory Memorandum for use when considering the Estimates of expenditure for 1940.

Report of the Co-operative Credit Banks' Board and on the Co-operative Credit Banks established in the Colony for the year 1938.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

Mr. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs) gave notice of the introduction of the following Bill :—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance further to amend the Customs Duties Ordinance, 1935, with respect to the Export Duties on Gold and Bauxite and the Import Duties on Petroleum Spirit.

Notice was given that at a later stage it would be moved that the Standing Rules and Orders of the Council be suspended to enable the Bill to be read the first time. (*Mr. D'Andrade*).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill :—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to amend the Aboriginal Indian Protection Ordinance, Chapter 262, by abolishing the minimum penalty for harbouring Aboriginal Indians and female half-castes.

## SURTAX ON TONNAGE AND LIGHT DUES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motions :—

THAT, with reference to Acting Governor's Message No. 1 of the 7th of October, 1939, this Council approves of a surtax of fifteen per centum being levied on the amount of Tonnage and Light Dues which shall be collected during the year 1940 under section eighteen of the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931.

## ESTIMATES, 1940.

THAT this Council approves of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1940, which have been laid on the table.

Notice was given that at a later stage it would be moved that the Standing Rules and Orders of the Council be suspended to enable the motion to be moved.

## UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

## DISCUSSION OF RICE REGULATIONS.

Mr. JACKSON, on behalf of Mr. LEE, gave notice of the following motion :—

WHEREAS there is dissatisfaction over the recently published Rice Regulations of November, 1st, 1939;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that these regulations be discussed in the Legislative Council before they are proclaimed and become effective:

*Be it Resolved*,—That His Excellency the Acting Governor cause to be placed on the order paper of this Council the said Rice Regulations to be discussed clause by clause in order to amend or alter any of the said regulations before they are proclaimed.

## RESOLUTION FROM LABOUR ORGANISATIONS.

Mr. JACKSON, on behalf of Mr. LEE, gave notice of the following questions:—

Has Government received any resolution from the joint Labour Unions and Associations in this Colony through the B.G. Labour Union? if so, when?

Will Government state what steps are being taken to meet their request, and when will they be taken?

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that the Standing Rules and Orders of the Council be suspended to enable the following motion to be moved:—

THAT this Council approves of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1940, which have been laid on the table.

It is proposed, if the Standing Rules and Orders are suspended, that the debate should be continued on Tuesday, 21st inst., if hon. members so desire.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture) seconded.

Motion put and agreed to.

## BUDGET SPEECH.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move—

That this Council approves the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1940, which have been laid on the table.

The Estimates of Expenditure for 1940 contain no innovations of a general nature affecting any of the branches of the Civil Service, as was the case in respect of the estimates for the current year. The outbreak of hostilities in which His Majesty is engaged necessitates the exercise of all possible economies throughout the Empire with the result that many activities contemplated by the local Government have had to be deferred.

A new Head from which to provide funds for emergency measures necessary in this Colony on account of the War has been opened. It is impossible to forecast what sum will be required for these measures, and therefore only a token figure has been included.

As 1941 will be the year for the decennial census to be taken throughout the Colonial Empire, it will be necessary to make certain preliminary arrangements in 1940 for taking the British Guiana Census. A new Head has accordingly been included in the Estimates.

The draft estimates show that expenditure is estimated at \$6,254,616 and revenue at \$5,995,889 (both inclusive of Colonial Development Fund transactions) leaving an estimated deficit on the year's working of \$258,727.

At a time such as this it is desirable that the Colony should do everything in its power to balance its budget and not rely on a grant-in-aid from the Imperial Government to make good any deficit; measures will therefore be brought before the Legislature to raise additional revenue, and of these I shall inform you presently.

It has been assumed that the Bill of Entry Tax, the temporary Excise Duty on sugar, and the 15% surtax on Harbour Dues, calculated to bring in \$270,000 \$200,000 and \$20,000, respectively, will be levied again next year.

It is pleasing to record that the anticipated deficit at the close of 1939 of \$299,917, shown in the current year's estimates, has been converted into an estimated surplus balance of \$292,298 without a grant-in-aid from the Imperial Government. As stated in Your Excellency's address, the improvement is due partly to the fact that the surplus carry-over from 1938 was \$430,513 more than had been expected, and partly to a considerable increase in revenue. The principal increases in receipts are Customs (\$169,000) Rum duties (\$35,000) Estate duty (\$229,000) Income Tax (\$70,000).

