

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 23rd January, 1935.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, SIR CRAWFORD DOUGLAS-JONES, Kt., C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. P. W. King (Acting).

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. Hector Josephs, K.C., B.A., LL.M. (Cantab.), LL.B. (Lond.).

The Hon. T. T. Smellic, O.B.E. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

Major the Hon. W. Bain Gray, M.A., Ph.D. (Edin.), B. Litt. (Oxon), Director of Education.

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

The Hon. R. E. Brassington (Western Essequibo).

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

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

The Hon. E. F. McDavid, M.B.E., Colonial Treasurer (Acting).

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

The Hon. J. Mullin, M.I.M.M., F.S.I., Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Hon. J. A. Henderson, M.B., Ch. B., B.Sc. (P.H.), (Edin.), D.T.M. & H. (Edin.), Surgeon-General.

The Hon. F. Birkitt, Postmaster-General.

The Hon. N. Cannon (Georgetown North).

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. F. J. Scaford (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. J. L. Wills (Demerara River).

The Hon. R. V. Evan Wong (Essequibo River).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 22nd January, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

GEORGETOWN TOWN COUNCIL BILLS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. P. W. King): With regard to the request made by certain hon. Members that a telegram be sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies asking for a reply to the resolution by the Georgetown Town Council which was forwarded in connection with the Town Council Bills, I am directed to inform the Council that a reply has been received from the Secretary of State, and the contents will be communicated to the Town Council in due course.

SUPPLIES THROUGH CROWN AGENTS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I ask that, with the consent of the Council, the debate on the motion by the hon. Member for Central Demerara with respect to the ordering of supplies through the Crown Agents be not resumed to-day. I have not yet got all the information for the purposes of my reply to the very full debate, but I hope to be able to reply very shortly.

Agreed to.

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I beg to move:—

THAT a comprehensive scheme of Drainage and Irrigation for the entire coast lands of the Colony in sections commencing from the County of Berbice is essentially necessary for the economic development and the relief of unemployment, and also to ensure the prosperity of the country; and this Council respectfully requests Government to obtain the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to raise the necessary funds for the immediate embarkation upon such a scheme.

On the subject of drainage and irrigation for the progress of an agricultural country I think there can be no dissension, therefore I intend to contend myself with dealing with the subject as if the proposition were universally accepted. I am inclined to think from the several documents I know are in the possession of Government, and an Ordinance passed as late as 1927, that I need not vindicate that which no one in this Council and no responsible member of the community would attempt to attack. I intend to address my mind and the attention of the Council to what would a responsible Government do in view of the desolation which the recent floods have caused in this country. The very earliest settlers in this Colony realised that the progress of their ventures from an agricultural point of view necessitated drainage in particular. This is evidenced by the fact that if anyone goes along the coast of the Colony, from the Pomeroon to the Corentyne, he will observe relics of sluices and dams which could have been constructed for no other purpose than to secure drainage. Then a cursory glance will show that wherever there is a sugar factory there is a system of irrigation and drainage instituted. Then one is inclined to enquire how is it that a country such as this, which is admitted to be an agricultural country, still remains in a stagnant state after 100 years of British occupation.

It is admitted on all hands that no progress has been made. What is the cause? This inquiry has been made from time to time by different parties, including the last Wilson-Snell Commission, and one cause or another has been assigned for this stagnation of the Colony. The Wilson-Snell Commission attributed it to political causes. The Elected Members of the day thought otherwise; they contended that it was economic, not

political. Thus they were banded about between the opinion of Government, as advanced by those Commissioners and others before them, and that of the Elected section of the House and others before them, that the prime necessity for the advancement or progress of the Colony was the inauguration of a proper scheme of drainage and irrigation of the coastlands, for the simple reason that the Colony as a whole may be said to be just resident on the coastlands. The major portion of the population is resident on the coastlands, except possibly 12,000 or 13,000 who may be found in the hinterland prosecuting various and subsidiary industries, but the major industry of the country is being carried on on the coastlands, and the largest portion of the revenue of the Colony is derived from those coastlands. Strange to say, although this is the case, it has never struck succeeding Governments what really was the cause of the non-progress or stagnation of those coastlands. So we have been going on for years, subject during that period to a flood or two every year, succeeded by a drought, yet Government did not seem to be able to realise the drain on the energy of those who attempted to pursue agriculture, the millions of dollars or pounds expended to carry on in the way they have been carrying on, and the blood and the brain and the brawn that have been used up in the attempt to carry on the major industries of the Colony and make a living.

Thus, in the midst of plenty, they have been actually suffering from want. At one season Your Excellency must have observed that we have more water than we need, and at another not as much as to bathe one's fingers. Your Excellency will say: "That has been going on for years, and is it only now you have become alive to the fact?" There is an Ordinance of 1927 and a Report of 1925 on the subject of the drainage of the coastlands, but Government has remained more or less inert until the gravest calamity came to the Colony at the beginning of 1934 in the most unprecedented flood any person living in the Colony had ever seen. Your Excellency has seen what no other Governor has seen because you happened to be here at the tail-end of what I believe was a most unprecedented drought in 1926. The 1911 drought was nothing in comparison with

the 1926 drought. It not only destroyed crops but cattle. It was ruinous to agriculture as well as to pastoral pursuits. That is the reason why I am constrained to put this motion before the Council while Your Excellency is in the Chair. No man coming here within the next 50 years will know the country and see conditions as you have seen them. You saw the country at its worse, and therefore you can easily conceive of the state of affairs one has been crying against all along. It is difficult to describe the condition of this Colony in 1934 when the flood was on, and it would be still more difficult to describe it to anybody who comes along. It is impossible to take any stranger to the country and make him understand what was there in January, 1934. Then there will be waiting and watching to understand what one is speaking about when one speaks of a comprehensive scheme of drainage and irrigation for the coastlands. Your Excellency has seen and that is why the appeal has been made to you to assist by appealing to the powers-that-be.

I consider from my experience that to preach the gospel of "Back to the land" under present conditions is criminal and wilful deception. No man, no matter who he is, with a limited capital can make a livelihood out of the land under present conditions. We are unable to supply the West Indian Colonies with rice all the time, and we live in a country in which rice-growing is certainly an industry which can be prosecuted with advantage. Because of the fact that we cannot be certain that we will reap what we sow every year, the people who depend upon us for their supply of rice cannot with any degree of certainty enter into contracts with us. We may have too much in one year and none at all in the next, because when we expect a crop, as in this last instance, we get a flood which deprives us of getting anything at all, and then when we have summoned up enough courage to embark again we get a drought such as we are passing through now. If Government had the experience of Members of this Council it would see the fallacy of talking about encouraging people to take up land, because the people it is preaching to are aware that there is no truth in it, and have no faith in it. When the balata industry was under sway some of the men conceived the idea of not returning to the

forest and devoted themselves to the cultivation of the soil. They took up 5 or 6 acres of land and appeared to have a flourishing cultivation. In less than three months the rain descended, and the whole crop went because of the flood. That is what has been going on in the country almost from time immemorial. Is it not time for Government to take measures to prevent a recurrence of such a state of affairs?

Recently there has been some talk about growing bananas. I would like to hear the Director of Agriculture say that you can embark upon the cultivation of bananas or anything else on flooded lands and hope to achieve success. Government preaches agriculture to people under conditions which make it impossible for agriculture to succeed. A short while ago there was some talk of producing cassava because a firm wanted the starch, but would any sane man embark upon the growing of cassava on any large scale on the swampy lands we have here? This mud flat is as rich as any for agricultural products. I have been told by a planter, who is now enjoying his well-earned savings somewhere in Scotland, that British Guiana has been able to keep its head above water as a sugar-producing country owing to the fertility of its soil, and that is why, in spite of the cost of labour and other disadvantages, it has been able to keep itself alive. Even the sugar industry is feeling its way owing to the continuous drought and flood. But for the fact that the proprietors of Cane Grove have some capital behind them, that estate would have been ruined during the recent flood.

What is alarming is that in the face of all this calamity Government has not propped anything by way of preventive measures for the future. It is all very well for Government to give flood relief here and there, and to mend here and there a dam which was broken during the flood, but would that prevent a recurrence of those conditions? Has Government not discovered that the unemployment that was rife in the country, a thing unknown until very recently, has now been intensified by the ravages of the flood and the present drought? Are we to have these as a heritage forever? I think they can be averted by a comprehensive scheme of drainage and irrigation which would make it possible for

men to reap what they sow. Government has always been told in this Council that it cannot hope to get the people to take to the soil, which of course everyone will admit is the source from which we get our exports, so long as the conditions remain what they are. Experience has shown that it cannot support the present population far less attract other people to the country.

What will any enlightened Government do in such circumstances? Under such conditions what is the duty of Government? It is the duty of Government to adumbrate schemes which would preclude the possibility of a recurrence of conditions such as we knew them last year. An enlightened Government would first of all see whether it is not possible to improve conditions so as to make it possible to give the country a move on. Instead of doing that what has Government set itself to do? Government has only been constructing machinery to extort taxes and increase the number of tax-gatherers, to squeeze blood out of stone. That is what Government has done at this session. Government has engaged itself seriously to extort money from people who have none. Is it that Government has not been able to perceive that unemployment is becoming a menace to the peace of the country? If you cannot send men to the soil, where are you going to send them, and if men are bordering on starvation what law will they know? Necessity knows no law. Is Government waiting for a breach of the peace of the country before it takes upon itself to do something when that situation has been staring Government in the face for years and years? I do not think so. I am appealing to Your Excellency because you have seen what men who will call themselves constructive Governors have not and will not see. Sir Gordon Guggisberg, a man of vision, when he came to the Colony discovered that irrigation and drainage for the coastlands were necessary. He was a man of large vision and saw the necessity for a Royal Commission of engineers to survey the country in order to make that possible. He did not agree at all, he said, with those scrappy patch-work schemes we had all around us. It is not that Government has done absolutely nothing in an attempt to effect drainage in some districts. The pumps that are in the villages now are evidence against that proposition. But I say that Government schemes have not gone far enough.

