

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 28th August, 1940.

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

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary
Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr.
E. O. Pretheroe, M.C.

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E.,
(Eastern Berbice).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. W. A. D'Andrade, Comp-
troller of Customs.

The Hon. N. M. MacLennan, Director of
Medical Services.

The Hon. M. B. Laing, O.B.E., Com-
missioner of Labour and Local Govern-
ment.

The Hon. G. O. Case, Director of Pub-
lic Works and Sea Defences.

The Hon. L. G. Crease, Director of
Education.

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

The Hon. L. D. Cleare, Director of
Agriculture (Acting).

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

The Hon. E. E. Eliazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E., (George-
town South).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western
Berbice).

The Hon. H. C. Humphrys, K.C. (East-
ern Demerara).

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

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

The Hon. C. V. Wight (Western Esse-
quebo).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Coun-
cil held on the 27th of August, 1940, as
printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1940.

The Council resolved itself into Com-
mittee and proceeded to consider the First
Schedule of Additional Provision required
to meet expenditure in excess of the pro-
vision made in the estimates for the year
1940, which had been laid on the table.

PUBLIC WORKS—EXTRAORDINARY.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: (Mr.
G. D. Owen): When the Council
adjourned yesterday afternoon I was speak-
ing on sub-head 45 on the list of "moves-
in"—the item of \$16,674 for the completion
of the Tuberculosis Hospital. I would
like to make a correction of an error in
the printing. I have already explained
that the sum now asked for will not com-
plete the work, therefore the item should
read "For continuation of the work on
T.B. Hospital." To complete the work
would cost another \$58,000, but Govern-
ment is only prepared to ask the Council at
this stage to vote \$16,674, and each year,
if possible, spend something in erecting
buildings which cannot be done out of the
\$16,674. To complete the original pro-
gramme there are Matron's quarters, Medi-
cal Officers' quarters, watchman's lodge,
store rooms, garage and petrol store, recrea-
tion hall, sun shelters, electrician's quarters,
demonstration block, and fencing, but the

Director of Medical Services will be able to carry on with the buildings we have put up and move the patients into the Best Hospital if the following works are carried out straight away: completion of sanitary details, temporary conversion of one convalescent block as nurses' quarters, erection of Matron's quarters, erection of watchman's lodge, provision of storage accommodation under the main building, erection of garage and stores, provision of water supply with electric pumping plant, fencing of the compound, and certain details not yet completed in the existing buildings. If that work could be carried out—and it can be with the \$16,674—the patients would be moved into the Best Hospital which would be used as an annexe to the Georgetown Hospital, and a medical officer would visit it daily.

Mr. ELEAZAR: When the Council adjourned yesterday afternoon I was about to speak on this item. On reflection last evening I wondered whether I should not come here this morning and say "Aye" to everything on this estimate, because criticism of Government and its methods seems to leave Government cold all the time. Not only does it leave Government cold but Government seems to enjoy criticism. Government officers make an estimate for this work and say it will cost \$78,000, but when the work has gone some way they say they want another \$68,000, a little short of 100 per cent. increase on the original estimate. It looks as if it was deliberately done—that it was under-estimated in the hope that Members of the Council would give assent to it, and when once started the work could not be stopped. Would anybody other than Government tolerate such conduct on the part of any of its officers? I wonder if there is any establishment of any standing in the community which would tolerate such conduct on the part of its manager or attorney? An increase of nearly 100 per cent. on the original estimate is wanted to complete the work, and all that is done is to ask a depleted Council to vote the excess. I do not think I would be justified in agreeing to any of these items here on this speculative mode of estimating work.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member says that all that was done was to come here and ask for more money. I think he has overlooked the fact that this and other

items have led to an exhaustive inquiry into the organization of the Public Works Department, and fairly extensive proposals are before the Council for the complete re-organization of the Department. It is therefore not quite correct to say that all that was done was to ask for more money.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I appreciate that fact and I will discuss that matter when we come to it. What I am saying is that an officer has failed signally in what was put before him, and all Government does is to suggest the re-organization of the Department and tell the officer that he can go on blundering. There should be officers who could estimate within a farthing.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have already explained that that is not all that has been done. There are proposals for the re-organization of the Department, and how they will affect the personnel I cannot say now.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Although Government gives an assurance that something else will follow, speaking from experience I do not know of anything that will happen except a trip to Palestine, but that would be in the interest of the officer who is going. He gets an increase of salary for his share in doing bad work in this Colony. If this under-estimating was done of set purpose Government should tell us so.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is suggesting that this under-estimating was done of set purpose. That is a very serious suggestion. I can give him the categorical assurance that there is not a word of truth in that suggestion.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have not stated my proposition yet, Your Excellency. I am speaking generally. I do not say that Government connived in that action, but I say that when the Department persists in under-estimating to the extent that we have here to-day, and for years and years, those officers must have some idea in their heads that nothing will follow, and that all that happens is that Government will go back to the Council for more money. I have been a Member of this Legislature for 20 years, and during the whole of that period this has been going on. Why haven't we got more artesian wells in the country? It is because the money esti-

mated for them has all finished and the wells have not been bored. Why have the villagers so much money to pay for drainage, and Government has to write it off? It is because when \$5,000 is estimated for work, Government eventually has to spend \$75,000. It is an annually recurrent fear, and especially so in this particular Department.

I know very well that all I am saying will have very little effect on Government, but I am not prepared to sit here from time to time and allow it to be said afterwards that I was here and said nothing about it. I am protesting against this kind of work because I do not believe these officers are incompetent. I believe that they will not address their minds to their duties; they are malingerers, and that is the mildest word I can use. They are drawing their pay and moderating their zeal. Officers undertaking to do work of this kind will not take into their counsel the men on the spot who can assist them. Instead they carry on according to some preconceived idea brought from Timbuctoo or somewhere else, which is applied to local conditions, and all we have to do is to feel what is the meaning of Crown Colony government. Government imposes taxation and we pay it. We have nothing more to say about it. I am wondering whether this is not another ramp to have another Public Hospital at Best, because it is an open secret that when Government wants to make somebody independent of somebody else, or establish another Government department this is how it is done. Government starts off by making a branch organization somewhere else, and when the proper time comes it is cut off, and we have two institutions instead of one. That method is employed because Elected Members are likely to contend that they do not want another Government department. That is why we are overburdened with Government departments overlapping one another and each wanting a deputy.

We have had many rumours concerning this particular Department, and some of them have been brought to the notice of the Director in the hope that it would make the officers responsible careful and stop the leak, but that has not happened. If Government can find a designation other than gross criminal scandal for conduct of this kind in under-estimating

by nearly 100 per cent. I cannot. Until that is done—and I defy Government to do it—I consider it nothing short of gross criminal negligence for which somebody ought to be made answerable. He should say where the money has gone to and why it has gone that way. Somebody should be made personally responsible to the taxpayers.

Mr. JACOB: I am not going to quibble. I wish to support in the main the remarks of the last speaker. When the Council resumed this morning there were seven chairs vacant on the other side of the table, but three have since been occupied, so that there are four vacant chairs on that side. There is also one vacant chair on this side of the table. I am interested in this country; I pride myself in saying so. I wonder what is the reason for this lack of interest? There must be something wrong. It is a painful duty to criticize, but we have to do it. At one time we are told that we have to close down some of the police stations. Now at nearly every session the strength of the Police Force is increased. New buildings are to be put up and old ones repaired.

THE CHAIRMAN: Largely at the request of the Council.

Mr. JACOB: I am making the point that there is on this estimate an item which we are discussing now—\$34,500 for the erection of a police station at Williamsburg. In fact several items are being taken together now. When I criticised the Civil Service, or certain sections of it, certain hon. Members said that my criticisms were too strong. Could we hear more damaging criticisms than those that have just fallen from the lips of the last speaker? When it suits certain hon. Members they support a policy which pleases certain people. When it does not suit them they say something else.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It is regrettable that Members of this Council should have to come here from time to time to criticize the expenditure of this particular Department. If it were not for the need which we know exists in this Colony for the proper establishment of an institution such as the Tuberculosis Hospital I think most Members of the Council would have criticised the Department, and Govern-

ment in particular, more strongly than perhaps they will do this morning under this head. The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) said, and we know it as a fact, that the original estimate for the erection of this hospital was in the vicinity of \$78,000. The Colonial Secretary indicated that that money has been spent, and that a further sum of \$68,000 will be required to complete the work. We are asked to-day to approve of the expenditure of \$16,674, and I am sure the Council will be approached at a later date for the balance of the money to complete the work. It seems to me to be all wrong. How is it that an efficient Department when called upon to prepare an estimate for the erection of this hospital, supplied an estimate of \$78,000 at a time when we could not afford the money and had to approach the Imperial Government for a grant, and after the work has been started we find that we are unable to do the work in its entirety? I know that the Department is under inquiry, and I also know that there are certain proposals to reorganize the Department. That, in my opinion, is sufficient evidence of the fact that something wrong has been discovered.

