

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Wednesday, 29th November, 1939.*

The Council met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Acting Governor, SIR JOHN WADDINGTON, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., 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. F. Dias, O.B.E. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

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, Comptroller of Customs.

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

The Hon. G. O. Case, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E. (Georgetown South).

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. F. A. Mackey (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. C. V. Wight, (Western Essequibo).

## MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 28th November, 1939, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

## SUGGESTED DISCUSSION OF RICE REGULATIONS.

Mr. LEE: I beg to move:—

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

And whereas it is desirable that these Regulations be discussed in the Legislative Council before they are proclaimed and become effective:

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

In moving this motion I would ask the Council to consider the matter carefully and say whether Members of the Council have not the right to discuss Regulations before they become effective, because they affect the inhabitants of the country. In this case these Regulations affect the second industry in this Colony. I do not disagree that Government has the right in a crisis like this to have emergency

powers, but before execution of those emergency powers which affect the industry, I am appealing to Government to accept this motion and have the Regulations discussed. In doing so Government would be able to see the people's side, and the responsibility would be thrown on the Electives' as well as Government's shoulders. As it is, if the Regulations are brought into force without the Electives being given an opportunity to voice the views of their constituents, the responsibility would be entirely Government's. Although the Regulations will come into force on December 1 I feel that in the interest of the people of the Colony Government should place them on the Order Paper in order that they might be discussed clause by clause in this Council. Having heard the views of the Council and made any amendments that might be found necessary Government would be able to proclaim the Regulations with the co-operation of the people.

In publishing the Regulations without consulting any of the recognized associations, or any recognized body of rice millers or growers, Government has not acted rightly towards the people, and in view of that I am appealing to Members of this Council that they should demand an opportunity to discuss the Regulations. After all the rice industry is the second largest industry in the Colony. There are such things as advances to rice growers, interest charges and rent, and I can tell Your Excellency that the proprietors have increased their rents and the cost of milling. There is no provision whatever in the Regulations for the protection of the grower in that respect. There is no provision with respect to interest charges on advances to growers. All those things would be brought to Government's attention if there was a discussion of the Regulations, and Government has emergency powers. Government would like the industry to prosper and its interests to be protected, and that is why I am asking Government to allow the Regulations to be discussed. I am not saying that Government is not thinking of the people and their interests, because that is Government's duty. At the same time Government has not looked at the other side of the picture. When I consulted my constituents I was asked how could two bags rice support a rice grower with a

family of ten for six months? I am not saying that Government's advisers have not advised Government to the best of their ability, but Members of the Council will remember the advice given Government in Sir Wilfred Collet's time, and what happened to the rice industry. Sir Wilfred Collet was misled on certain facts and he assumed control of the industry in order that there should be sufficient rice to supply the needs of the inhabitants of the Colony. The people believe that their representatives in this Council can voice their views, but if Government cares to ignore those views it can do so. I am appealing to the Council and to Government to permit the Regulations to be discussed.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: In seconding this motion I do not support entirely what has been said by the hon. Member who moved it. It would appear to me that there is nothing to prevent any Member of this Council coming forward at any time with a motion for the amendment of the Rice Regulations. I have seconded the motion because the rice industry is of some importance, and it should at some time achieve the importance to the Colony which the sugar industry has, if not to the same extent and value. I know that Government has been faced with a considerable amount of difficulty in the matter, and perhaps Government has had the various sides of the question put forward. My interest lies entirely in the producer, and I have always maintained that there are several indirect profits which have never gone to the benefit of the industry. If the hon. Member has amendments to suggest it is on that ground I support his motion that the Council should discuss the Regulations. I must congratulate Government on the action it has taken, but it is unfortunate that the rice producer will not get the full benefit which he would have got if action had been taken perhaps a month or two ago, just before the crop. As far as my constituency is concerned, while Government's action is welcomed, certain proposals were made unfortunately at a stage when a large portion of the crop had already been disposed of, and certain suggestions have not quite been appreciated by those concerned. Those are matters to which I presume those respon-

sible for the Regulations will give due consideration.