I hold in my hand the Report of a Committee on Drainage and Irrigation on the East Coast, Berbice, and the Corentyne Coast. There was a small Committee for Berbice, of which I had the good fortune or misfortune to be a member, one for Demerara and another for Essequibo to go into the question. On those Committees were men of the calibre of Mr. W. M. B. Shields, Mr. J. K. C. Gordon, the late Mr. R. B. Butts and the late Mr. Essex, not to mention your humble servant who knows nothing about the country in which he has lived all his life. But what did the then Director of Public Works, Mr. Pudsey, say? He wrote:—

“I have somewhat reluctantly arrived at the opinion that the whole district cannot be included in any scheme or schemes to be put in hand in the near future. I therefore only deal in this report with those areas which I think can reasonably be expected to profit on account of the proposed improvements, and where there is a fair chance of the works being properly maintained.”

The Director of Public Works threw cold water on the report of the Committee. I believe it was on the strength of that report that Government embarked on the Kilmarnock scheme. Up to now we know what the position is. Government will have to spend as much again as it has already spent. In a letter to Mr. Pudsey I wrote:—

“With reference to paragraph 13 of the report experience has proved that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to keep the outer channels free from silt during the dry season when there is never sufficient water to force them, and the proprietors have never been able to co-operate to do the “digging when necessary.” This is exemplified by the fact that there is not a single sugar estate in the Colony without a pumping plant, an expedient which has been resorted to from sheer necessity. *Natural Drainage* by means of sluices has been found to be a complete failure, as the population and area of this district are about the same as those of the Whim and Bloomfield District (see paragraph 10) I see no reason why a pumping plant should not be installed in this district as well.”

When an attempt was made by Government to do something as the result of that report we did not want certain people who were living in that area. That paragraph was written because there was not the slightest reason why those people should be kept out of the scheme. It was pointed out to Government that if it did it would be throwing the incidence of taxation on a few who would not be able to bear it, and Government's efforts would be frustrated.

That warning was not heeded at all. A pump was put down at Gibraltar costing about \$49,000 but the whole village could not raise that amount. The result is that the pump has been taken away. People who could not participate in the scheme should have been saved from themselves. What would have been a success otherwise has become a failure. That is how Government thinks it should go about these matters. Government embarks on these patch-work schemes against the advice of people who should know, and when they fail Government says "It has failed. We remain as we are and you have to pay the tax."

Under the conditions which prevail in the country at present, to induce people to go to the soil is nothing short of a delusion and a snare. Agricultural employment by peasant proprietors on the coastlands is nothing short of that. One only has to travel in the train and see the district between Mahaica and Mahaicony, a lovely stretch of flat country with three creeks within a distance of 24 miles. They are really three rivers of fresh water. Government cannot see its way to harness that water to benefit that district, and it is appalling, pitiable when passing that district even now to see the devastation by the flood, all the blasted rice standing there. One individual in the person of Mr. Isaac McLean has been able to put a small pump in the creek and water a small area. Could not Government see its way to do likewise, or instal a pump of greater volume, and by means of canals make that district prosperous? But if Government did that it would be of no advantage because along the entire foreshore of that district there is not a single outlet, so that when the water accumulates there is no means of getting drainage out to sea. Hasn't Government got the brains in the Public Works Department? If the brains are not there can we not import men with brains? We have more than is necessary here, but Government has no faith in local people. I regret, sir, that you will not be here for many years to come, because the knowledge you have gained of the country and its requirements would have been useful to us here, and you would have been able to impart that knowledge to others who come here.

There is a district on the Corentyne in

which not a grain of rice has been planted because those who rent land exacted \$2.50 per acre for water. I have information that a whole crop of rice has been allowed to be blasted because the farmers were refused water on the excuse that if they got water they would be independent of the estate. It is easy enough for Government to get a pump for the Canje creek and provide irrigation for the whole of that district, and put another pump at the other end to give the necessary drainage. I know from experience on the East Coast and also on the Corentyne Coast that those two districts could provide enough rice to swamp the West Indies and to challenge Burma too. At present it is only a gamble.

I began by saying that it is not necessary to defend a position that cannot be successfully attacked. I ask Government to accept the motion and not only to say that it accepts it, but to take the necessary steps to put the suggestions into execution, to give the Colony a move on. Government must admit that this country has been in a stagnant state for a long time, and that there have been advocates of one school or another, advocating methods of progress, and that all those suggestions have so far failed. Government must also realise after the experience of 1934 that the only solution is adequate drainage and irrigation of the coastlands unless Government has made up its mind to remove all civilisation into the interior, which is impossible. I have a sincere hope that the Rupununi scheme will materialise, and if it does what is Government going to do? Make the people prosperous; give them drainage and irrigation here so that they might reap what they sow, and then they will plant bananas and other things. A spasmodic exploitation of gold with the fluctuation of prices of diamonds and a dying balata industry cannot save this country. Those industries provide employment for certain sections of the labouring community, but those people are only a few, at the very most 20,000 or 30,000 people. I venture to assert that if there was a drainage and irrigation scheme on the coastlands those coastlands would take another 8,000 people.

It is time that Government should know that there are people who feel that Govern-

ment has not done, and has shown no sign of doing what it ought to do in the interest of the community and the Colony in general, and the reason why I took the opportunity to bring this motion so forcibly to the notice of this Council and Your Excellency is because I am satisfied that with your experience of the conditions I have indicated you will be able to make your influence felt. I cannot conceive of Your Excellency doing otherwise if I have assessed you at your correct valuation as a person who has the welfare of the country at heart. It is not possible for you to leave these shores with the knowledge you possess of the resources of the country and the means of exploiting them and sit quietly and allow the country to drift. No matter what is the cost, in the face of this calamity Government would be justified in telling its creditors to wait, and in taking every penny from the productive portions and re-animating the unproductive portions. Are we going to allow the country to remain stagnant and sink? The time has come when we should face the facts. In order to lift it we have to create more debts, if not we have to take what we can get and try to get more. Your Excellency will have earned the gratitude of this country wherever you may be if you can lend us your assistance and give the benefit of your experience to the proper quarters so that this may be an accomplished fact.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I have pleasure in seconding the motion. Earlier in the session I asked a question to which I received a reply yesterday. I asked what was the amount spent on drainage and irrigation over a certain period in Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo. The question was:—

“What amount has been spent on Drainage and Irrigation Schemes in Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice with the object of increasing the production of Rice during the last five years and for the 10 months ended October, 1934? Give each County and district separately.”

The reply given shows that \$110,000 was spent in Essequibo between 1929 and 1934, \$85,000 in Berbice and \$498,000 in Demerara. I have often from my seat here urged on Government the necessity of doing something more than has been done in the past in connection with drainage and irrigation. I am not going to deal with the County of Berbice because I

do not know as much about the irrigation and drainage requirements there as I do about Essequibo, the constituency which I have the honour to represent. But I do say that the money that has been spent—and very large sums of money have been spent on drainage and irrigation works throughout the Colony—has been misspent with the best intentions.

The hon. Member for Berbice River has laid stress as I have often done in this Council, on what happens on sugar estates as compared with what happens in villages or districts in which the control of drainage and irrigation is under Government, and whose schemes have been carried out by Government. In Essequibo nearly half a million dollars has been spent on drainage and irrigation. What has been the result? I am not in any way blaming the present Director of Public Works, but I do severely blame his predecessors, especially Mr. Pudsey whose adventures and costly mistakes have been to a great extent the cause of the present position. Mr. Pudsey believed that by impounding savannah water a supply is assured for irrigation needs. In Essequibo that has proved to be a great mistake. Mr. Pudsey and Government were warned by planters that impounding water in savannah areas would not give the water required when it was most needed, and that is in time of drought. It does provide a little water for the first few weeks of fairly severe dry weather. He was told by the speaker, among others, that what was wanted in Essequibo was to tap the Pomeroon river and bring the water down. In other sugar and rice producing countries enormous sums of money have been spent on irrigation. I was reading some time ago of the enormous sums that have been spent in Hawaii and Honolulu in connection with irrigation. It is known to those Members of the Council who are familiar with the growing of sugar cane, that in Hawaii 9, 10 and 11 tons of sugar have been produced from one acre.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): For two years' growth.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Sugar planters in this country have got as high as 5 tons of sugar to the acre with a fair supply of water. Plns. Rose Hall, Albion, Port Mourant and Skeldon have not only in-

stalled pumps to put water on the land but also drainage pumps to take the water off. The water for irrigation is drawn from the Canje creek. There are few countries in the world in which Nature has been so lavish in its favours in regard to rivers as this country, but what use are we making of them? So much for irrigation.