The main differences in the estimates of revenue which, as presented, have been prepared on the basis of existing taxation as compared with the revised estimate for 1939, occur under the heads "Customs," "Excise" and "Internal Revenue—Estate Duty." It will be observed that an increase of \$85,000 is shown under "Customs Duties," an increase of \$47,000 under "Rum Duties" and a decrease of \$229,000 under "Estate Duty."

The revised estimates for 1939 include one-fourth of the estimated additional amount of revenue which Government expects to collect in one year as a result of the increased duties on imported spirits, tobacco and rum imposed by the Customs Duties (Amendment No. 6) Ordinance, 1939, which was passed on the 5th of October. The estimated additional amount for one year under "Customs Duties" is \$113,000, and under "Rum Duties" \$62,000—those are the figures which have been included in the estimates for 1940.

It is impossible to foresee to what extent customs receipts will be affected by the war; while the value of imports will be higher there will be a reduction in their volume, and no attempt has been made to estimate for such variations.

The receipts this year under the head "Estate Duty" have been abnormal, due to the collection of a sum of over \$247,000 from two large estates.

The estimated expenditure for 1940 of \$6,254,616 is \$233,892 less than the approved expenditure and \$625,174 less than the revised estimate for 1939. The reason for this reduction is Government's decision to postpone all reconstruction and new capital works, except in very exceptional cases, and merely provide for expenditure on a maintenance basis so as to avoid increased taxation over and above that which I have already stated will have to be imposed in the effort to make revenue quadruple with expenditure. Every endeavour has been made to avoid curtailing important social services and reducing staff. Increases in 1940 over 1939 due to additional services, staff and emoluments approved during 1939 under the heads Education, Medical, Labour and Miscellaneous amount to approximately \$77,000.

The following are the heads under which the largest increases and decreases, as compared with the revised estimates for the current year, will be found:—

	INCREASE.	DECREASE.
Education	\$ 27,000	
Hospitals and Dispensaries	33,000	
Miscellaneous (b) Subventions, other than Municipal ...	21,000	
Pensions and Gratuities		\$ 26,000

Public Works—	
Annually Recurrent	72,000
Sea Defences	52,000
Transport and Harbours	169,000
Public Works Extraordinary	236,000

Several items have been included in the draft estimates on the clear understanding that, if passed by this Council, they are subject to the Secretary of State's consideration of the Estimates as a whole. The more important of these items are:—

- (a) \$ 7,200 for additional teachers necessary to cope with the steady increase in attendance at the elementary schools.
- (b) \$ 1,750 for staff and equipment for a school at Mackenzie; the Bauxite Company will provide the building. The only other schools in the district are at Wismar, on the opposite side of the river, and cannot accommodate the large number of children in this prosperous area.
- (c) \$ 5,500 for a Customs launch to replace one condemned as unsafe by a Board of Survey.
- (d) \$ 1,680 for an Assistant Medical Officer for the Leprosy Hospital. It is very desirable to have an understudy to the Medical Superintendent who will be retiring in a few years; if approved the post of Laboratory Assistant, salary \$960, will be abolished.
- (e) \$ 6,768 for additional nurses and servants for the maternity wing at the Public Hospital, Georgetown, and the Tuberculosis Hospital, both to be completed next year, and for additional attendants at the Mental Hospital.
- (f) \$ 1,760 for probation officers and after care of boys on discharge from the Industrial School, a service which, with the assistance of the Salvation Army authorities, will give effect to the recommendations of Mr. Paterson, His Majesty's Commissioner of

- Prisons, who visited the Colony in 1937.
- (g) \$ 3,026 for additional clerks for the Postal Department.
- (h) \$ 6,400 for building four rural health centres in districts and  
\$ 1,620 for salaries of Health Visitors and Caretakers.
- (i) \$15,000 as the first instalment for a new Police Station at Alberttown.
- (j) \$ 6,500 for an annexe to Colony House at Suddie—during Supreme Court Sessions there are no quarters available for Crown witnesses.
- (k) \$10,100 as a third instalment for the New Amsterdam drainage scheme and  
\$ 1,440 for alterations to culverts in the drainage area.
- (l) \$30,000 as a third instalment for the drainage of Government lands lying between the northern boundary of the City of Georgetown and the Sea Wall.
- (m) \$10,000 for a portable rotary drilling plant for the Pure Water Supply Scheme.