I do not think the questions raised by the hon. Member come within the Regulations, but they can be adjusted in another direction. As a lawyer he should know that they are matters to be dealt with by private agreement. I appreciate the point raised about interest charges on advances to rice growers, but those are matters for private arrangement. I think he also referred to the question of landlord and tenant, and the fact that the tenancy is created with the right of the landlord to compel his tenant to place his padi at his disposal. Those are matters which I think could be better dealt with in an Ordinance based on the principles of the Agricultural Acts at present existing in England. That is a very wide subject, and it would have to be considered how far those Acts could be applicable to this Colony. I feel sure that Government will have no hesitation in having these Regulations discussed, because it appears to me that Government is never afraid of discussion, and has become so immune to criticism that perhaps it would not mind any criticism at the present time.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I find myself in some difficulty because I have not heard from the mover or the seconder of the motion what is the objection, if there is any objection at all, to the Regulations. In the first place I must say that the Regulations have been made by the Governor under the provisions of the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, and the Emergency Powers Order in Council. Those powers are, of course, used by the Governor in a case of emergency, and I think it will be generally agreed that what has happened in the rice industry during the last few weeks and what might happen in the future fully justified the Governor in taking the steps he did to introduce these Regulations. I was very grateful to hear the hon. Member say that he feels that the Regulations are going to protect the growers' interests. That is undoubtedly so. In fact it was one of the principal reasons for the Regulations. The seconder also said he congratulated Government on bringing them in.

I would like to state what are

really the purposes of these Regulations. In the first place the Regulations have been introduced by the Governor in order to ensure that there is an adequate supply of rice in the Colony for local consumption during the war. Secondly, they are intended to ensure that such rice as is available for export shall be marketed under the most suitable conditions, and thirdly, the Regulations are intended by their operation to secure a better price and improved production in the Colony with the object of supplying the West Indian markets as far as possible. That is very important for the reason that if we can supply the complete requirements of those markets ships now used for conveying rice to the West Indies could be diverted by the Home Government for war purposes. A fourth reason is to ensure that the profits of the industry during the war are equitably distributed between all the interests concerned. It is quite obvious that if the export price goes up it is essential that everybody concerned in the industry should benefit, and particularly the grower. Lastly, but not least, it is important that there should be no exorbitant profiteering in export markets. We want to satisfy our customers in the West Indies, and we do not want a repetition of the disgraceful procedure which took place during the last war when prices rose in the West Indian markets out of all proportion. I do not know whether the provisions of these Regulations are entirely grasped. The export market will be conducted in a manner which is entirely different from what the trade has been so far accustomed to.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Rice Marketing Board and Government have just completed negotiations with the Government of Trinidad by which 10,000 tons of rice will be sold to Trinidad from the present time to the end of September, 1940, together with an option to buy a further 3,000 tons, all at fixed prices for each grade. I am also pleased to say that these prices are adequate to maintain the prices for buying in the Colony, of which the Board has already given notice. I regard that as a most important step in securing the Trinidad market. I should add that the Government of Trinidad have agreed that during that period they will not permit the

sale of Indian rice in Trinidad except by special licence. That is the first step towards securing a logical first market for our rice, and I am very pleased indeed that I have been associated with a transaction of that nature.

Although the hon. Member did not mention what were his real objections to the Regulations he has indicated in the preamble of his motion that there is some dissatisfaction. That is quite contrary to my information. The Secretary of the Rice Marketing Board has been making tours in the country and has toured the Corentyne and Essequibo. His opinion is that, generally speaking, the growers of padi are delighted with these Regulations, and even the small millers are delighted. Some of the large millers had hoped for large profits, but they realize that the conditions under which sales are made to-day will not allow of enormous profits being made. Of course there will be criticisms on certain points, but on the whole I do not agree that there is any general dissatisfaction with the Regulations at all. I think, generally speaking, everyone is more or less pleased with the introduction of this scheme.

The hon. Member mentioned one or two points which he thought might be discussed. He spoke about interest charges which obviously are outside the scope of Regulations dealing with the sale and distribution of rice. I quite agree that if it becomes desirable to fix by law some maximum for interest on rice loans, something might be done in some other form. He also referred to the question of rent of agricultural lands. That, too, is outside the scope of these Regulations. If it becomes necessary to introduce some special form of emergency legislation to deal with that question that can be done. At the moment I have no information which would lead me to think that is necessary. Nevertheless, if a case can be made out for that I have no doubt Government would consider it.