As regards drainage Government has an object lesson on the sugar estates. Where natural drainage is deficient or non-existent they have powerful pumps to take the water off. I will refer again to the County of Essequibo. Fifty years ago there were several drainage pumps at the northern end of the Coast. Is there a single one to-day? No. What is the result? Constant flooding despite the huge sums of money that have been spent. What is extraordinary to me is the reply I received to my question regarding the flooding of Pln. Lima. It reads:—

“The present flood conditions have been relieved to a certain extent by making a cut from Lima into Alliance. Expenditure on measures to prevent a recurrence of flood is precluded owing to the impecunious state of the Drainage District.”

The reply is most illuminating. It might be considered amusing if it were not so serious. What an admission after nearly half a million dollars has been spent in Essequibo on drainage and irrigation? The people were told that they must expect flooding periodically. If they are not flooded by rain their channels are blocked and they cannot get the water off. In my opinion that is a most unsatisfactory condition. I do not say it is not the truth, but it is most unsatisfactory for those unfortunate people who are living there to be told that they could go on planting rice but Government is not responsible for the flooding of the land and is unable to keep the water off. Those people are called upon to pay heavy drainage and irrigation charges for which they have received no benefit. I do not like to remember the number of years I have known the Essequibo Coast. I was an overseer 38 years ago and I can honestly say that in regard to drainage the villages, especially those at the northern end of the Coast, are in the same deplorable condition to-day as they were 38 or 40 years ago.

The hon. Member for Berbice River

rightly asked how could the people be advised to go back to the land? The late Sir John Harrison has put it in cold print that this Colony can produce 2,000,000 tons of sugar, and that the soils are extremely fertile on the coastlands. With all these advantages, with a bountiful and unlimited supply of water for irrigation purposes, we should not have year after year reports appearing in the Press that the rice crop has been entirely destroyed, or that only half the usual crop would be reaped owing to the want of irrigation. It is a sad commentary. Until Government makes up its mind to put down irrigation pumps and drainage pumps agriculture will always languish in this Colony. I am not blaming any member of the Government sitting around this table. I am fully aware that the Director of Public Works knows and has admitted that what is required in Essequibo are drainage pumps, but he tells me in the same breath it is not his fault Government cannot get the money. I say we cannot get the money now because Mr. Pudsey threw it into the sea and we have to suffer. I will be excused if on a motion which deals with the whole of the coastlands of the Colony I devote nearly all of my time in referring to the County of Essequibo. I consider that Essequibo is the most unfortunate and has received the most inefficient service in regard to drainage and irrigation than any other part of the Colony. I know I am up against a hopeless task, but that will not daunt me. I have been speaking on the subject from almost the first year I was elected a Member of this Council, but I am sorry to say that it would appear that it is so much waste of time. It will be remembered for a couple of years, and you will get the usual platitudes “We have no money,” or “A scheme is being drawn up,” but the fact remains that we are in the same position to-day on the Essequibo Coast as we were 40 years ago.

Your Excellency has appointed a Commission to go into the prevailing conditions on the Essequibo Coast. Sugar has almost disappeared. The end of March or early in April will see the last canes going through the Hampton Court mill. I am sure the Commission will make valuable recommendations on the evidence that is brought before it, and any schemes that are put before it, but Government will be

blamed when Hampton Court disappears as a sugar estate. The final catastrophe at Hampton Court was caused by the flood. There can be no doubt about that. It wiped out one-third of the crop of that estate. The only other estate in this Colony that has suffered in comparison with Hampton Court as regards damage done by the flood is Cane Grove. What happened at Hampton Court? It might be said that Hampton Court did not have its drainage in the order in which it should have been, but that was not the position. The last nail in the coffin of Hampton Court was driven when the water came down from Dartmouth, the adjoining village, in which the koker had not worked for years, and from the adjoining estate, Bounty Hall. Government may say it is not responsible, but I say Government is responsible for the villages, and if Government had heeded my warning, my suggestions and my recommendations years ago we would have had those pumps there and Hampton Court would have been going to-day. It was decided that the estate would be carried on in spite of the difficulties of low prices.

We are greatly indebted to Your Excellency. We had an interview with you, sir, and you have done everything possible that a Governor could do to save Hampton Court and the sugar industry, and to save the people—which is most important of all—from starvation and a slow and lingering death. I am sorry to say that in a way I am to blame because I was promised by the late Governor in numerous interviews—I have his letters—that he was going to do something for Essequibo, and he has gone away without doing anything, and has left us in the state we are in. I think the hon. Member for Berbice River has done a great good to the Colony in bringing forward his motion. The importance of drainage and irrigation cannot be too frequently brought before the notice of Government. This is an agricultural country, but instead of going forward we are going backward, not through any fault of the people. I have been told that the agricultural labourer is a lazy man. I say he is far from being a lazy man. The courage with which he has stuck to the soil in the face of insurmountable difficulties, in the face of the apathy shown by Government, is commendable. He loses a crop and he

says it is God's work. He is downhearted for a few weeks, but he starts again. But how long is he to continue in that way? I do hope Government will do something. Government will not solve the irrigation and drainage difficulties of this Colony by spending \$40,000 here and \$10,000 there. It is so much money thrown away. If Government wants to get good results it will have to spend money. If Government does embark again on drainage and irrigation schemes I hope it will take the advice of the sugar planters of the Colony, a body of men who by their foresight, by their business ability and by their knowledge of the country can point to splendid drainage and irrigation schemes.

I am hoping, despite all the disappointments we have had, that something will be done, and I would like to hear the views of the Director of Public Works as to what is needed. I want his opinion, his honest opinion. He is a plain talker, and I would like to hear him say to-day what is needed and why there have been these failures. I do not want to hear from him the old thing, "The people." I do not want to hear such a hopeless statement as the answer given to my questions:—

"Expenditure on measures to prevent a recurrence of floods is precluded owing to the impecunious state of the Drainage District."

What a terrible thing for Government to say? It is tantamount to saying "No hope, no hope. You must depend upon God's rain and the disappearance of the mud banks along the coastlands of the Colony. That is the best we can tell you."

Mr. LUCKHOO: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion which has been so ably moved and seconded, and in doing so I do not wish to traverse the ground already covered by the two previous speakers. I shall content myself more or less with dealing with matters which are peculiarly within my own knowledge. There can be no doubt that British Guiana, with the wonderful potentialities of wealth with which generous Nature has endowed it, is still in the background. The question of drainage and irrigation has been urged upon Your Excellency's Government many years ago. In fact I think one of the Members who repre-

sented Berbice in 1906 brought forward a motion with respect to the drainage and irrigation of the coastlands of the Colony in 1912. I refer to Mr. J. P. Santos. Since that time there have been persistent representations to Government on this question, and steps have been taken by Government to deal in a measure with the question of drainage. In the Berbice district, as I observe from the replies given yesterday, a sum of \$85,000 was expended on the Kilmarnock-Springlands dam. I think that figure includes the empolder of what is known as the Phillippe-Macedonia area. That amount was provided from Imperial funds for the relief of unemployment in that district. The work has been accomplished, but whether with satisfactory results or not is a question for those in a position to judge. But from the reports I have heard it appears that there has been unnecessary expenditure in connection with a portion of that work. I think the work which has been done has been the means of relieving the people on the coastlands within that area from the terrible ravages of flood during the early part of last year. It has done some good, and the people in that locality are very grateful for the means adopted in order to prevent the flooding of the villages in the upper reaches of the Corentyne.

Government subsequently embarked on another scheme, the empoldering of the block between Phillippe and Macedonia, comprising five estates. Some money has been expended in draining that particular area, but as I remarked some days ago, the conditions under which those lands were offered for lease were such as not to attract people to take up leases. I do not know whether it is Government's intention to maintain the Kilmarnock-Springlands dam. There can be no doubt that that dam will be the basis of any future development on the Corentyne Coast, and if Government is so well disposed towards the community there I think Government should undertake the responsibility and liability of maintaining that dam. Apart from that, between No. 57 and No. 74 we have a good many Village Authorities who have had advances from Government for the carrying out of certain improvements of their estates, draining and empoldering the lands. If that dam is not properly maintained I think there will be hardly any chance of recovering drainage rates from

those people, because it is only by maintaining that dam it is hoped that those people will get the full benefit of that irrigation scheme. Therefore I ask Government seriously to consider the advisability of maintaining that dam. With respect to the liability of those villages on their loans—I understand it is quite a large amount—they are quite willing to carry out their obligations, but at the same time they need every possible help from Government with respect to the maintenance of the dam which would have the effect of enabling the rice industry in that locality to expand, and also attract settlers.

With respect to the Phillippe-Macedonia area, Government has expended a sum of money in getting that land drained, but that land is not being occupied at present, and is not bringing in any return. What does Government intend to do with that area? Does Government intend to lease the lands on the conditions advertised some months ago? Government is not going to get settlers. If those lands are rented at reasonable rates, and if after a number of years the people would be able to acquire them, there would be a reasonable chance of Government establishing that area. Unless the terms induce people to go on the land there is no possibility of getting people to settle. Apart from that Government should see that facilities are given the people to bring out their produce. If Government is unable at the present time to tackle the scheme as a whole, may I suggest that it be taken in parts? Government should take one village, say Phillippe or Macedonia, and see whether it can make the project sufficiently attractive to induce the people to settle on the land. Before those impossible conditions were laid down people were inquiring from Government whether it would give out those lands, but as soon as the conditions were laid down they kept away from the movement, and the scheme remains at present as it was when it was started. If the object of Government was to attract settlers, I do urge on Government to consider a revision of the terms.