I have risen to make this criticism because I am going to ask quite definitely that the report of the Committee be made available to Members of the Council as to the findings of the inquiry that is going on. I am not satisfied, and I am quite sure that several Members are dissatisfied about the working of this Department. This particular matter is nothing short of a scandal. I cannot understand how it is possible for men who consider themselves experts in their work, to prepare an estimate and when the work has begun to find that it is going to cost twice as much. I can assure Government that that does not happen anywhere else. As far as I know, when an estimate for work of that kind is being prepared a prudent man would allow 10 per cent. for contingencies. I am quite sure that when that estimate of \$78,000 was made contingencies found a place in it. What then is the explanation of the difference of \$68,000? It would be inhuman to attempt to move the deletion of this item. I wish my conscience would allow me to do so, but knowing the need that exists for an institution of this kind I do not propose to take that step. But I am going to ask that the fullest possible

inquiry be made into this particular work of the Department, and that the report of the inquiry be made available to Members of this Council. I do not think that is too much to ask.

In nine cases out of ten estimates prepared by this Department for work of this kind are exceeded. Some Members call it under-estimating. I do not like the description "under-estimating" or the suggestion made by my hon. friend, the Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) that it was under-estimated for set purpose. There must be some other reason. We have engineers, draughtsmen, and a number of experts in the various branches of construction work, and yet we have never been able to obtain an estimate for any work done by this Department which was completed at a figure even near to the original estimate. That is a scandal, and what I cannot understand is that over and over again criticisms are levelled at the estimates of this Department and yet nobody in the Department seems to do anything about the matter. Nobody seems to make any enquiry. If they do we never hear anything about it. Things have reached such a stage that Government itself has had to make some enquiry. It seems to me that the time has come when we ought to use a new broom altogether. (Mr. Eleazar: Hear, hear) and re-organize the Department in all its branches, engineering, construction works, and things of that kind. I am not going to suggest that Mr. "X" or Mr. "Y" should go or remain. Certainly there are very capable men in that Department, but the question is whether they are pulling their weight. I cannot help saying that this particular work has been so outstanding that one cannot but characterize it as the most shameful and scandalous in so far as this Department is concerned.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to remind hon. Members that the preparation of the estimate for this work was done several years ago. An estimate was prepared generally, I believe, by the then Surgeon-General, the Government Medical Officer of Health, and the then Director of Public Works, but what cannot be found to-day is any record of the details of the estimate or of the plans. Personally I think that to some extent that estimate was changed. In this esti-

mate an additional \$8,000 was included for special equipment asked for by the present Director of Medical Services. In other words \$8,000 is required over and above the original estimate for special equipment.

Mr. DE AGUIAR : I quite sympathize with Government if the original plans have either been misplaced, lost or destroyed. It will make it somewhat difficult to ascertain how the estimates were prepared in the first instance, but however regrettable that may be it seems to me that what is required in this inquiry will be a little more than that. In spite of the fact that the original estimates cannot be found it should be possible for the cost of the work that has been done so far to be prepared with the hope of finding out how, when and where the difference arose. I cannot see very much difficulty in that, and I am suggesting to Government that the Committee that is inquiring into the matter should be charged with ascertaining the cost, and should be prepared to go into the minutest details of the work done and the expenditure incurred, because it does not matter if the original estimates have been lost. The only purpose which the original estimates would serve would be to make comparisons with the actual cost of the work. In that respect they would serve a useful purpose, but while we bewail the fact that the estimates have been lost I do not think the inquiry should cease. I do not think it has ceased, and I do urge that the question of the money spent so far should be carefully inquired into. I cannot see any difficulty in doing that.

The point is that unless that is done it would be impossible for Government properly to lay the blame on any person or any particular set of persons responsible for this work. I do not think it would be correct to blame the Head of the Department for the excess. That would be wrong. I am not blaming him at all, nor am I suggesting that this immediate sub-head should be blamed. The fault might be somewhere else, but wherever the fault may be I think it is the duty of Government to charge the Committee of Inquiry to make the fullest investigation possible into this matter, because it is impossible for me to understand how work originally estimated to cost \$78,000 should now cost \$146,000. It is beyond my understanding.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I do not want hon. Members to have the idea that there is any thought of misappropriation of funds. The finding of the Committee was that the money has been spent, but there was gross under-estimating, and to a small extent the prices of materials and wages have risen. I think it is pretty clear that if plans had been drawn up and the estimate based on those plans it would have been possible to find them. Therefore one can safely say that no proper plans were made on which to base estimates. I think that was the mistake from the beginning.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT : I have never yet heard in this Council such a condemnation of Government method as has been made by the Colonial Secretary. I was very pleased when he rose a second time and tried to make an explanation, because the matter had left a very unpleasant taste in my mouth. He says there has been no defalcation, but the whole matter appears to me to be most unbusinesslike.

I observe on the schedule an item of \$4,315 required for the completion of a cottage at Eve Leary for the accommodation of a Warrant Officer. From the figures given I calculate that that cottage will cost \$6,000 52. Why a cottage should cost \$6,000 is beyond my comprehension. I am positive that if the work had been given out to some responsible firm or a reputable contractor it would not have cost more than \$3,000. The wood used in the construction of the building should certainly not have cost more than \$2,400, and the cottage should not take more than six weeks to build. That is a condemnation of the methods of the Public Works Department. I am therefore not surprised at this expenditure.

Mr. SEAFORD : With reference to the remarks made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. DeAguiar) I think that as a member of the Committee I should make a few remarks. The Committee went very carefully into the whole circumstances of this hospital at Best, and the conclusion we came to was that there were no detailed drawings prepared until the construction of the building had started. What happened at the time was, I think, that the Public Works Department was weak in Drawing Office staff. They had not the time to prepare all the drawings

they desired, and I am afraid they were rather rushed by Government at the time. They got out on a very rough scale certain figures to do the work. It was thought that the buildings planned were too small and some alterations were made to suit the Medical Department. They were also told they could not get more money, and I think that instead of sticking to their guns the Public Works Department were induced to estimate for increased buildings. That is responsible for the present position. They did not, in our opinion, resist Government sufficiently.

Apart from that, the Committee did not consider there had been any falsification. After going over the buildings and the materials used the Committee was satisfied that the money had been expended. Apart from bad estimating, it must be borne in mind that the estimate was prepared some time ago, and that the cost of labour and materials has gone up since then. That accounted for a considerable amount of the increase. In addition to that a new plant required by the Medical Department cost \$8,000 and another item which rather let them down was that they anticipated they would get \$6,000 worth of material out of the old hospital, but they got nothing at all. When those sums are added together they amount to about \$30,000, which slightly relieves the position. I am not here to apologize or make excuses for the Public Works Department because I feel that it must shoulder the blame for this excess.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I always like to hear the hon. Member speak because he always expresses a very frank opinion, without fear, favour or partiality. But even with his explanation we want to know where is the \$60,000 after deducting the additional \$8,000?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member does not understand. The Committee is satisfied that all the money has been spent on the work, and that the work that has been done represents on the whole a reasonably fair value for the amount expended.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I fully understand, but I think I am quite qualified to say that a building should cost \$15,000. I am not an engineer, but in my own sphere I

can teach engineers how to carry on their business. That is what we lawyers do. Where has this \$60,000 gone? There seems to me to be more people to blame than those persons who actually prepared the estimate some years ago, because on what data did the work commence? If plans were made where have they gone to? Have they gone with the person who prepared them? I have told Government before, that I know of my own knowledge, and I brought it to the notice of the then Director of Public Works, that the Department was paying for materials which were never bought, and also for transporting them. Public money has been spent in that way.

THE CHAIRMAN: On that building?

Mr. ELEAZAR: No, sir, I am telling Government what transpired in the past when we got guess estimates such as we are dealing with now. Therefore when one becomes sceptical of estimates of this nature there is good reason for it. Government need not pride itself that it has escaped creditably from this matter. Too many people have been involved in it. There has been gross dereliction of duty on the part of several persons.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I do not believe in flogging dead horses, but this is indeed a very bad case and I feel so strongly about it that I am tempted to rise again.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am not quite clear whether the hon. Member for Berbice River moved the deletion of the item.