I shall now refer to some of the most important of the items of expenditure in the draft estimates.

*Head II.—Legislature.*—\$4,400 has been provided for expenses in connection with the General Election which is due to be held next year.

*Head VIIIA.—Education.*—The main increase is under "Primary Schools." Normal increments to teachers amount to \$16,600, and \$7,200 is required to provide for the employment of additional teachers and pupil teachers as a result of the increase in average attendance of the schools. Expenditure on salaries of Interim Teachers in connection with the Agricultural Bias Scheme will not be incurred next year as it is proposed to endeavour to carry on the scheme without the services of these teachers; this step has been found necessary for purposes of economy.

*Head XII.—Labour and Local Government.*—Provision for an Industrial Adviser and one more Inspector of Labour is mainly responsible for the net increase under personal emoluments.

*Head XVI.—Medical.*—Consequent on the reorganization of the department involving the amalgamation of the Medical and Health Services, the posts of the three health officers have been included under this Head instead of under Head XX.—Medical—Government Health Department. The newly created post of Deputy Director of Medical Services has been substituted for the post of Government Medical Officer of Health. The establishment of sanitary inspectors and other personnel of the Health Section continues to be shown under Head XX. An additional assistant medical officer, to be attached to the staff of the Leprosy Hospital, is also provided for.

*Head XIX.—Hospitals and Dispensaries.*—There is an increase of \$16,907 under sub-head 1 (22) for wages of nurses and servants—more than half of this sum is required for payment of normal increments; particulars of how the balance is made up will be found in the explanatory memorandum which has been prepared for members to facilitate consideration of the estimates.

The provision for dietary under sub-head 3 has had to be increased by \$10,000 to provide for revised diet scales and additional numbers under treatment. An additional \$5,000 will be required for drugs and medical appliances.

*Head XX.—Government Health Department.*—It is proposed to establish two health centres in the County of Demerara and one each in the Counties of Berbice and Essequibo. These centres will be run under the direction of the County Health Officers and attached to them will be Sanitary Inspectors and Health Visitors. They will become permanent health rendezvous for the dissemination of information on health problems, the holding of health clinics and general health propaganda purposes. The additional cost is estimated at \$9,620. Of this sum \$8,000 is of a non-recurrent nature, being for buildings and equipment.

*Head XXV.—Miscellaneous—(b) Subventions, etc., other than Municipal.*—The increase under this head is due to the inclusion of the annual maximum subsidy which it may be necessary to pay to the British Guiana Airways, Limited, under the agreement entered into with Government.

*Head XXXVI.—Public Works—Annually Recurrent.*—A sum of \$202,000 has been included for "Roads, Rivers, Creeks and Portages" as compared with the sum of \$233,590 which it is estimated will be spent this year. A large item which will not recur in the Estimates for 1940 is the one for \$30,000 to form a revolving fund for the purchase of timber, which was approved by Legislative Council Resolution XXXVI. passed on 4th October, 1939.

*Head XXXIX.—Sea Defences.*—An increase of \$7,000 is provided for minor works and a decrease of \$60,000 is shown under sub-head 3—New construction and replacement works.

*Head XLI.—Transport and Harbours.*—The "Net Deficiency" which the Council is asked to vote this year is \$161,342 less than for 1939, and expenditure on capital account will be \$2,000 compared with \$25,000 for this year. The decrease in the former is accounted for by deferring expenditure, wherever possible, on renewals and replacements. During 1939 a new launch was purchased, a considerable section of the railway permanent way was replaced and purchase of an additional steamer was completed. Details of the foregoing are to be found on page 8 of Appendix A to the 1940 Estimates.

*Head XLVI.—Public Works—Extraordinary.*—The vote for buildings is \$143,000, drainage schemes and requirements in connection with well drilling account for \$55,000. The vote for roads and bridges is \$50,000 being \$130,000 less than the vote shown in the current year's estimates. This is due to the fact that it has not been possible, having regard to the financial position of the Colony, to provide for the continuation of the concrete strip roads programme next year. The largest amounts to be spent on next year's programme are the following :—

\$16,340 on the completion of the Maternity Wing at the Public Hospital.

\$10,000 on reconstruction of buildings, sanitary works and water supply at the Leprosy Hospital.