With regard to the other question of the Corentyne Coast, there can be no doubt that we have an extremely fertile area there, and I think Mr. Douglas referred to it as "an extremely interesting area" when reporting to the Empire Mar-

keting Board on the question of rice. Government might be in a position to impound a quantity of water beyond the third depths so as to provide means of irrigating the third depths without incurring the expense of installing a pumping plant. That might be tried out if Government is not disposed to make one comprehensive scheme. I suggest that the question be taken up by Government in instalments. It might be necessary to get the opinions of people who are actually resident on the Coast. I am sure that the sugar planters in that district are quite capable of managing their own affairs. In a matter of this sort it would be well for Government to consult and get the advice of those sugar planters who are actually resident on the Coast. I do not ask Government to embark on any wild-goose scheme, but I do ask Government to consider any reasonable scheme that might be put forward by a competent body such as the sugar planters. I would urge upon Government to examine the matter thoroughly before embarking on any comprehensive scheme, and I am sure Government will get the assistance of the sugar planters in any scheme that is brought forward.

I am not going to speak about other parts of the Colony. I think in 1898 there were under cultivation in the whole Colony only 6,000 acres of rice lands. According to the returns of the Director of Agriculture there were 72,096 acres under rice cultivation in 1929, 64,252 in 1930, 78,424 in 1931, 84,783 in 1932, 63,524 in 1933 and 57,840 in 1934. Look what immense strides the industry has taken from 1898 to the present time. With a little more encouragement, better communication with the back lands, there would be established in that locality a very happy and prosperous peasantry. The people are not looking to Government for help in every possible direction. What they ask is that Government might assist them in a measure to undertake those large works. If the works can be undertaken by the Local Authorities from loans under the Local Government Board Ordinance then Government should give every assistance, because there would be sufficient safeguards. But if Government thinks it should embark upon a large scheme I think Government would be well advised to consult those who are capable of

expressing an opinion on that point. We have an inexhaustible supply of fresh water in the Canje creek.

I do hope that no harsh measures will be taken by Government with respect to the drainage rates in connection with the locality, Lancaster to Kildonan, which is suffering from the drought. If schemes are carried on in that district they would be the means of adding to the meagre earnings of the people at the present time. Then Government could hope to recover at least a part of the expenditure on those schemes. I have approached Your Excellency with respect to the Corentyne Coast and you have carried out your promise. The people are most grateful for the relief you have given them, but I think there are other parts of the Corentyne which might be similarly treated, and if this project is carried out to its fullest there is no doubt that the Colony will become the granary of the West Indies.

I am not advocating that these schemes should be embarked upon in sparsely populated areas, but on the Corentyne Coast where the population is distributed I think Government might consider the necessity of doing something. I do not suggest that Government should embark upon these schemes without regard to the population. I am asking Government seriously to consider the question of doing such necessary works in that locality as would enable the people to reap their crops and pay off their indebtedness to Government. I do appeal to Government that steps should be taken to investigate this matter thoroughly, and not merely allow it to rest in the hope that in a year or two it might be brought up again for discussion. This is an opportune time, and I feel sure you will have earned the extreme gratitude of the people if steps are taken at once to investigate the question and afford them every possibility again to extend their rice and other cultivations.

Dr. SINGH: I have risen to support the motion. I doubt whether Government will support it. Drainage and irrigation are two important subjects in this Colony. They are so important that they were taken up by the old Combined Court, and we feel they are so important to-day that we are also considering them. For years Government has been aware of the

fact that those districts—Mahaica-Mahaicony particularly—have had periodical visitations of floods and droughts. Government is also aware of the fact that several deputations have approached Government from those areas, but up to now nothing has been done. If we had drainage and irrigation to-day perhaps we would have had two very flourishing creeks, the Mahaica and the Mahaicony creeks. But what has happened? The morale of the people has been destroyed by the floods and droughts. Many have left the Colony for India, and many are migrating to other parts of the country. I think the time is opportune for Government to try to undertake drainage and irrigation schemes. All our industries are stagnant, and if we are going to encourage new industries this is the time we should embark on drainage and irrigation works, thereby giving the people an impetus to start some new industries.

Mr. SEAFORD: When I first read this motion I was not sure from what angle I should approach it because I was not sure that when the hon. Member tabled it he did it in all seriousness, or if he was in one of his jocular moods. It is a gigantic scheme. Two hon. Members have spoken on the question of drainage and irrigation, and there is no one who does not agree that they are necessities. But when I read that Government must “raise the necessary funds for the immediate embarkation upon such a scheme” the enormity of it left me gasping. That is why I felt that the hon. Member could not have been quite serious when he tabled the motion. The entire coastlands of the Colony extend from Berbice to Morawhanna. Before anyone embarked on any drainage or irrigation scheme it is necessary first to ascertain whether the lands to be irrigated or drained are of any value. Are we going to irrigate and drain the lands and then find that they are of no agricultural value? We might find that instead of economical development it might be an uneconomical catastrophe, and that in no way could it ensure prosperity to the country. The question we have to consider in all these matters is whether or not it is an economic proposition. The mover of the motion said that Government had not propounded any measures for drainage, etc.

On this occasion I must point out to Members that Government actually has done something.

The hon. Member might remember that there was a Flood Investigation Committee which recommended certain works to be done to relieve flooding chiefly. I understand that those recommendations have been submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by Government, and a reply is awaited. It is therefore not fair to say that Government has done nothing in the matter. I must also admit that there were very large works put forward, but the Committee could not agree to all those works, because in going into the question it was found that the cost of certain of those works to make the lands fit for cultivation would far exceed the economic value of the lands. We cannot dive into the ocean without knowing what depth there is. Even those works that were recommended by the Committee total \$428,000, and they were only for very small areas. I hesitate to attempt to estimate what it would cost for the whole Colony. It would be millions, and that is only for drainage. On the contrary it would be very much better if instead of taking a general scheme for the entire coastlands, Government selected certain areas where population already exists. I have in mind a place like the Canals Polder, and places like that. There is good land there and population. The object is to try to concentrate the people of the Colony. You cannot take large areas like the Mahaica creek and the Mahaicony creek and expect Government to give them drainage and irrigation schemes. It is absolutely impossible. If we are going to do anything to increase agricultural production we must cheapen the cost of production and go in for intensive cultivation. We must get all the people closer together and as near the centre as possible.

The hon. Member for Berbice River referred to a report and said that there was no sugar estate in the Colony without a pumping plant. The hon. Member knows the country very well, and has not very far to go on the West Coast to find that none of the estates there have pumping plants. They have natural drainage at the present moment. I do not know whose report the hon. Member was reading from.

Mr. ELEAZAR : Exceptions prove the rule. If the estates on the West Coast have none all the other estates have, and that proves the rule.

Mr. SEAFORD : That is one of the legal terms. I accept the hon. Member's admission. I am very glad to know that the sugar estates are regarded in the manner in which they are, but they are not quite infallible. I am afraid there is no sugar estate in the Colony, or no district in the Colony that could cope with the rains we had at the beginning of last year without being flooded. It is quite impossible, and no estate or no business would ever consider it economical to instal pumping plants to deal with such a rainfall. The pumps might be used once in a hundred years. We cannot put down pumps to meet every emergency that might crop up. We have no control, and never will have control over such rainfall.

A great point has also been made about our unlimited water supply and the wonderful and large rivers that we have, of which greater use could be made for irrigation purposes. That is correct up to a point. The Mahaica creek was referred to. It would be surprising to know that in dry weather the Mahaica creek becomes salted for a considerable distance up. I can assure hon. Members that if there is any possibility of our getting irrigation water in drought a pump would have been put down for that purpose many years ago. It is a matter that will need very great consideration. The creek becomes very small in dry weather and gets salted. In wet weather it becomes a mighty river, so much so that it floods the land around it. It is going to be a very big proposition indeed to get any drainage through the Mahaica creek unless pumps are put down, the cost of which we know. I doubt very much whether any Director of Public Works—the most brilliant man in the world perhaps—would ever recommend putting down large pumps in that area. I cannot imagine anyone doing such a thing. From an engineering point of view it becomes very simple if you consider the cost of installing pumps, but we have to look at what return we are going to get on the money invested. The hon. Member for Western Essequibo referred to the question of—

The Council adjourned for the luncheon recess.

Mr. SEAFORD : When the Council adjourned I was about to refer to the remark made by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo as regards the savannahs and the conservancies. I agree to this extent : that where you can tap a river, and where you can be sure that you will get a supply of water which is not salt, it is always the correct thing to do, and lately a sugar estate has adopted that principle on the West Bank in respect of the Camounie creek by putting down a pump there. Unfortunately, on the East and West Coasts we have had to flood the savannahs and use the stored water because, unless we go to very heavy expense, it would not be economical. It is impossible to get any other water except by flooding the savannahs. For that reason the conservancies are not as good as they ought to be if you want proper irrigation.