Mr. ELEAZAR: No, sir, I criticised the item but said it would have to go.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I feel very strongly about this matter, and although I have the very highest regard for the remarks made by the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford), for his knowledge of this kind of work, and also for the inquiry he must have made on the Committee, I feel that Government should do a little more than that. I therefore ask in all sincerity that the report of the Committee which investigated this particular phase of the activities of the Public Works Department should be laid on the table for the information of Members. I do not think that is an unreasonable request to make, and I hope Government will accede

to it. I do not suggest any lack of knowledge on the part of the members of the Committee, but I think it would come with good grace if Government would lay the report on the table. It might allay any fears that one might have. I accept the statement that there was no misappropriation of funds or materials of any kind, but I personally would like to see the report of the Committee, not merely for this particular matter, but because it might avoid some future criticisms of the work of the Department. I would like a pronouncement from Government as to whether my request will be acceded to.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I formally move that item 46—Erection of building for Government Produce Depot, \$5,500—be struck out. I consider it a waste of money. It would be very much cheaper for Government to rent premises at \$30 per month and experiment with this Depot for a year or so. I agree that this experiment is going to be a thorough failure. There is no doubt that there will be over production and prices will fall. I think this money could be better spent in some other direction. If Government lent the money to the Loan Banks for the purpose of making advances to the farmers that would be a wiser course to adopt than to erect this building, especially after what we heard this morning about the manner in which the Public Works Department constructs buildings. I think this item should be struck out in the interest of the taxpayers.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It is rather unfortunate that the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) should have referred to the vacant chairs. It may be that his oratory does not come up to the standard which would keep those Members glued to their chairs, but I quite agree with him that had the Electives got together and come to the Council with a set policy of criticism I am sure it would have been much more effective and would have carried much more weight. It does appear, however, from the remarks of the Colonial Secretary that the original estimate has been lost. The Colonial Secretary has evidently come to that conclusion, but isn't it possible that it might have been removed carelessly, negligently or wilfully? This is not the first occasion on which the Council has been asked to in-

crease an estimate of this Department. What happened in other cases in which the Council was asked to increase an estimate?

The hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight) anticipated me with regard to item 46. It seems to me that this state of affairs proves that there is something radically wrong in the whole system of this Department. It wants rejuvenating or re-organizing. There is some difference of opinion as regards the necessity for a Produce Depot, but I am of the opinion that the fixing of prices should benefit the farmer and the community if the farmer would give the scheme his support, and if he does not allow outside people to dissuade him from the outset.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I gather that the hon. Member is under the impression that the Public Works Department will be asked to erect this building. The proposal is that the Transport Department will erect it because it will be erected on land belonging to the Transport Department.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: What will happen if after a few years Government finds that this venture is not a success? Would Government make some other use of the building? It seems to me that in order to get over the difficulty and the constant reiteration by Members of this Council against the waste in the Public Works Department, the system should be changed immediately and drastically.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I had not intended to speak on this matter at all because it seemed to me from the outset that it was the sad old story of the money having been spent and the work not completed. I will, however, take this opportunity again to ask Government why shouldn't this work be given out to independent contractors? Every time work is performed by the Public Works Department there is either an excess on the estimate or defalcations. There are at least two or three contractors in this Colony who are men of substance and can give the necessary bond for the performance of this work. Why shouldn't the Public Works Department prepare plans and specifications and call for tenders for the erection of this building? It is realized on all sides that Government is fair game, and as

long as that feeling continues to exist there will be over-expenditure and defalcations. I think that in England and in a great many of the larger Colonies works of this nature are always given out to tender. I think we have come to the stage when Government should consider the advisability of not allowing public works to be done by the Public Works Department itself. That is the only way to get over this continual difficulty.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Government schemes fail before they start. Here is an item for the erection of a police station at Williamsburg. Everybody who knows the country is aware that in the past police stations were established at strategic points. Two or three years ago when the Inspector-General was on leave somebody suggested to Government to close some of the police stations on the Corentyne because there were too many, and in spite of great protests the police station at the Canje bridge was closed down. It was a strategic point, and since then that district has been a hot bed of crime. What is the reason for the erection of a police station at Williamsburg except to watch Rose Hall village, which is at the roadside? Because in troublous times people get nervy Government proposes to abandon the stretch of country between Canje and Albion and erect a police station at Williamsburg. Some years ago there was a rest house at Whim where Government officers who had business on the Corentyne remained overnight. I understand that that building is to be converted into quarters for the N.C.O. Who suggested that? I was told by a reliable officer that until he was informed by a policeman that repairs were being carried out there he knew not a word about it. In the old days the Magistrate stayed overnight at that rest house. Now it has been decided to build quarters for the Magistrate at Williamsburg. To-day, with motor cars plying day and night, a Magistrate is to be stationed there for the purpose of signing warrants, because that will be all his work there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. Member arguing that a Magistrate is not needed on the Corentyne?

Mr. ELEAZAR: I say that much, and furthermore his house is not needed.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member was a member of a deputation to me which very strongly urged that a Magistrate be stationed there.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think you will remember, sir, that what I said at the time was that although there was not sufficient work in Berbice for two Magistrates there was certainly more than one man could do, and it appeared to me that a little increase in the Magistrate's emoluments would meet the situation. I have never entertained the idea that a Magistrate should live on the Corentyne. If Your Excellency understood me to say so you misunderstood me.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member says that the work is more than one man can do. What is the inference?

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have always said that, but Government failed from its arrangement. Government gave one Magistrate £100 more on his pay in Berbice but when he left I think only two other Magistrates got it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member says that there is really more work than one man can do, but he says if we give him £100 more he will do more than one man can do.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That is good logic.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not good logic. If it is more work than one man can do it is no good giving him £100 more.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Give him £100 and he will do the work. (laughter).

THE CHAIRMAN: What the hon. Member appears to mean is that it is more work than one man will do. That is very different.

Mr. ELEAZAR: When I used the expression I had certain reservations which I need not mention to Government. Whatever I have said on the matter was subject to that arrangement. I have never conceived the idea that a Magistrate should live on the Corentyne. All he will have to do is to sign warrants, and that is not sufficient reason why he should live on the Corentyne. Government proposes to put a Magistrate there and build a house for him. It is public expenditure without

any thought. Why can't the Magistrate live in New Amsterdam and carry on his work on the Corentyne? The destruction of the plans has caused these buildings to be erected by men who have just come into the country and—

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is again suggesting that these plans have been drawn up by men who have just come into the country. The man who drew them has been in the country over 14 years as far as I know.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am not speaking of the plans now, I am speaking generally. I know that the first man who talked about closing down police stations was the late Sir Gordon Guggisberg who said there were too many. When Sir Edward Denham came somebody put it up to him to close them down. When I make these remarks I know what I am talking about. I must excuse Your Excellency taking exception to my remarks.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am not taking exception, I am trying to tell you the facts.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Anyhow Government will have its way; it is always right. I now come to the erection of this building which the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight) spoke about. Government is embarking on an experiment which everybody knows will fail. Government will add to that failure a sum of \$5,500 for a building which will remain on its hands as a white elephant six months hence when the project has failed. If Government is bent upon doing that it can proceed. Surely Government should take the advice of the hon. Member for Georgetown Central on financial matters. I do not think any member of the Government would challenge his opinion at all. I think this is another attempt to waste \$5,500. I think Your Excellency will be here six months hence for me to tell you "I told you so."

Mr. DEAGUIAR: When the Council resumed this morning discussion was confined to item 45. It was unfortunate that I had to leave the Council hurriedly yesterday afternoon. I was under the impression that there would not have been

further discussion under this head as has now taken place. I am grateful for the opportunity to make a few observations on item 44 (a). I am not opposing the item, but I earnestly ask Government to consider the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) before the work is started. As a matter of fact I had intended to make a similar suggestion when the general question of the re-organization of the Department was before the Council, but as the hon. Member mentioned it this morning I will go one step further and ask Government to give his proposal a trial in this particular case. When I read the item I was not surprised at the figure of \$31,500. I thought it was a palace Government was building, but now it turns out to be a police station.

With regard to the erection of a building for the Produce Depot I supported the proposal to establish the depot generally, but I am asking Government very seriously to postpone the erection of this building. The proposal is an experiment which Government and its advisers feel is going to be a success. Elected Members think otherwise. Government carried the initial expenditure of \$1,960. Let us experiment with half of the money and adopt the suggestion of the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight) by renting a building. I heard some mention of the Transport Department. Perhaps it is hoped that if the scheme fails Government will be able to pass the building on to the Transport Department. I presume that is the intention. That may be sound, without going into the question of whether the Transport Department has need for it. At present I think it has all the room it wants at the Georgetown stelling and I must give the Department credit for the fine bit of work it has done there. I think Government should experiment with the least sum of money possible, and postpone the erection of this building until such time as hon. Members are satisfied that the scheme will be a success.

THE CHAIRMAN: We must have a building of some kind.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: The suggestion is to rent one.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is not one on

the spot. The whole idea is to have it next to the Market.

MR. DE AGUIAR: Now I see what the reason is. I must admit that I did not see it before. It seems to me that the idea is to deprive the Market of revenue.