\$15,000 towards the cost of erection of a central Police Station at Alberttown.

\$10,000 on the purchase of a portable rotary drill plant for the Pure Water Supply Scheme.

\$10,100 on the improvement of the drainage system of New Amsterdam.

\$30,000 on the drainage and filling in of Government lands in Georgetown.

In accordance with custom, a memorandum explaining in detail the changes under both revenue and expenditure heads has been laid on the table with the draft estimates.

The estimated deficit in the printed estimates for 1940 is ...\$ 258,727

Since the printing of the estimates a grant from the Colonial Development Fund for Government's share of the expenses of the Yellow Fever campaign (Head XX.—sub-head 13) has been approved amounting to

	48,260
leaving a deficit of	...\$ 210,467

Government's proposals for securing additional revenue to meet this estimated deficit are as follows :—

	Estimated additional yield.
(a) Re-imposition of the excise duty of 12 cents upon every gallon of deodorised coconut oil and 42 cents upon every 100 lbs. of lard substitute	\$ 20,000
(b) Excise duty of 1½ cents per cubic foot on timber for sawing purposes	10,000
(c) Increase in the income tax of individuals by approximately 33 per cent. and of companies from 12½ per cent to 15 per cent., details of which will be given at a later date	115,000
(d) Increase of 25 per cent. in telephone rentals	12,000
(e) Introduction of excess profits tax, excluding bauxite and gold, (estimate for a full year is \$160,000)...	40,000

(f) Export duties on—	
(i) Bauxite—20 cents on every ton in lieu of the existing duty of 1½ per cent. <i>ad valorem</i> ...	\$ 44,000
(ii) Gold—25 per cent. of the excess value over \$35 per oz. or 1½ per cent. <i>ad valorem</i> , whichever duty is the greater...	17,000
(g) Customs duties increase of 5 cents per gallon on petroleum spirit (inclusive of the existing surtax)	40,000

The total estimated yield of this additional taxation in 1940 is. \$ 298,000  
After deducting the estimated deficit of 210,467

there is left an anticipated surplus on the working for the year of \$ 87,533

This year I do not propose to move for the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the draft Estimates, as on previous occasions.

THE PRESIDENT: I think hon. members will prefer to defer any remarks they have to make until they have been able to digest the estimates which are going to be placed before them to-day. Therefore I suggest that we pass on to the next item and take the estimates next Tuesday, when the Colonial Secretary will move that the Council go into Committee to consider them.

Debate adjourned.

CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT No. 7)  
BILL, 1939.

Mr. D'ANDRADE moved that the Standing Rules and Orders be suspended to enable the following Bill to be read the first time:—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance further to amend the Customs Duties Ordinance, 1935, with respect to the export duties on gold and bauxite and the import duties on petroleum spirit.

Mr. WALCOTT seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

Mr. D'ANDRADE: I beg to move that "A Bill intituled an Ordinance to

amend the Customs Duties Ordinance, 1935, with respect to the export duties on gold and bauxite and the import duties on petroleum spirit" be read a first time.

Mr. WALCOTT seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

Notice was given that at the next or subsequent meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read a second time. (*Mr. D'Andrade*).

BUDGET DEBATE ADJOURNED.

THE PRESIDENT: As the Colonial Secretary has stated, he does not propose on this occasion to move that a Select Committee be appointed to consider the estimates. The Select Committee has served a very useful purpose in previous years, but I feel that this year there is not the same need for it. It has not been possible, as hon. members are aware, to include in the estimates any very new features, and I feel that a Select Committee might only waste time this year, and that we could get quicker through the estimates by going direct into Committee of the whole Council. As there is no other item on the Order Paper I propose to adjourn the Council until Tuesday next.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Would Wednesday next not meet the case, sir? We usually have two weeks, but we will now only have one week and an additional day.

THE PRESIDENT: The reason why I suggest Tuesday next is because we have already been delayed with the estimates, and it seems to me that we should not delay consideration of them any longer.

Mr. ELEAZAR: On Tuesday I will take the opportunity to—

THE PRESIDENT: Do I take it that the hon. member does not intend to look at the estimates until next Tuesday?

Mr. ELEAZAR: No, sir, but I have my days quite filled. Tuesday is the only free day I have.

The President adjourned the Council until Tuesday, 21st November, at 11 a.m.