There was one point made by the hon. mover of the motion when he referred to the Gibraltar pump which he said had cost \$79,000 while the value of the whole property was only about \$5,000. That bears out my point that we must consider the value of the land and the benefit to be derived from it. There is another point which I think would have to be carefully considered, and that is if we propose to embark on this gigantic scheme we have to find the people to put on the land. The hon. Member referred in his speech to the unemployment question, but I can assure him, and I feel he must know, that at certain periods there is really in this Colony no unemployment of agriculturists. There is a certain amount of unemployment, but it is more among people who work in stores, artisans, carpenters, painters and perhaps a few engineers. But amongst agriculturists there is no unemployment, and perhaps the time will not be far off when I will send a telegram to the hon. Member asking him if he could supply agricultural labourers for various parts of the Colony. We have at times tried to get more people to work on various estates but we could not find them.

With regard to the talk of bringing people into the Colony, there are numbers of people in the West Indian Islands quite willing and anxious to come here because

of the unemployment question in those countries. The Governor of Barbados visited this Colony some time ago and discussed the question with the Government, but when the matter was gone into very carefully I think the local Government was informed that Barbados had no agricultural people to settle here. In the other islands it was found that there would be trouble in getting people to come to this Colony in large numbers. I think that instead of going into a very expensive scheme we might ask the Department of Agriculture to produce some semi-aquatic plants, whether bananas or pine-apples, or produce something that will grow in water.

I cannot agree with the motion as it stands, and I am sure the mover will amend it because I feel that we are all in favour of irrigation and drainage, but not on this huge scale. What I would suggest is if Government proposes to do anything—I know Government has it in mind—that the existing schemes should be perfected. We have schemes in the Colony to-day, but in the past Government has been too haphazard in its policy, jumping from here to there. I had no idea that Government had spent so much money on irrigation and drainage for the various parts of the Colony. The hon. Member for Western Essequibo said that Government had spent in Essequibo something in the neighbourhood of \$500,000.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: That is including the scheme operated by Mr. Pudsey.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am referring to the money that has been spent on that. The schemes have been too haphazard. The first thing is to get accessible land which will produce something, and in that connection Government can get considerable help from the valuable report by the Commissioner of Lands and Mines and the Deputy Director of Agriculture. Government should concentrate on those lands, bring people in and put them on those lands. Government cannot afford to embark upon huge schemes for a few people here and there. We should concentrate the people and their activities and perfect the schemes which have already been started instead of launching out on a new scheme which we will never be able to afford, and from which we will never get any results.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I rise to support the motion. As I understand the remarks made by the hon. mover it seems to me that what he is after is something in the nature of a scheme of insurance against loss of crops in the event of flood and drought, and I feel sure that if that is the motive of the hon. Member he will obtain the support of every Member in this Council because, so far as this Colony is concerned, we have had quite a lot of sorrowful experience in the past when farmers after labouring on the lands have suffered severe loss either through flood or drought. The occurrence of a year ago is fresh in the mind of every Member. I agree with some of the things the Hon. Mr. Seaford has said but I would tell him that as far as I understood the hon. mover of the motion, it was not his intention that Government should immediately embark upon a scheme for the irrigation and drainage of the entire coastlands, from the Corentyne to Morawhanna. What I understood him to mean was that Government should take the scheme step by step, beginning first of all in those areas where this Colony has suffered in the past very severe loss, and where undoubtedly there is a resident population. I think that is the motive behind the mover of the motion. I know that Government would make a careful examination of the schemes before embarking upon them. I take it that Government would not irrigate and drain an area where there is no population, because Government would open itself to criticism not only by Members of the Council but from the Secretary of State.

I fail to see the alarm the last speaker expressed when he referred to the words used in the motion. From the multitude of opinions expressed Government is bound to obtain some good material to work upon. There can be no doubt that on the East Coast the question of drainage is a very serious problem. Perhaps some of the drainage has been affected by the desire to assist the sea defence works. Some means should be devised to have the pumps working properly if they are not. The Hon. Mr. Seaford referred to schemes put up to Government. I join with him there. Lots of schemes have been put up to Government, but we do not seem to hear anything about them.

Mr. SEAFORD: I said that schemes

have been put up to Government which have been recommended by Government to the Secretary of State.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: We get no further, but I believe so far as the local Government is concerned it would do all it can to encourage the acceptance of those schemes. This motion, I submit, will strengthen the recommendations made by Government. I have every reason to believe that as the debate continues the mover himself will suggest certain amendments which would probably meet the wishes of the entire Council. But let us keep this "cannot make blood out of stone" excuse out of it. Let us try to make blood out of mud; let us have irrigation and drainage.

Mr. CANNON: At the risk of displeasing certain Members and possibly any prospective applicant for my seat, I am going to support this motion. I support it because it has been my policy, because throughout this session I have advocated an increase of nearly every item on our Estimates. (Laughter). Whether it is for District Administration or for irrigation and drainage it is going to have my unstinted support so long as we can get the money out of our fairy god-fathers in London. Whatever we can get I am going to take. The day is not very far distant when we shall be deprived of that pleasure, and I am going to take it while the going is good. I have listened very attentively to the mover of the motion, and I wish to tell him that in 1912, the then hon. Member for one of the Berbice seats, Mr. J. P. Santos, moved the following motion:—

"Whereas the present drought has brought forcibly before the public the necessity for proper drainage and irrigation schemes throughout the colony;

Be it resolved,—That this Court recommends to the Government the advisability of borrowing a sufficient sum, which sum must be spent exclusively for the purpose of irrigation and drainage areas in districts situated on Coastlands where there are no water conservancy schemes."

It will be seen that to my knowledge this matter has been before this House over 20 years ago, and to-day we find the same state of affairs being discussed. In moving his motion in 1912, Mr. Santos is reported in Hansard as follows:—

"He said the attention of the Government had been drawn repeatedly to the necessity for irrigation and drainage schemes, and that the

present drought which had unfortunately seriously affected cultivation and the mining and other industries had forcibly emphasised the necessity. The Government could not ignore the fact that had irrigation and drainage schemes existed the loss in consequence of the drought which they had been experiencing for the past two or three months would not have occurred. Cattle were dying, there being no grass for them to feed on. The revenue must suffer. The revenue from minor industries must decrease. Without the industries there could be no business, and without business, no revenue. He hoped God would not let the drought last three or four months longer, for he did not know what would happen to the colony. He was afraid everything would be ruined. The colony was passing through the most trying period experienced since its acquisition by the British Government."

I say help ourselves and the Lord will help us. The late Hon. R. G. Duncan said:—

"They had become so accustomed to depending on the Government that they had forgotten that the Lord helped those who helped themselves."

That is probably the principle on which Government is to-day operating, but I wish to congratulate the planters on being able to stem their troubles during the drought seasons and during the flood period. But if the planters are able to do that, why can't Government do the same thing for the other planting elements in the Colony? I think the motion is one of many that has been tabled on this subject, which should be forcibly brought to the notice of our fairy god-fathers on the other side. From the replies given to me yesterday I feel that Government has very lavishly spent \$349,474 on the—I want to say useless—project of a bridge which might have been built at much less cost, and far less could have been spent on the road thereto. I feel I can do no more than ask to be associated with the remarks of the mover of the motion. Throughout this session, and sessions in the past, our Berbice friends have been always to the front in putting forward the case of the people in Berbice, ably associated with my friend, the hon. Member for Western Essequibo, who never fails to let us know the wants of his constituents. I have much pleasure in associating myself with what that hon. Member has said. I have perhaps a weak spot for that part of the Colony, especially now in its time of trouble.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I also rise to support the motion. I have been relieved

of a great lot because there is no dispute that drainage and irrigation are necessary to the successful pursuit of agriculture in the Colony. It has resolved itself into the question whether we have lands suitable for agricultural purposes. We are in good company because we have had the report of Mr. C. E. Douglas in 1930, in which, referring to Berbice, he said:—

“There are great stretches of land which are eminently suited to first-class rice cultivation on an extended scale, provided that water supply was available in case of deficient rainfall.”

That does away with the question whether we have lands suitable for agricultural purposes and for growing rice. The next question which has been raised by the Hon. Mr. Seaford is whether those lands can be drained and irrigated at a cost within the means of the crops planted. For a moment I may examine the areas between Bath and Eldorado in connection with which a scheme was submitted to and considered by the Flood Investigation Committee, to which the Hon. Mr. Seaford referred, and was rejected by that Committee. I am certain that if the Committee were aware of all the facts they would have adopted that scheme. That area is about 30,000 acres, and the estimated cost of that scheme is \$75,000, about \$2.50 per acre. The entire area is beneficially occupied for cattle-grazing purposes and rice cultivation. We know that as the result of the recent flood 50 per cent. of the crop was lost, and I observe from the replies to the questions by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo that in August the crops were completely destroyed. On the basis of the average yield of 20 bags of padi per acre the area would produce 220,000 bags of padi. The loss of 50 per cent. of that crop would be 110,000 bags of padi which at 72 cents per bag would be worth \$79,200. That shows that in one year that scheme would have more than paid for the initial cost.

MR. SEAFORD: I should like to point out that that estimate was only for empoldering the land.

MR. PEER BACCHUS: I had a suspicion that the Committee did not have full information on that scheme, and I think my suspicion is now confirmed. The scheme that has been called empoldering would have acted both for irrigation and

drainage. The West Coast of Berbice is being flooded by the overflowing of the Abary creek, and if a dam was constructed as recommended to the Committee it would have prevented the flooding of the land and served the purpose of preventing the water from getting back into the Abary. Following the flood there was a drought, and practically 75 per cent. of the crop in that district was lost through the drought. Within a year, 1933-34, that scheme would have put into circulation no less than \$200,000. It has been said that consideration must also be given to increased production and reduced cost of production. The position can only be remedied by drainage and irrigation which would enable the people to reap whatever they sow. If they happen to lose their crops one year, naturally the cost of that crop would eventually go into the next, therefore it adds to the cost of production. The farmers have suffered annually not less than one-third of their crops, but nobody knows about their suffering because they had sufficient to live upon.