THE CHAIRMAN: Quite the reverse. We want to work in the closest possible co-operation with the Market.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I was purposely avoiding the Market all the time. I thought the idea was to deprive the Market of the revenue it earns—at least deprive somebody; if not the Market then the Transport Department. I do urge that some effort be made to rent premises. Yesterday I said that this scheme was going to fail. To-day I say with a great deal of emphasis that it will fail before it begins. If Government says that this building should be erected, and that the Transport Department will have need for it then perhaps the money spent might not be considered such a waste, but if the Transport Department wants a little more space it might not spend \$5,500 for whatever additional space it requires, so that there will still be some waste. I think the erection of the building should be postponed until such time as it is shown that it is possible to make the scheme a success.

MR. GONSALVES: I do not agree with the remarks of the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) on the question of the Magistrate. In fact I must express great disappointment with his statement this morning, and I sincerely hope that Government will not take his suggestion seriously. I take it that when Members suggest certain changes and improvements they do so in earnest and expect Government to act upon them. It has always been contended that there is a shortage of Magistrates, and it has never been suggested that an increase of pay would enable one Magistrate to do the work in Berbice. To hear this morning that an increase of £100 on the salary of the Magistrate would relieve the congestion of work in Berbice is really beyond me.

MR. ELEAZAR: I never said that. The original arrangement was that one Magistrate should do the work and get an extra

£100. One Magistrate got the extra amount and his successor got it, but—

THE CHAIRMAN: And he did the work?

MR. ELEAZAR: Yes, but with the one exception that the man who did not do the work got the extra money. (laughter).

MR. GONSALVES: Perhaps the hon. Member will say that it has never been advocated that it is very desirable to have the Magistrate residing in his district. It has been argued here over and over that it is very inconvenient to people when a Magistrate does not live in his district. To say now that it is not necessary for the Magistrate to live in his district is really beyond my understanding, and I should like to hear the views of the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) on the suggestion. I do not wish Your Excellency and the public to have the impression that you should not worry with what Members say here. If that is the view inside or outside the Council I hope I shall not be classed with those persons who feel that way.

With regard to the suggestion that public works should be done by contract I know that the Public Works Department has been criticized in many cases, and I suppose Members would like me to say in all cases, and has not been working to the satisfaction of the community. But there has also been criticism of the work done by contract. I read a letter in a newspaper in which complaint was made of the treatment by a contractor of the labourers under his control, but that is a question of the character of the contractor. I do not agree that work should be given out to any sort of contractor, and if labourers complain of the treatment they receive from a contractor Government should see that they are protected. There should be no question of saving a few dollars.

I regret I was not here during the early part of the session to hear what was said about the Tuberculosis Hospital, but as President of the Society I know there has been great disappointment that the work at Best has not been completed. There has either been under-estimating or over-spending, and I believe a Committee was

appointed to enquire in' o the matter. I think the findings of that Committee should be made available to Members because it will be interesting to know the cause of the excess. I do ask that the work be proceeded with without delay. If the money is not sufficient to complete the work I hope it will be found. The question of the Hospital has been pending for a few years.

THE CHAIRMAN: I take it you mean that money should be found to make it useable.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I hope that later on money will be found to complete the work. I trust it will not be a case of just spending this amount and leaving it there, but that the work will be completed according to plan.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I wish to make a small contribution to the debate on the question of the necessity for a Magistrate on the Corentyne Coast. The matter was debated on several occasions, and I think it was the considered opinion of responsible citizens that the Magisterial staff should be increased in Berbice. There were at one time three Magistrates in Berbice, one at Fort Wellington, one in New Amsterdam and another on the Corentyne Coast. In course of time when economics were being made the districts were amalgamated and one Magistrate was put in charge of the judicial business in the County of Berbice. In view of recent happenings the matter was brought very prominently before the public, and discussions have taken place among representative bodies in Berbice including the Berbice Chamber of Commerce. It was then decided unanimously that representations should be made to Government to increase the number of Magistrates in Berbice. A deputation was received by Your Excellency at Government House, and I think it was the view of the majority at least that the Magisterial staff required strengthening in that direction. As a result it was thought that the additional Magistrate should be stationed on the Corentyne Coast where there is a large growing population, and where there are three thriving sugar estates employing large numbers of labourers, and inhabited by people of all races.

With respect to the work now being

done by the present Magistrate there is no doubt that he is doing his very best. In fact I think he is over-working himself. I will illustrate what I mean. He has to attend court at Springlands at 9 a.m. and leaves New Amsterdam at 7 o'clock, travelling a distance of 47 miles. With a break of an hour he is at work until 5 or 6, and often as late as 7 o'clock in the evening in order to dispose of the cases before him. As a result of that I can say that litigants have been considerably inconvenienced because there is not sufficient time for the Magistrate to cope with the volume of work. People do not go to Court to have their cases dealt with summarily, but to get a proper hearing. Some cases, although they appear to be trivial, involve very important principles of law. For want of time there are frequent postponements of cases, and litigants cannot afford to give their witnesses refreshers every day they attend. Recently there have been many cases of a very serious nature arising in that district, and it is thought that the inadequacy of the police staff contributed to the non-detection of those crimes. It might be asked what is the value of the presence of a Magistrate in the district? I think it has a very salutary effect when a Magistrate can be seen in the locality. His presence has a far-reaching effect on the discipline of the people in the district. If an additional Magistrate is to be stationed in that district then a house must be found for him. I think it will be money well spent. After all Government obtains a great deal of revenue from fines. There is great necessity for a Magistrate in the district and I think the item should be supported.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Now that my friend the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) has heard the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) he has heard what he has always heard before, and I do not think he has got very much in addition. I do not speak for convenience. I was wondering whether the Magistrate was required for Georgetown, because if my knowledge of the County of Berbice, where I travel at least twice every month, is worth anything I think it is worth more than that of the Member for Georgetown South on that question.

Mr. GONSALVES: While I speak for

convenience I take care whenever I do speak that I do not talk non-sense. I take the remarks of the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) to support what I have said.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I observe that the debate has taken a new turn, and that is whether an additional Magistrate is required for Berbice or not. I happen to be the representative of a portion of the County of Berbice and I must say that there not only exists now the necessity for an additional Magistrate but for some time past. We were told by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) that at one time the judicial work in the County of Berbice was carried on by one Magistrate. I think the hon. Member might have gone a little further and said that in those days he complained of having so many village courts throughout the County. I know that litigants have been very much inconvenienced not only on the Corentyne Coast but on the West Coast of Berbice, because cases have been pending for months. I hope that the Mahaicony Court will be included in the Berbice Judicial District, and I suggest that Government should consider the re-opening of the Weldaad Court.

I do not think it is Government's idea to provide a house for the Magistrate free of rent. I think every Government officer pays rent for the house in which he lives, and in due course I think the rent received will more than cover the cost of the building.

I would like to make my position very clear with regard to the building for the Produce Depot. I happen to be a member of the Advisory Board of Agriculture which discussed the matter and unanimously decided to give the venture a trial, but having heard the arguments adduced here I think Government would be well advised to postpone the item for the erection of the building. Even if the item is carried Government should still inquire into the possibility of renting a building in the vicinity of the Market.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Having heard the difference of opinion between the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) and the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) I would say that

perhaps the delay in the appointment of an additional Magistrate was anticipated by the hon. Attorney General as he found himself in difficulty to know whether hon. Members really wanted an additional Magistrate, or whether the discussion on the question of an additional Magistrate has been put forward in order to speed up that appointment.

I find myself unable to agree with the views of the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) and the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) on the question of giving out public works to contract. There are several details to be considered. There is the question of rates of pay about which there is difference among employees. There is also the question whether Government would be able to fix rates of pay and also whether a contractor should employ people resident in the district in which the work is being done. Those are some of the details to be considered, and whether the Public Works Department should continue to employ the same number of people. It seems to me that a suggestion of that kind would have to be formulated and the details considered by Government and the Council.

Mr. ELEAZAR: With respect to the Magistrate in Berbice I think the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) will bear me out when I say that I have always maintained the position I take up now, that the arrangement was that Government would give the Magistrate an additional £100. Government did so up to a certain point and then withdrew it. There is nothing new about my saying that. It was Government's arrangement which Government did not keep. The question I raised this morning was that there was no necessity to build a house and compel the Magistrate to live on the Corentyne.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think this is a convenient point to adjourn. I understand that hon. Members wish to attend the funeral this afternoon. There has been a very sad accident and I am sure that Members of the Council wish to show their sympathy. I therefore propose to adjourn the Council at 3.30 this afternoon.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon recess until 2 p.m.

2. p.m.—

Mr WOOLFORD: I would like to make a few remarks which, I hope, will be of interest to hon. Members of Council. The vote I am more concerned about is the proposal to erect quarters on the Corentyne Coast for the permanent Magistrate the Government proposes to appoint to that area. It is an appointment which has been urged on the Government for some years past. Generally speaking I happen to know that throughout the country districts it is a physical impossibility for a Magistrate to perform his duties with anything like a degree of satisfaction either to the public or himself. The points made by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) are a reiteration of the real problem. The Magistrate at the Courts on the Corentyne Coast has from time to time engaged in very hurried and unsatisfactory trials because of the necessity for him to be present at some other Court the next day. It very often happens, as the hon. Member says, that the Magistrate leaves his work unfinished. I have known cases where the cost to the public has been enormous and out of all proportion to the matter in dispute between the parties. One can imagine the difficulty of persons who have cases for hearing in any Court, say at Springlands, or Whim, or Albion, having to go there three or four times before their cases are disposed of. They can only travel either by bus or motor car, or donkey cart, and it often happens that they have to wait until the Magistrate has concluded his work for the day, which may be at six o'clock, before they can leave for their homes, arriving there at night.

I have not risen merely to elaborate on that point but to point out that there are great difficulties in the present magisterial administration. The central office for all magisterial work in Berbice is in New Amsterdam. If a person residing at Skeldon requires the services of the Magisterial Department, his request has to reach New Amsterdam in some form or other and it is to the public an inconvenience to have to do so. I would like to know whether Government has considered what is going to happen by the Magistrate being resident on the Corentyne Coast and having to sit at one of the Courts on that Coast. In practice

at the present time a clerk and a bailiff from New Amsterdam have to attend his Court and that is necessary if the Magistrate is to perform his duties properly. Where are his records to be kept? There must be some accommodation for a central office of some kind to serve the Corentyne area as distinct from the central office at New Amsterdam. There is confusion now and there will be greater confusion still if you only provide a Magistrate. The situation cannot be met by the appointment of a Magistrate alone. I hope Government is not going to expect the bailiff and the Magistrate's Clerk to continue to suffer the same inconvenience that they are suffering to-day and only exclude the Magistrate from doing so. One of the reasons for this appointment is that it will enable the judicial work of the Corentyne Coast to be performed by someone resident there. Unless there is some adjustment, if I may say so, it is going to happen that the staff, who will have to follow the Magistrate who is permanent on the Coast, will not get back to their districts until a late hour. I do not know what takes place to-day, but there was a time when the Magistrate, for reasons of economy, had to take the clerk and the bailiff in the same car in order to save travelling expenses. I suspect that the Magistrate does not now travel alone. Therefore it would save some amount of travelling and public inconvenience if a Magistrate's office were also opened somewhere in the Corentyne district.

I have heard many an allusion made as to the necessity for this appointment on the ground that disturbances in the district may lessen as a result of the appointment. I fail to see any connection between the two things. There are far more important issues than that. Cattle stealing is prevalent on the Corentyne Coast, and as the hon. Member for Berbice River pointed out, you have removed one of the arms of control of that traffic passing down to the New Amsterdam slaughter house where the cattle are disposed of to butchers and subsequently killed, in the removal of the police guard at the Canje Toll House. That was an essential spot for detection as the two or three men stationed there provided sufficient precaution against cattle-stealing which offence mostly constitutes a fair number of the criminal cases which take place

in that district and which take up much of the time of the Magistrate in the actual hearing. The manufacture of bush rum is another offence which is very much in evidence in the Berbice district, and the stuff is being conveyed even on the buses without any interruption, because of the lack of control. These proposals are all known, and I am rather surprised to know that in any recommendation made to Government it has been overlooked that some kind of police control should be established at two important strategic points—one at Tarlogie and the other at the Canje Bridge.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is a police station at Tarlogie.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I understand there used to be one there. As regards this appointment, what is going to happen with these two Magistrates in the county of Berbice? It is perfectly clear that if you relieve the New Amsterdam Magistrate of the necessity of visiting the Corentyne Coast you would have to find some work for him to do, as the work in New Amsterdam is insufficient to keep him employed for more than two or three days a week. Is he going to be made to do the Reliance Court work? If not he ought to be made to do so. All these re-arrangements come within the jurisdiction of the Attorney-General, and I am only throwing out the suggestions I have made in order to attract his attention to the matter. Reliance Court should be definitely attached to his area. If the jurisdiction has to be altered let that district be included in the New Amsterdam Judicial district. I further suggest that the Magistrate Judicial District of New Amsterdam be extended to Mahaicony on the East Coast, Demerara. The New Amsterdam Magistrate should go down to Mahaicony and there should be a Court at Weldaad. That would lessen public inconvenience. The natural corollary is that the Magistrate on the East Coast, Demerara, would not have to go to Mahaicony at all. All the Magistrates from time to time are very fully engaged.

A case in which I was engaged serves as an excellent example of what takes place. It was a dispute over the ownership of a cow and there was the necessity of keeping the cow in

the courtyard under police control from day to-day. It cost something like \$69 to keep that cow there, and it is quite definite that the animal did not cost so much. My client was charged with stealing the animal and I tried to establish ownership. No one was allowed to get to the animal even to feed it. The cost was borne by my client who was eventually acquitted of the charge of stealing his own animal. Means of identification were not procurable and in the meanwhile the animal was detained at a cost to my client, simply because it was absolutely impossible for the Magistrate to conclude the hearing of the case within a reasonable period. If that proposal—the Mahaicony Court being brought into the New Amsterdam Judicial District—is adopted, I think that would meet the case.

I want to make another suggestion. When the time arrives and we change our habits and address ourselves to new conditions I would like to see a Judicial appointment made to New Amsterdam. I am satisfied it would save public expense. When a Judge has to visit the Criminal Court in New Amsterdam he is confronted not only with having to preside at the Assizes but also with having to do a quantity of civil work which is always ready for trial long before the Criminal Session. The Criminal Session being fixed by Statute cannot be held at any other time, and the civil work is usually postponed until the criminal work is finished. A or B from the Corentyne Coast, who is expecting his civil case to be taken, has to wait until C or D who is charged with larceny, has been acquitted or convicted or referred for trial again. He never knows when the criminal calendar is going to end, and in that way there is a good deal of public inconvenience caused. If you appoint a Judge-Magistrate for the County of Berbice he could find time to do the Magisterial work of New Amsterdam other than indictable matters, and also to do all the civil work which is necessary for the County of Berbice. At some period he could preside over the Criminal Session held in that County and thus save public expense in some directions and public inconvenience in others.

THE CHAIRMAN: He will function as a Magistrate and as a Judge.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Yes. You want a good man, one with experience. It may be said that there may be times when he may as Magistrate have a preliminary investigation taken before him and it will not be right for him also to try the case. That is so. In such an event one of the Judges could be assigned to preside over the trial. You could find a man to fill the position I am advocating for £1,000 a year. If the position is examined you would find that a system of that kind would give satisfaction. There will be no necessity in some cases for the Appeal Court always to sit in Georgetown. The Chief Justice or one of the Judges can go to Berbice and the Judge-Magistrate, who is there and who is a Judge after all, can sit along with the Chief Justice, or the Judge appointed for the purpose, and decide appeals.

I do hope that a review of the magisterial position in Berbice will be made. All this trouble has arisen because one Magistrate wishing to earn £100 extra undertook to do the whole of the work in the County, when we all knew that he could not do it and that he never intended to do it. It is true that he did preside as a Magistrate but he disposed of cases in a most perfunctory fashion. From that time, however, it has been thought that if you pay £100 extra you can find another to do the work. This has been a great mistake. No amount of additional pay can enable one man to get through satisfactorily the work that has to be done in the entire County. What is wanted in all Magisterial Courts is a careful investigation of cases and not a summary disposal of them.

I do not wish to delay the debate, but I think some mention should be made about the establishment of a Government Produce Depot. I think the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight) suggested that a building may be rented. The site is a very important matter to be considered in connection with the proposal. There is no site at the Government stelling to be rented, nor is there one adjacent to it to be rented. Although the building is to be constructed at a cost of \$5,500 there will be no difficulty at all, if the scheme proves a failure, in the Transport Department being able hereafter to make profitable use of it. There are a good many

directions in which that can be done. The public will gladly pay for additional storage facilities if they are available. Hon. Members need have no apprehension of the building on the ground that the scheme may or may not be a failure.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The closing remarks of the last speaker are exactly what I was going to say in regard to the site. It is very important that a site near the waterfront should be selected. I know that enquiries were made to see whether suitable accommodation could be rented but none was found. I was told to-day that it is impossible to rent a portion of space in the Stabroek Market. I also understand that the amount of space it is possible to obtain and the rent to be paid will not be a satisfactory arrangement in the opinion of those who have to run it. As hon. Members have said, if by chance the project failed there would be no difficulty in Government finding use for any building that might have been erected. If the Council votes this money Government would go closer into the matter and ascertain whether it is possible to erect a smaller building. The proposal calls for a building 60ft. by 90ft. being erected, but it may be possible to erect a smaller building. That will be investigated. I hope the Council will pass the amount; if Government is satisfied that it is necessary to put up a building of this size it will then be done.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) fears the loss of Town Council fees. The Town Council will not lose any fees, as arrangements are to be made for the landing fees to be paid over to the Town Council. Government will not keep those fees.