The point was made by the Hon. Mr. Seaford that the Mahaica creek was salted far up, and that it would be impossible to get a supply of fresh water during a drought to irrigate the land in the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary area. We have had that experience during the last drought. Mention was made by the hon. Member for Berbice River of the property of Mr. Isaac McLean which is within that area, and that he was able to save his crop by means of a small pump which he used in the creek, and I do not think he saved it by using salt water.

On the question of cost, and whether it would be advisable for this Colony to obtain a further loan from the Imperial Government to embark upon a scheme of drainage and irrigation, I am aware that the Colony's Public Debt is over \$22,000,000. As we all know, that money has been spent on unproductive works which will not add one half-penny to the revenue of the Colony, yet we are being called upon year after year to budget for interest and sinking fund and maintenance of those works. We budget to collect revenue from people who cannot properly feed themselves. In my opinion it would be wiser and better if we asked for a further loan so that we may embark upon drainage and irrigation whereby we may

be able to increase our production and revenue and change the position of the country from its backward state into that of a self-supporting Colony. It is plain that by making a further loan we would be adding to the Colony's liabilities, but at the same time in spending a further loan on drainage and irrigation we would immensely increase our assets and give further security to our creditors.

Mr. WILLS: I can add but very little to the debate because the subject has been fully treated by the Members who have already spoken. I think we are all agreed that the question of drainage and irrigation is of vital importance to this country. The people are agriculturally inclined, because although they have suffered great rebuffs we find them year after year tilling the land in the hope of reaping what they have sown. No one will gainsay the fact that the Canals Polder on the West Bank are thickly populated, and that the people there practise agriculture as a means of livelihood. But they do not get very far with it, the reason being that through no fault of their own they cannot reap what they have sown. That area is roughly about 99,000 acres, and a Committee some time last year recommended to Government that the expenditure of a sum—I think it was about \$181,000—would improve the drainage conditions in that area. I do not know whether Government intends to adopt the report of that Committee and give the people in the Canals Polder the sum of money required to improve their drainage. Several deputations have approached Government and put their case, pointing out that the people cannot continue in this manner very long. It is a matter which requires great attention and should not be lightly thrown aside.

As far as I can gather, Government has not been accused of having done nothing to improve drainage, but that in spending money on drainage Government did not follow the advice of men on the spot, those planters who have lived there and know the conditions. When they gave advice it was discarded. If Government would accept this motion when it is amended I think a lasting benefit would be derived by the people of this Colony. I think the Elected Section of the Council at least should support the motion wholeheartedly.

Mr. WIGHT: I certainly deprecate the idea which is constantly impressed on this Council that money given to us by way of loan or grant is being squandered. That idea goes abroad through the newspapers, and one of these days the worm will turn and we may get no more money to assist us in relieving unemployment. I am satisfied that most of the money is thrown away through the lack of proper advice to Government. I am speaking with very little knowledge of the subject, but I certainly heard what has been said and I am prepared to vote according to the views I appreciate and agree with. People who manage sugar estates are able to take a very small acreage and build it up. I have in my mind Plns. Albion, Port Mourant, Springlands and Rose Hall, in respect of which absolutely uncultivated lands were taken up by those planters and made a perfect success. They knew what they were doing. Government should appoint a Committee and put on it men who have managed those estates for a long number of years and know more about irrigation and drainage than any Government Official. But the first thing Government will do is to appoint as Chairman a Government Official. I have always regarded that policy as a very great mistake. If an independent outsider is appointed Chairman it has a far better effect.

The Kilmarnock scheme is a waste of money. It is one instance I have before me, and I say perfectly clearly that it was opposed by every unofficial member of the Committee, but the Chairman persuaded the majority of the members to accept the scheme. I spoke very feelingly on the matter, and I distinctly recollect stating that it was a waste of money on land where there was not sufficient population to work. We talk about going in for irrigation and drainage on a large scale. Why on earth do we want to take up new land when we have the Essequibo Coast going from bad to worse? It is easy enough for Members to discuss the matter here and to think the effect is going to be miraculous, but it is constant attention and personal visits to the Coast that matter. I had the misfortune to visit the Coast recently, and I am in a position to say that the people are in dire want. They are absolutely begging and taking in one another's washing, yet we talk about bringing population

into the Colony. There is population that could be beneficially used. All Government has to do is to wipe the slate as regards the arrears of rates and let the people remain on their properties instead of taking them away and wasting money on further irrigation and drainage schemes.

I heard one Member of the Council to-day condemn Mr. Pudsey, but I was associated with Essequibo a good deal at the time, and I was told then that he was the best man in the world; he did everything for everybody and spent Government's money freely. He is not here to defend himself, but I can tell you he did a lot of good work. That is what I heard in Essequibo at the time. There is no difficulty in evolving any new scheme for the spending of money so long as the right people handle that money. I happened to be associated with a property in Essequibo about that time. It was considered by no less an authority than the late Mr. H. E. Murray to be one of the finest properties in the Colony, and I was led into agreeing to a large sum of money being spent in order to see whether the Pomeroun river could be connected with the estate for the purpose of providing a regular supply of water. About \$10,000 or \$12,000 was spent on that survey, but nothing came of it. I am satisfied that that estate could have been a success, but for one reason or another I am inclined to think that proper attention has not been given to it. Money has been put into it to improve it but it has all gone, and there is nothing to be recovered from the ashes at the moment. I am satisfied that Government can do Essequibo a good turn by encouraging the people there to put their lands under rice cultivation. There is no better place in the Colony for rice-growing than Essequibo. I think it holds that reputation abroad, and I know the rice estates there can always sell their rice at a higher price than any other estate in the Colony on account of the quality.

Reading through the Colonial Treasurer's Report yesterday I looked for outstanding assets—all the liabilities are there. I know I am going to be told that they are included in loans, but I would like to be supplied with a list of the outstanding debts by all the estates on the Essequibo Coast, even on the East Coast or wherever they are, to see whether they

are dealt with as recoverable. I shall at some other time endeavour to get the information.

As the Hon. Mr. Seaford pointed out, the proposal in the motion is undoubtedly a very big proposition. I do not think we are in a position to embark upon it as suggested in the motion, but I gather that an amendment will be made to the motion, and when that is done I will be prepared to support it.

The situation in the Canals Polder is a thorough disgrace to Government. I think Your Excellency knows that I have no faith in Government now, and I think the charges put on those lands are absolutely preposterous. The system of taxing the arable lands is certainly the proper thing. I was never in favour of the proposition that taxes should be paid on land that is absolutely of no value whatever. We have had the sea defence scheme made a colonial question at one time. A few years ago, as the result of some dissatisfaction with regard to some work on the West Coast, the question cropped up and the planters who were very soft gave in and allowed Government to revert to the system of assessment of the proprietors of the estates. I think they will find before many years that it was the greatest mistake they have ever made.

I will again impress on Members that this parrot-cry of drainage and irrigation has always been before the Council. It is true that it comes from Berbice. I certainly think if Government would go into the matter in a more businesslike way and consider the question of letting those people who are willing to remain on the Essequibo Coast remain on their properties and cultivate rice, the Essequibo Coast would be very beneficial to Government by way of returns of taxes and income tax. I understand that Government has not made any effort to collect rates due on the Essequibo Coast. Government must be satisfied that it is hopeless, and is prepared to give in and let the people start afresh. If Government takes up that attitude it would make things so much more comfortable for the people there. At present it is very undecided, and Government will commit itself to nothing whatever. I have heard that Members of the Council have gone to

Government House and discussed the saving of Pln. Hampton Court, and I read in the newspapers that Your Excellency was good enough to go down there and view the situation yourself. It did not take you long to arrive at an opinion, because you publicly announced that. It is no good flogging a dead horse. I do not think anything will save that property, but if there are people who are willing to acquire it, let them take it over. I am one who will lose heavily. I regard it as a loss and I would let it go.

I appeal to Government to go into the matter very carefully. It is a question that deserves the amount of thought that the mover of the motion has given to it, and I am satisfied that if a Committee of men who know something about the subject were appointed a decent decision would be arrived at. The people are not as lazy as some make out. It is a very serious statement for me to make—it is one perhaps that might cost me my seat—but that will not prevent me from saying it. We have an Education Department on which we are spending thousands of dollars, for what purpose? I cannot see it. It would be better if Government gave the Department of Agriculture a larger vote for the purpose of acquiring a couple of estates with the view to improving cane cultivation, the growing of rice and ground provisions, and cattle rearing. I think such a scheme would be more profitable to Government than what is being done with the money at present.

Mr. WONG: The colonial necessity indicated in the motion is such a well-known and admitted one that, as the last speaker has pointed out, it has now become a parrot cry, but that does not make it any the less an urgent and pressing problem. (Hear, hear). There are areas in this Colony which are entirely dependent upon direct rainfall for the cultivation of crops. That is a condition that should not be allowed to exist. Such an area, for instance, is Wakenaam. As recently as last year the farmers there lost their entire rice crop through failure of the rains to materialise. With the mighty Essequibo flowing all around it, it should not be beyond the wit of man to devise some means by which that river could serve that island with a supply of fresh water available for about 10 months in a year.

I may refer to another dire need in Wakenaam. Man as well as land requires irrigation. (Laughter). In that island of Wakenaam, with the people entirely dependent upon direct rainfall for their personal requirements, we find a hopeless condition existing, all the wells there being merely holes in the ground and no effort being made to revive their flow. That is no doubt a question which I shall press at an opportune time.

To return to the sphere of the motion, I do not share the opinion expressed by the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo when he stated that he did not think Government would accept the motion. After all the motion only asks for fulfilment of one of the Government policies enunciated by the late Sir Gordon Guggisberg. At this stage I might also be prepared to express the belief that the Hon. Mr. Seaford has slightly misunderstood the nature of the motion. As I understand it, the mover is merely urging on Government that some comprehensive economic and engineering survey should be made of the coastlands of the Colony, that new drainage and irrigation schemes should be adumbrated and co-ordinated with existing schemes, and that the execution of those works should only be proceeded with as and when required. It is on that understanding I am supporting the motion, and naturally, if that is the intention of the mover, the first works that would be undertaken would be the perfection, or perhaps even the completion in some cases, of existing schemes. He has already indicated that there is a good deal of urgent work of that description necessary to-day. He has referred to the report made by the Committee of which he was a member, which has been forwarded to the Secretary of State for consideration, and if the Hon. Mr. Seaford will accept the interpretation I am now putting on the motion I feel sure he will agree that its acceptance will do more than anything else to hasten a favourable decision in regard to the report with which he was associated.

I repeat that I do not think anyone will doubt that the necessity does exist here, and urgently exists, for a comprehensive scheme, not necessarily to be completed or even undertaken at once, but a co-ordinated and comprehensive scheme of irrigation and drainage. I do not think

there can be two opinions on the subject, and the only phase of it on which there might be room for differences of opinion is whether the time is now opportune for it to be undertaken. I submit that this is the time when money is cheap and when there is considerable necessity for relief of unemployment.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): I do not think there is very much I can say with regard to the motion. The subject is one that undoubtedly has received the attention of Government for some time, and its sympathy with the motion has been shown in the fact that several drainage schemes have been prepared, and constructed; and notwithstanding the fact that several Members have said they are failures, I contend that they have been undoubtedly of very great value to the sections of the Coast where they have been laid out. The main point, as far as I can see in connection with any comprehensive scheme, is that one has to bear in mind the economic value of the land in so far as the scheme is concerned and design a scheme that will be remunerative. The hon. mover of the motion referred to land which had been bought at \$3 per acre and could not pay a pumping charge of \$2.50 per acre for a small pumping plant. As has been said in this Council time and again, Government cannot construct any works at lesser cost than a private individual, therefore if a private individual is charged but cannot pay \$2.50 per acre for irrigating his land, it is certain that the individual who requires the water under a Government scheme could not pay a higher rate. I mention this because of the necessity for a close examination of any scheme that might be put up in order to arrive at the economic value of the land and the consequent cost of such drainage or irrigation scheme.

To prepare a scheme as suggested here would require a comprehensive survey of the whole of the coastlands, so that the existing schemes should be co-ordinated as the last speaker mentioned. It was that which was in the mind of Sir Gordon Guggisberg when he suggested bringing out Royal Engineers to make a survey. Whether we are in a position to meet the cost of that survey I am not prepared to say, but it would be a considerable cost,

and it would take a considerable period of time. There is no doubt whatever that some such scheme is required, both drainage and irrigation, but the whole thing boils down to the point whether the land is worth it. I have said before that it is impossible to make water run up a hill, and that is the position we are in this Colony; the coastlands are flat, and it is essential for any successful drainage and irrigation to have pumps.

THE PRESIDENT: Before asking the hon. Member to reply to the debate I would like, if the Council will bear with me for a few minutes, to take the opportunity of dealing with the subject which has been one of very great interest to me since I have been in the Colony. I would like to review—I may not have another opportunity of doing so—this particular phase of the Colony's necessities. To do so it will be necessary for me to go back to the condition which the Colony was in say 10 or 15 years ago. I have made a close examination of the difficulties of this Colony with regard to reclamation works during the last few years—and by reclamation works I mean Sea Defences, Coastal Drainage, Pure Water Supply and works of that nature.

Some years ago the necessity for the construction of sea defences became a matter of great urgency. The construction of sea defences, as we all know, destroyed natural drainage. That in its turn necessitated in many instances the putting down of pumping plants, although even before that pumping plants were in use in a number of cases in particular districts. Then we had, as has been pointed out by the mover of the motion, the question of alternate droughts and floods. It has been my misfortune, perhaps—although I am very glad to have been here, on two such occasions—I came to the Colony just after the great drought of 1926, and I was here last year during the flood. I can only hope that in future the Colony will not, for many years at all events, have to contend with two disasters of that nature. But the necessity for meeting that drought and also, to a certain extent, irrigation gave us an artesian well programme. That, after going through various difficulties and vicissitudes, which unfortunately most schemes in this Colony are destined to have to go through, has

now been reduced, I think, to a basis which can be regarded as economical. It is no good, I think, going back to the mistakes which have been made in the past, and which we now know were mistakes. In that connection I am sure the hon. Member for Western Essequibo will forgive me if I defend Mr. Pudsey. I happened to be here just before he left the Colony, and was naturally very interested in the schemes on which he was engaged when I arrived. It was evident that Mr. Pudsey was not altogether to blame for the mistakes which were made in respect to coastal drainage. A very urgent necessity for coastal drainage had arisen owing to the construction of sea defences which destroyed the natural drainage, and Mr. Pudsey was pressed not only by the Members of the Combined Court but also by the Administration at the time, to push ahead as fast as he could with those coastal drainage schemes. I do not think, if he was here now, he would refuse to admit that he was not given sufficient time to study each individual problem. The scheme was thrown at his head, and he was told to carry it out. I think I must defend him to that extent. We know that as regards coastal drainage, pumps were put down where they were not required.

Hon. Members have advocated seeking the advice of the people of the Colony. That, I must say, was one of the first things that struck me when I came to the Colony—how few of those people in the Colony who really could give Government advice were ever brought into consultation with Government in regard to matters of considerable importance. As an indication that I realised that very soon after my arrival here, I may mention that, in November, 1928, I wrote a Memorandum advocating the formation of a Sea Defence Board, and my main argument in favour of that Board was that on that Board would be those in the Colony who were mainly concerned with the question of sea defences and knew the conditions of the Colony very much better than those people who were brought to the Colony on temporary appointments. I also suggested at the same time that the same Board should interest itself in coastal drainage and irrigation, because the three conditions which the coastal belt of the Colony has mainly to contend with

are the problems of sea defence, drainage and irrigation. After a period of five or six years we have succeeded in getting a Sea Defence Board established, charged with the control of sea defences, and I do not think any member of that Board, or any Member of this Council, in spite of what the hon. Member for Georgetown Central has just said with regard to making sea defences a "Colonial Question," would wish to revert to the old condition of things. I would just throw it out as a suggestion for the future, that this Council should consider the desirability of placing upon that Board the duty of considering such questions as coastal drainage and irrigation. The members of the Board are quite capable of doing it. The men who form the Board are daily connected with the problems of drainage and irrigation, and I submit that it is the Board whose duty it should be mainly to advise Government on those matters. In doing that Government would be giving effect to one of the opinions always expressed here, that Government should consult the people of the Colony more closely in matters concerning them.

I will deal with the particular schemes which have been referred to later, but here I would like to refer to the question of the economic value of land raised by the Hon. Mr. Seaford. It is perfectly true that in considering any scheme of drainage or irrigation, or whatever it may be, the economic value of land must be considered, but here I want to sound a note of warning, and it is this: that those considering this question should not slavishly consider the economic value of the land. In the case of what are purely reclamation schemes, that is to protect or improve property already existing, it is, I think, an admitted axiom that the land, or the people owning it, should pay something towards the capital cost of those schemes. But there is a slight difference between those schemes and schemes of pure development. Where it is pure development the people of the Colony as a whole benefit because of the production of wealth which can be derived from land which is put under cultivation and can produce wealth. I therefore draw, perhaps, a subtle but a distinct difference between works that are reclamation works and those which are purely development works. And here we come back to the old question

whether a scheme should be a "Colonial Question" or not. I maintain that works of pure development should be a "Colonial Question," but works of reclamation to defend capital already invested cannot be regarded as "Colonial Questions," although the taxpayer should and does contribute considerably towards the capital cost. Therefore, when we come to the economic value of land, it can pay the Colony to lose money by leasing suitable land upon which people can be established, wipe off the capital cost altogether and simply lay it down as a principle that the annual revenue that should be derived from that land should be sufficient to maintain those works which were constructed, as regards capital, at the cost of the Colony.