With regard to the remarks made by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys), who referred to Government giving out the work to contract, hon. Members are aware that small contracts are given out. Most of the painting work is done by contract, and small carpentry work is also given out to contract. I understand that from time to time the Public Works Department has endeavoured to give out work to contract. Plans and specifications have been prepared and tenders called for, but I am informed that there are very few people here who can

tender very accurately. I am told that the variations in tenders are tremendous, in some cases it is quite obvious that the work cannot be carried out for the small size of the tenders sent in, while on the other hand there are some tenders which are much higher than what the Department itself has to pay for the work to be done. Government will consider whether there are any works from time to time which may be given out to contract. It has not only been tried here but actually carried out for years in another Colony and found to be unsatisfactory. The difficulty between the Department concerned and the contractor is that the contractor wants to make as much out of the contract as he can, while the Department giving out public work to contract wants to get as fine a building as possible. I understand the chief difficulty has been the type of tender which has been submitted when contracts are called for.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Pretheroe): Sir, with regard to sub-head 44(b);—"Erection of Magistrate's Quarters at Williamsburg, Corentyne, \$6,000"—Under Head "Public Works Extraordinary," the position is that this Council approved of the appointment of an additional Magistrate and the salary of that Magistrate, and this Council is now asked to provide the money for providing him with a house. I do not think the site ought necessarily to be taken as definitely and finally settled. Quite recently I had the opportunity of visiting the proposed site accompanied by Dr. MacLennan (Director of Medical Services) and I am personally in favour of that particular site. The jurisdiction of this Magistrate will be the east side of the Berbice River, excluding the Courts of New Amsterdam, Sisters and Reliance. It follows, therefore, that he must reside somewhere in the area I have just mentioned. This Council is asked to approve of the provision of this money to erect his quarters in that area, not necessarily at Williamsburg. As regards the records and staff of the new Magistrate, it is proposed that he should keep his records at the Court where he may preside.

Reference has been made to the staff. In the draft estimates submitted to the Colonial Secretary some five or six weeks ago, provision has been there made for one

additional Court clerk, one additional Class III clerk, and an additional bailiff. I hope when the estimates come before this Council they will receive entire approval. That is all the staff required by the Magistrate who is required to live in this house. When this area is taken over by the new Magistrate, the Magistrate at present in New Amsterdam will, as tentatively arranged, be responsible for the Reliance and Sisters Courts and as far west as the Mahaicony Court. It is essential that this house be built. The money "wasted" by the Magistrate in travelling hundreds of miles in the performance of his duties will be cut down one-half by putting this house in the district. There should be no difficulty in passing this amount.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: May I ask whether the question I raised in regard to the report of the Committee—

THE CHAIRMAN: I will deal with that before the motion is put.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: Permit me to reply to the hon. Colonial Secretary. He said that a building 60 by 90 is a small building—

THE CHAIRMAN: He said that is the size of the building, but if we can manage with a smaller one that will be done.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: Instead of getting proper advice I understand they sought to get premises on their own. Because I made certain remarks they did not confer with me. The site I would select is in the Stabroek Market where it is very easily available. With regard to the vote, the Chairman of the Transport and Harbours Board has made the statement that the building, if no longer wanted, can be used by that Department. If the idea is to obtain by some subterfuge a building for the Harbour Board, it beats me. I am a member of the Board and I do not know that they want any other building on premises belonging to them. I say this project is going to be a failure. Government should use this \$5,500 to better advantage for the poor people it wants to help. If the matter is left to the Director of Agriculture and myself we would find very suitable premises.

THE CHAIRMAN: The first point

before the Council is that item 46 be struck out. That is a definite motion. I quite agree that this is a large outlay, but a very good case has been made out for it. This is a very important experiment to assist in the Colony's war effort. It is not really on a very large scale when you come to think of it—\$10 000 to assist and encourage the production of food and to try and ensure a market for the farmers' produce about which there has been so much complaint. I am perfectly sure that no other method of helping the marketing of farmers' produce has been suggested. I do ask hon. Members to treat this matter in a fair-minded spirit and let the experiment be made under these very special war conditions. If all Members of this Council go about holding up their hands and saying "This thing is bound to be a failure," that alone would go half-way towards making it a failure before it begins. If we can start operations with a smaller building or with a section of a building which can be extended afterwards if necessary, we will do so, but it is of the highest importance that an adequate building be established with proper accommodation. If you do not get that, it is an admission of failure before you have begun. I agree it is more than I had expected to spend on the building, and I hope it may be possible to do the work for something less. Whether it is possible to start with a smaller building or a section of a building, I do not know. As one hon. Member pointed out, this building will in no way be wasted, as very good use can be made of it in many other ways even if it were only for rental purposes. I ask hon. Members to allow the amount to remain.

I understand that if we can get it done at a lower figure we will certainly do so by beginning with a smaller building. May I also ask hon. Members not necessarily to make up their minds that the experiment, which is something slightly different to what they did before, and has succeeded to a reasonable extent in another country, is bound to be a failure here. That sort of defeatist cry is not very helpful to the public nor to the farmer. I am not guaranteeing that this scheme will be a success, but I do feel that under these strenuous war conditions we are justified in making the effort and even taking a certain amount of risk in doing it. That these prognostications are justified no

one can tell. You cannot possibly tell until you have tried.

With regard to the question raised by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. DE AGUIAR) about the report on the Public Works investigation the position is this: The disclosure of the position relating to the Best T.B. Hospital was evidence that there was a very unsatisfactory state of things existing, and a Committee of Enquiry was immediately appointed to go into that matter. That was a Committee of the Executive Council which was to report to the Executive Council. It was deliberately made a Committee of the Executive Council because it seemed quite possible at that time that the report of the Committee might develop into disciplinary proceedings, which are the special province of the Executive Council. It is not customary for reports of that kind—reports which have a certain disciplinary form—to be laid before the Legislature. I do not think, as far as I have heard, it has ever been done. There is a certain objection to it in principle; if such committees which may turn into a disciplinary enquiry are made to feel that their reports will eventually be turned over to the Legislature, the scope of their enquiry may be very much restricted. It is extremely undesirable. I do not think it is advisable that the report should be laid on the table in the ordinary course. There is, however, no desire to conceal anything about it. I am perfectly willing and ready to agree that the hon. Member can see the report and also other hon. Members who are interested, but it is contrary to the usual practice for a report of a Committee of the Executive Council on a matter approaching a disciplinary question to be laid before this Council. When that first report was completed, it disclosed a state of affairs which made it clear that an extensive re-organization of the Public Works Department was necessary.

One hon. Member said quite clearly that it is not so much this individual, or that individual, or some other officer of the Department is responsible as it is the system being proved to be unsatisfactory. I am of the opinion that one of the most unsatisfactory features of the system is that the headquarters of the Department has been most markedly undermanned and

understaffed. There has been a great deal of discussion about plans not being provided. Plans could not be provided because the staff to provide the plans was not there, and the work was held up for many months because the adequate staff to provide plans was not there. The whole organization, I certainly think, wants overhauling, and this report is a very conspicuous example of failure to make bones about it. A large portion of these extensive proposals for the re-organization of the Department is being laid before the Council now. It must not be supposed that this is entirely a matter of individuals; it is a system. Here you have a Department like the Public Works that has under its charge a scope of works, the extent of which is very seldom realised. This Department has—I have made a rough calculation I admit—works to the value of about \$20,000,000. That is a very large amount of works, and the vote for the annual upkeep of those works is totally inadequate and has not been adequate for years. I do not know when it is adequate. They have been endeavouring to keep those works in a good condition with totally inadequate appropriations. To take an example: Public Buildings are valued on the books at something approaching \$1,700,000, and the replacement value is over \$5,000,000, and the maintenance allowance for these buildings for many years was considerably under one per cent.

Apart from inadequate provision, this extensive system of buildings, roads, bridges, the whole of the sea defences, drainage sluices was under the charge of a Department which was very much understaffed at headquarters, and the result was that there has been found by the investigation of the Committee a very defective system of organization, co-ordination and supervision. It is not a matter in which individuals can be blamed; it is the system that is at fault. If you want satisfactory work that system would have to be changed. As to the actual report there is nothing to be concealed about it. I am quite prepared to allow the hon. Member to see it, but it is contrary to the recognised constitutional practice to lay on the table of the Council a report on a disciplinary matter.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I desire to express

my appreciation of Your Excellency's promise to afford me an opportunity of seeing that report, and perhaps at this stage I may mention that when I asked for the report or took the opportunity of doing so, I was not particularly dealing with the vote, but I had in mind the proposal which is going to be discussed later in so far as the re-organization of the Department is concerned. As a matter of fact I may mention also at this stage that if the report was not made available I would have found myself in some difficulty in supporting or otherwise the proposals that are going to be put forward. I think we all agree that there is some need for re-organization in that Department, and we are all trying to do what we can to bring about that re-organization to the benefit of Government and the taxpayer. I quite appreciate that if Government appoints a Committee to deal with a matter and subsequently it is discovered that the report is bordering on a disciplinary measure, it is unconstitutional to lay that report before this Council.

THE CHAIRMAN: To avoid misunderstanding, I did not say that Government appointed a Committee of the Executive Council because it was thought it might take a disciplinary character. I did not say it did, as the hon. Member would see from the report and be able to judge for himself.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I assure you, sir, I had no intention of putting it that way. I wish to express my thanks for your offer. I shall make myself available to see that report at a very early date.

Motion put, and lost.

Item agreed to.

The provision made under the respective heads in the list of "Moves in" to the First Schedule of Additional Provision, 1940, was put and agreed to.

DIVISION B OF SCHEDULE.

EDUCATION—SCHOOLS, ETC.

Item—Attendance Registers, etc., for schools, \$50.

MR. JACOB: I was hoping to see some

provision under this head for grants to one or two new schools, request having been made several times for same.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is not the place where that will appear. The hon. Member is taking full advantage of the ordinary parliamentary privilege of discussing anything on a vote. He is rather extending that privilege in trying to attach additional schools to a vote like this.

Mr. JACOB: I cannot discuss it until the Annual Estimates come up.

THE CHAIRMAN: Not under a vote of \$50 for additional provision for school registers.

Mr. JACOB: I have no desire to question what you say, sir, but it has always been the privilege of a Member to raise any matter on Supplementary Estimates. I take it that privilege has been withdrawn.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the evidence of the last few days is sufficient to satisfy you that that privilege has been made full use of. I think there are limits to it and limits to the patience of the Council, if even not to mine, as the hon. Member for Berbice River was kind enough to point out. I am not dealing with it from a personal point of view at all. I am quite prepared to go on discussing additional schools for the next hour.

Mr. JACOB: I do not think it will take an hour. I think Government has had several requests in this matter. I have written—

THE CHAIRMAN: I am prepared to allow the hon. Member to make his remarks if he chooses, but I desire that it be clearly understood that Government is not prepared to give an answer on that subject now.

Mr. JACOB: I will make my remarks and let it remain on the Hansard. There is an entire lack of educational facilities in certain areas; on the Corentyne Coast there are two hundred children of school-going age who are not getting any education at all, so to speak. Letters have been written about the matter. There is a Compulsory Education Ordinance which imposes an obligation on this Government

to give ordinary primary educational facilities to all children of school-going age. Here is a case—one of several—where children have not been given any such facilities, and while they are even willing to help themselves Government is not offering them the help that Government should afford them by legislation. I think the position is very unsatisfactory and steps ought to be taken to remedy it.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Item—Emergency relief measures in diamond mining areas, \$500.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I wonder whether we are going to hear something about this item. I think last year we spent \$1,000 or \$1,500 on a definite programme. I am wondering now whether this expenditure here is a continuation of that programme, or whether it is something new.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The diamond industry, as the hon. Member is aware, has dropped considerably within the last few months. These men are practically starving and stranded in the diamond fields, and Government had to send them some relief and to find work as much as possible for them in the goldfields.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not a case of financing work in the diamond fields, but one of relieving extreme cases of emergency.

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND SCHEMES.

Item—Tobacco Industry Development \$1,444.14.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I see in the Remarks Column "*To cover cost of passages of Mr. T. W. Bradshaw and family. Provision was made for this expenditure in 1939, but lapsed in consequence of Crown Agents charges not being received in time to be brought to account during financial year just ended.*" I wonder whether Government can see its way to increase this amount, making it double so as to give this gentleman a "back" passage. If what I am going to tell this Council is correct—and I have no doubt in my mind that it is so—we should send him home. I have always understood that in this country people have been trying for years and years to grow tobacco. It is not that anybody here lacks knowledge as to how to get

the plant to grow. It has been growing here from time immemorial, and the people know how to grow it. I have seen leaves grown here of the size of something like one yard in length and about twelve inches in width. Gentlemen have carried off first prizes offered by the Agricultural Department at local exhibitions. What has been the puzzle is how to manufacture the leaves into the commercial article. We have been labouring on that all the time but without appreciable success. If I am not mistaken, when we spoke of getting a tobacco expert we were—at least I was—expecting to get a gentleman who knew something about manufacturing this article so as to put it on the market.

THE CHAIRMAN: You mean the curing of it?

Mr. ELEAZAR: Yes; I have been told that this gentleman on visiting Berbice some time ago was approached by two gentlemen, who have been interested for some time in the growing of tobacco, and asked to give them some idea about the curing of the leaves; he assured them that he knew nothing about the curing of tobacco and all he knew was about the growing of it in the field. The person who told me is one whose credibility is above reproach. Those two gentlemen had been experimenting by themselves in the curing of the leaves, and I even borrowed a book and lent it to them so that they might try to cure the leaves. If what is said is true, then we have not got the article we want. We want to know how the tobacco grown here can be cured so that we can get a market for it. We do not want an expert to tell us what every schoolboy here knows, that if you plant tobacco seeds in sandy loam with a little bit of manure you would get the plant to grow. The growth of tobacco is prolific in this country. We have got an expert and, if what I understand about him is true, we are ready to export him back to his home. This will not be the first time that we have posted back an expert.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Only once!

Mr. ELEAZAR: One gentleman came here as an accountant and we found that his only qualification was a Second Class College of Preceptors certificate, which nearly every secondary schoolboy had in

those days. We held it was not good enough and we posted him back by the next boat.

THE CHAIRMAN: He was not an expert.

Mr. ELEAZAR: He claimed to be an expert accountant. Your Excellency, Government should enquire into this thing as really what we want and like to get is a person who can tell us how to cure tobacco and make it a commercial article. We do not want anybody who can only tell us how to grow the article in the field, as there are hundreds here who can do so. I know a schoolmaster on the West Coast, Demerara who for over twenty years has been growing tobacco in the field and experimenting in the curing of the leaves, and who has made a good thing of it. Even now while travelling on the train from Berbice you pass patches of growing tobacco, some being of excellent growth.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do they sell that?

Mr. ELEAZAR: Yes, Your Excellency. They sell it to one or two firms in Georgetown who claim to be the manufacturers. You can easily imagine that as soon as they improve the quality they have the price going down. They obtain a small price for the stuff. One man told me that the thing has ruined him; he had planted some and got a fairly good price and so he borrowed money and embarked on a larger scale only to find that the merchants did not want the stuff. Another man at No. 53 on the Corentyne Coast did not get what it had cost him to grow the leaves because nobody wanted the stuff. There are only one or two firms which take the leaves in that way, and no one knows how to cure the leaves. What promises, therefore, to be a very good industry is almost being killed. We want an expert to teach us how to cure tobacco. I understand this expert is a Barbadian whom we have imported from Africa. If that is so, then it is much cheaper to import one direct from Barbados. I am asking Government to investigate this matter and, if what has been said is found to be true, fire him.

THE CHAIRMAN: You may send him back to Barbados.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am very much surprised to hear what the hon. Member has

said because, if my memory serves me correctly, a short time ago the Colonial Development Trust Fund Committee voted a certain amount of money for the erection of a kiln, which this Government will have to erect, for the curing of tobacco so that the people could see what kind of kiln they should erect for the curing of their own tobacco. It beats me to understand how this gentleman can say that he knows nothing about the curing of tobacco.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I was going to make the same observation as the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) but I also heard the same remark made by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar), and the strange thing about it was that it was stated that it came from the particular officer concerned. If that is so, and I think I mentioned at the time that it could not be correct, but I keep on hearing the remark and I am at a loss to understand where we are in the matter, I am going to agree with the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) on this ground. If we hope to develop the tobacco industry we must have someone to teach us how to cure tobacco. I know from my own knowledge as a dealer in tobacco that the main difficulty has been the curing of the leaves in this Colony. I have tried on several occasions to assist people who grow tobacco. I have taken it and tried to dispose of it, but in nine out of every ten cases the results have been unsatisfactory. The hon. Member for Georgetown North has said what this gentleman is supposed to do.

I do not, however, agree with the hon. Member for Berbice River that at the same time there is nothing to be learnt about the growing of tobacco. One man whom I know very well embarked upon it as a business proposition and eventually had to give it up although he knew how to sprinkle the seeds and to put a little bit of manure. There is still a lot more to learn before you can produce a leaf that can be properly cured and made suitable for the market. There is a good deal to be learnt about the cultivating of tobacco, such as the necessary attention to the plants, the elimination of worms, and the quality of the leaves. I do not think the hon. Member is quite right about that end of it. But, sir, I would ask that in view of the number of stories which are going

around, some of which are accredited to the particular officer himself, the matter should be investigated. He is alleged to have said: "I came out here to show the people how to cultivate tobacco." As a matter of fact the story goes on further and it is reported that he has said: "All I know is about the growing of tobacco on my plantation." That is the story that is going around. He is the owner of a plantation somewhere in Africa and was engaged to come here and teach us how to cultivate tobacco. I thought we were getting someone to teach us how to cure tobacco also.