Now I come to the recommendations of the Flood Investigation Committee which have been referred to. I may say that the recommendations of that Committee have been very carefully considered by Government. Unfortunately, the consideration took a longer period than I hoped, and it was not until the early part of this month that I was able to send a despatch to the Secretary of State recommending the adoption of the recommendations of that Committee and asking that this Government might be permitted to add to the loan which is already to be raised for the construction of the sea defences at Nog Eens, a sum of \$500,000 to give effect to the schemes which have been recommended by the Flood Investigation Committee. The Committee did not see its way to recommend all the schemes that were put forward, but it has recommended some. Some of them have been referred to this afternoon, and it is not necessary for me to refer to them in any detail. It has been stated, and I have told the Secretary of State so perfectly frankly, that in all these schemes it cannot be expected that the land, or the people who will go on the land which has been developed, will be able, in any way, to pay back any part of the capital cost, and that all Government has to be satisfied with is that the people in whose areas these schemes are being put down will undertake to tax themselves to the extent of meeting the annual maintenance cost of these works. I do not think I need go over again what I have said, but I want it clearly and distinctly understood that this policy, which Government has

accepted in connection with the schemes of irrigation and drainage and flood relief measures put up by the Committee, and I think this Council should accept it from now onwards, is that in all cases of pure development schemes, no part of the capital cost should be charged against the land which has been developed. It is quite evident that the protection of that land may not be an economic proposition, but there is always what is very often termed an invisible benefit to Government by having people occupying and producing wealth from land, and thus creating other business. It is perfectly obvious to any business man that it is very much better to have large areas of land occupied and producing wealth, even if the wealth produced cannot repay the capital cost of producing it, but can pay the cost of maintenance. The fact that some wealth is being produced from that land does return to Government and the taxpayers of the Colony some invisible benefit. It cannot be allocated to that particular work or scheme, but it comes back to Government in the spending power of the people who are making a living on that land. On this question of economic value we do not want too slavishly to consider in any scheme put forward whether it is actually economic on a purely business basis. I think it will be found, in this Colony at all events, that there are very few schemes put forward which could be shown on a commercial basis to be economical, but the people of the Colony who are going to pay interest and sinking fund on the loan for development must clearly understand that they will be saddled with the capital cost of those schemes.

I would like to refer to the remarks made by the hon. Member for Berbice River about the necessity for progressive schemes. That is, I think, the first essential and what he had in mind, and I think he is prepared to amend his motion a little in that connection. What we really want in this Colony are progressive schemes. I entirely agree with the Hon. Mr. Seaford that we should complete those schemes we have already in existence, and in quite a number of cases, if the recommendations of the Flood Investigation Committee are adopted, that would be done, especially in the Canals Polder and one or two other places. The schemes must be progressive.

The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) referred to the Kilmarnock-Springlands scheme, and to the necessity of maintaining the dam impounding that large area. That matter is now receiving the consideration of Government. Unfortunately, on that scheme \$85,000 has been spent, and I think it would be almost criminal to allow that money to be wasted just for the sake of a few thousand dollars which are required to maintain that dam. I have put the matter to the Secretary of State with estimates of what it would be necessary for this Council to vote each year to maintain that dam, and also to carry out the suggestion which has now been made to make use of that land, that is to begin in the Phillipe-Macedonia block, starting from the back lands at Phillipe and working eastward, developing the next block and so on progressively. If the money that has been spent is to be saved it is essential that the dam should be maintained, and I have approached the Secretary of State in that connection. I hope a reply will be received soon, and this Council will be approached with a view to voting a sum of money for the maintenance of that dam.

The hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) has referred to the Bath-Eldorado scheme. Personally, I was rather disappointed when I found that the Flood Investigation Committee had not recommended that scheme, because it has been often referred to, and it is a matter I have personally gone into. I commend it to the Council as one which might be carried out later on a progressive basis, and I think this Colony can now—I think the operations of this last year rather indicate it that, unless some catastrophe happens, or another world slump takes place, this Colony can well afford to borrow each year a moderate sum of money for development schemes. It is obvious that the Colony has to do so because, if it has to repay the capital cost and annual interest on loans of very considerable sums for reclamation works, which are not reproductive in any way, the Colony must have development works which will be reproductive so as to produce the money or wealth with which to meet those schemes which are not reproductive. I think the Colony has arrived at the time when it should seriously consider development schemes.

I do not think there is anything more I can say with regard to this motion, but I would like to congratulate the hon. Member on the moderate way in which he presented it to the Council, and for the very interesting debate it has produced. I am glad to have had this opportunity, which may not occur again before I leave the Colony, to give expression to my own views on this very important matter, and I would suggest that the policy indicated, by the formation of the Sea Defence Board, should be adopted not only for coastal drainage and irrigation but in other directions, that wherever advice is required by Government the people of the Colony who are closely connected with any scheme Government might be undertaking at the time should be brought into it.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I thank Your Excellency for your very helpful remarks, and at least for relieving the anxiety of myself, the Council and the community by your statement that there is something to be done in the direction indicated by the motion. Your Excellency has certainly saved me the trouble of going over some of the remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Seaford. Your Excellency has exploded his theory and I hope he will take it in good part. In carrying on a Government there is such a thing as public utility—not always economy. We must not always expect to get a penny for every penny we spend. I do not think recrimination has ever added anything to the council of men, and therefore I do not wish to remind the hon. Member that the country as it stands to-day, in spite of irrigation and drainage, is practically the outcome of a very apathetic Government with whom the planting fraternity had great influence, and that the hon. Member's position to-day is exactly what his predecessors' was 100 or 50 years ago. The late Hon. R. G. Duncan said: "Heaven helps those who help themselves," and the planters' view in those days was: "We have our own drainage and irrigation schemes; why should we be taxed to help those people?" The estates were always well drained and irrigated, and the neighbouring villages always inundated or scorched. Those days are past, and I am surprised that the hon. Member still has that kind of thing in his head.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am objecting to that

statement. The hon. Member is entirely wrong. To-day he will find some of the villages better drained than the estates. I would like to know where the money is coming from to do what is suggested in the motion. I object to money being broadcast without a proper scheme, and without knowing whether we are going to get any return from it.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The hon. Member made a remark that there was no place that was not flooded during the flood last year. There I join issue with him and tell him that he must be far behind the time if he does not know that Buxton drained Lusignan during the flood when that village itself was not flooded. I do not know how the hon. Member got the idea into his head that I suggested that Government should embark upon a scheme of drainage and irrigation where there was no necessity for it. My motion was intended to convey to the Council that Government might see its way to have irrigation and drainage where there is population, and where conditions warrant the scheme. In fact it is a physical impossibility to have one drainage scheme from the Corentyne to the Pomeroon. I know that in 1927 the Government was not afraid to embark on a 2½ million dollar artesian well-boring scheme, and only a very infinitesimal portion of that money has been spent, and in most of the places to no benefit at all. Only a few wells were attempted, and only a few succeeded. Most of the wells have failed, and not through faulty construction. I understand that the reason for the failure is due to the fact that there are not sufficient underground rivers to be found in a country where there is so much water on the surface. My view is that we have quite enough water on the surface in all the rivers to warrant irrigation schemes being provided by tapping the water from the rivers and creeks.

Mr. WONG: Surely the speaker should be corrected with regard to his idea of the cause of the failure of artesian wells.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If nine or ten wells are out of commission there must be a reason for it. I am not propounding any proposition of my own. The reason I have stated is what has been given as the excuse for their failure.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member will find a very interesting resumé in the Colonial Secretary's Office, which will give him the whole story.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I must thank the hon. Nominated Member for his contribution to the debate because if there are no champions there would be no fights. If it is found that the Kilmarnock scheme has been started on incorrect lines, then, of course, it is no use perfecting such a scheme. It would be better to turn back and start afresh, but by all means do something. Again I have to thank Government for its kind consideration, and with the consent of my seconder I have amended my motion to read thus:—

THAT progressive schemes of Drainage and Irrigation for the entire coastlands of the Colony are essentially necessary for economic development and the relief of unemployment and also to ensure the prosperity of the country; and this Council respectfully requests Government to obtain the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to raise the necessary funds for the immediate embarkation upon such schemes.

THE PRESIDENT: Perhaps the hon. Member will withdraw his original motion and substitute the amended motion.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do so with the consent of my seconder.

Mr. BRASSINGTON seconded.

Motion agreed to.

CAPT. FAWCETT PENSION BILL.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I beg to move that "A Bill to make provision for granting a pension for Capt. A. Fawcett, Bandmaster of the British Guiana Militia Band" be read the first time.

Mr. MULLIN seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

THE PRESIDENT: There is some little urgency about the Bill, which has been before the Council on a previous occasion and adopted, but owing to some technicality it was not allowed. I think it should go through in order to enable Capt. Fawcett to receive his pension, and I think hon. Members will agree that the

Standing Rules and Orders should be suspended.

Mr. McDAVID : I move that the Standing Rules and Orders be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through its remaining stages.

Mr. MULLIN seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. McDAVID : I move that the Bill be now read the second time. As Your Excellency has indicated, the Bill is being re-introduced into the Council. It was passed as an Ordinance some time in 1931 but repealed when Capt. Fawcett entered into an agreement with the Government to continue his employment on different terms. He has now retired finally from the Colony, and it is necessary to re-introduce the Bill. Capt. Fawcett has not served for the number of years necessary to enable him to be awarded a pension under the Militia Ordinance. The period is 21 years ; he has only served about 10

years. The Bill is an exact reproduction of the Ordinance.

Mr. CANNON : With your permission, sir, I would like to second it. The officer is deserving of it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

The Bill passed the Committee stage without amendment.

The Council resumed.

Mr. Mc DAVID : I move that the Bill be now read the third time.

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

Bill read the third time.

The Council adjourned until Tuesday, 29th January, at 11 o'clock.