Mr. CLEARE: (Director of Agriculture, Acting): I am surprised to hear some of the remarks by hon. Members as regards this officer not knowing how to cure tobacco. It seems rather like another story I have heard about another officer of our Department asking people to cut down rice which he mistook for grass. We do get these stories told about us. They are like the Aberdeen stories, sir.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I do not want anything I have said to be mixed up with what the hon. Member for Berbice River has said as to this gentleman not knowing how to cure tobacco. I did not say that.

Mr. CLEARE: I am sorry. This officer has a considerable plantation of tobacco in Africa and, I believe, has been rather successful in the operation of it. As the hon. Member says, we can grow tobacco here quite easily, but it is essential in curing to get a sufficient quantity at the same stage to fill a barn. It is necessary to get a barn full of tobacco to make a successful curing, and the officer has now got a small cultivation established with the object of obtaining sufficient for curing. Until he does that he will not be able to tell the people more about curing, which is so essential to making the industry anything like what is desired.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The Head of this Department of which the hon. Member is only the *locum tenens*—

THE CHAIRMAN: I may help the hon. Member if I say I know a little about the growing of tobacco, maybe not so much as the hon. Member. You do not measure tobacco entirely by the size of the leaf. A leaf three feet long

and one foot wide is not necessarily a good leaf. Any tobacco planter must know something about curing tobacco. He cannot be a planter of any magnitude unless he knows something about curing.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have said what I have been told by two gentlemen who have been doing this thing for some time and have been trying their best with it. One gentleman told me what the expert said and the other gentleman was called to verify the statement. The gentleman said he was astounded when he asked the expert to tell them something about curing and he replied that he knew nothing about it.

THE CHAIRMAN: He must cure his own tobacco or nobody will buy it.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If he knows how to dry the leaves that is not curing tobacco. If he cannot cure tobacco Government is going to make excuses for it. I understand he was coming here to teach us at least how to cure it.

THE CHAIRMAN: He may have made some unwise remarks, I do not know, but every planter must know the elementary principles of curing, otherwise he cannot be a tobacco planter.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am pleased to hear that remark.

THE CHAIRMAN: This gentleman has come from a big tobacco-growing country with a large number of planters. They all do their own elementary curing before the tobacco goes to the factory. The hon. Member misunderstands the position.

Mr. ELEAZAR: No, sir; I think we have been blundering with this thing. We want to cure tobacco.

The Council resumed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

THAT this Council approves the First Schedule of Additional Provision required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the estimates for the year 1940, as amended in Committee.

Mr. SEAFORD seconded.

Motion put, and carried.

LIVESTOCK EXPERIMENT SCHEME.

Mr. CLEARE. I beg to move —

THAT, with reference to Governor's Message No. 23 of 21st August, 1940, this Council approves of a free grant of \$14,000 for the first year and \$4,000 per annum for four consecutive years thereafter from the Development Trust Fund for the purpose of financing the establishment and operation of a livestock experiment station at Ebini Downs, Berbice River

The necessity for the establishment of this station has been set out in the Message. Economic conditions produced by the war have indicated that there will be an opportunity to develop the livestock industry, and in addition the expansion of the rice and sugar industries on the coastlands is reducing the grazing areas. Some of them are already considerably overstocked and the intermediate savannahs appear to offer an opportunity to extend these livestock areas. The grasses and soil in these areas have shown some mineral deficiency, and it will be necessary to carry out some experiments to see whether these areas would be suitable for a livestock industry. The amount asked for is to do that.

The scheme also proposes to supply bulls for the coastlands and the Rupununi district. The scheme is definitely experimental and developmental in its character, and for that reason I believe it will get the support of this Council. There has always been a cry for an export cattle industry, and it is quite evident that very shortly there will be an opportunity for the export of cattle to the adjacent Caribbean area. Unless we carry out these preliminary trials this Colony will not be in a position to take advantage of that opportunity when it does occur.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I rise to oppose the motion which, as I understand it, is asking for a sum of \$26,000 mainly for experimental purposes. The pastures are said to be void of certain minerals, and it is intended to carry out experiments in feeding the animals with some minerals in order to see whether their condition would improve. The condition of these pastures does not allow the animals to thrive, and even the calves do not live for any length of time. If the animals are very wild they will have to be tamed and hand-fed before they will take any minerals by themselves. I do not know

if they would ever reach the stage to take the minerals by themselves. Together with this experiment it is proposed, as I understand it, to stock this place with pure bred bulls and cows so as to supply bulls to the small cattle-owners on the coastlands and those of the Rupununi district. These are very large areas and therefore it cannot be expected that such an experiment to improve these pastures will be productive of practical results. It has been thought that they should experiment on the animals themselves. Even if such an experiment proves successful, which I doubt very much, only a limited number of animals can be fed owing to the fact that they are wild.

Some time ago the ranches in the Rupununi district were trying out this experiment on the animals, and there is still some doubt as to whether the animals have improved in condition as the result of the experiment. I go further and say that if there is the necessity for this experiment there are established ranches in the Rupununi district and in the area that is proposed for this experimental station. The owners of those ranches can be given the minerals free of cost and, I am sure, they would lend their co-operation in carrying out the experiment to its fullest extent, because it would be to their benefit if it is successful. We need not, therefore, establish this proposed station where we will have to employ a staff, erect buildings and quarters for the technical officers, and build corrals, etc. If hon. Members of this Council had the opportunity of seeing the report on which this motion has been introduced into this Council they would have seen that at the end of the experiment in the fifth year there would still be a deficit of \$1,250. In support of my contention that this is an experiment, if I may be permitted to refer to the joint report of the Government Chemist and Government Veterinary Surgeon dated 29th December, 1939, the following is therein stated:

We have the honour to submit the attached statement on the necessity, object and cost of an experiment station at Ebini, Berbice River.

I have quoted that to show that this proposal is nothing short of an experiment. The report goes on further to state in paragraph 5:

The above project would in two to five years provide information that would be of great

value in determining whether this large uninhabited savannah can be economically useful for livestock.

This leaves no doubt that the proposal is purely experimental. These areas are not known to be suitable for cattle-rearing, as has been proved by this report. To bring this proposal within the scope of the Colonization Ordinance, they have added the development of the industry. It is intended to stock 100 creole cows, 3 bulls, 50 ewe sheep, 2 ram sheep, 2 pairs of grey oxen, 3 horses, and one pack mule. The value of these animals is put down at \$4,800. The maintenance cost for that stock is \$4,000. I maintain and feel certain that this Council has no power to make a grant from the Colonization Development Fund for an experimental purpose. I think application was made under sub-section (b) of section 6 of the Ordinance which says: *The promotion of agricultural or other industry.* I maintain that this being an experiment it cannot be said that it is for the promotion of the cattle industry. As I interpret the word "promotion," it means having the direct effect of raising to a higher standard. This being an experiment it may prove adverse to the industry. So far as improving the breed of cattle on the coastlands is concerned, quite recently we have had a grant from the Colonial Development Fund, and I understand a definite step has been taken at Anna Regina to improve the strain with that pure bred animal. I think it was also decided that a branch station be opened at Whim. Altogether we had in the estimates last year an increase of \$1,400, bringing the livestock vote up to \$2,000.

If Government is desirous of carrying through this experiment arrangements should be made with the ranches in the districts whereby the experiment can be carried by them to the fullest extent. One of the main questions to be considered in this experiment is whether this will be a commercial undertaking. If the cattle would take more minerals in value than the value of the beef produced, then it would not be a commercial undertaking. On that question alone I do not think the proposal should be carried any further. There may be restricted areas for cattle-rearing in certain parts of the country, but I make bold to say that so far as the County of Berbice is concerned—and I

think it is the largest cattle-rearing County in the Colony—there are vast savannah lands easily accessible to the public which can be utilized for extending the cattle industry instead of seeking somewhere 75 or 100 miles from New Amsterdam. We will all be benefited by any expansion or improvement of the cattle industry, but I challenge the Agricultural Department to say they can find a better type of cattle to withstand the adverse weather conditions of this Colony than the type of cattle that we have here. When we are thinking of improving our breed of cattle we must also think of improving the pastures on which to stock those cattle. If you improve the breed without improving the pasture; it would be money and energy wasted. I have had personal experience and know what I am saying. Three years ago I had no less than eight half-bred animals and owing to adverse weather conditions I have lost them one by one until there is not one remaining to-day.

The Council adjourned until the following day at 10.30 a.m.