He also mentioned the question of the retention of rice by a grower for his own consumption. The Regulations provide that the Board may prescribe the quantity of rice which shall be retained by a miller for himself and for any grower of padi for domestic consumption, and it gave the

Board some considerable thought to discover what was the correct average amount that should be prescribed. The hon. Member mentioned two bags. I do not know where he got that figure from, because at the last meeting of the Board it was decided that on the coming into force of the Regulations a notice would be published allowing 10 bags per annum for each miller and each grower. That is considered to be a fair average quantity which the average Indian family would require for consumption.

I believe the hon. Member mentioned the question of milling fees. If he did I want to tell him that the drafting Committee did consider that point, but it was decided that it was quite impracticable to fix any standard of milling fees. It was realized that so many standards of mills exist, and so many different types of mills, that it was quite impossible to fix any one standard that would cover all types of mills. I admit some difficulty because I expected to answer any number of criticisms of the Regulations, but I have heard nothing really that requires an answer. I do not think it is necessary for the Council to decide that these Regulations, which the hon. Member admits will give satisfaction to the principal parties concerned, the growers, and on which his seconder congratulates Government, should be discussed clause by clause. The Regulations will become law the day after to-morrow, and I really would like to appeal to all those interested in the industry to co-operate with the members of the Rice Marketing Board in making them a success. I think the industry has a chance which it ought to use as much as possible. Out of evil has come some good, and we hope that this scheme will succeed and will form the basis of some policy which will re-establish our rice industry. (applause).

Mr. JACOB: I have spoken on this question until I am tired. I am concerned about the rice industry because it was once the second largest industry in this Colony. Government and this Council by a majority decided that something should be done to aid this industry seven years ago. I have given certain figures on several occasions and I think they can stand repetition. When Government began to help the industry the exports of

rice were, in round figures, 30,000 tons. They will not reach 14,000 tons at the end of this year. That is how this industry has been helped by Government. I maintain that the industry requires help. It has not had the right kind of help up to the present time, and I go further and say that this scheme, however well designed it may be, will not be operated in the interest of the growers and those who have built the industry up. Large sums of money have been lost by various people, including growers, millers and investors, and it is common knowledge that if our rice exports have declined by more than 50 per cent. then there must have been losses throughout the industry.

We have been told that certain things are not within the scope of these Regulations. Why doesn't Government take over the whole industry and bring everything within the scope of the Regulations? It should be within the scope of the Board to increase the production of rice, and after that the sale of it would be all right. I think the Board has blundered in selling that rice to Trinidad at the present time. We are concerned about getting the best possible price for our rice. We are not concerned about selling to the West Indian markets at prices favourable to them or the consumers there. If that is how Government is going to look after this Colony I am sorry for the people of the Colony. Up to the present time the consumers and purchasers of rice have never worried about where it comes from. They have bought in the open market at competitive prices. I am not satisfied that the Board has done well in making this sale.

It is distinctly unfair that Government, or the Acting Governor, should take over the whole of this industry. I think it is a distinct breach of faith with the growers that these Regulations should have been brought in. I do not want to say anything more on that point. All I am concerned about is that production should improve, and that soil conditions should be such as to bring benefit to those planting the rice, and that we must be able to supply all the markets that can buy our rice. The Colonial Treasurer stated that we will be able to supply all the markets. All the markets consume 60,000 tons of rice, but next year we will not export more than 20,000 tons. I should like to

be advised as to what is the quantity available for next year. I think 20,000 tons would be a very conservative and practical estimate. There is a drought in the Colony at the present time, and local consumption is going to increase. I therefore do not think large quantities of rice should be sold in advance. Trinidad has been of great help to us in the past, buying certain qualities of our rice which could not be sold in other markets, but the prices obtained in Trinidad have been the lowest this Colony has ever had. With the exception of super rice I should like to see figures of the Board showing what prices have been realized in Trinidad, Barbados, and the Windward and Leeward Islands for other grades of rice. It would be clearly seen that it is unprofitable to sell small quantities of rice to Trinidad and leave the other markets out. Those are practical things for practical business men, and I want to urge upon Government that it must secure the best men in the Colony to control the industry. I do not think Government has done that.

There is another point I wish to make about the Regulations. Regulation 9 (c) states that the Board shall from time to time—

allot the proportion of the quantities of rice available for export which may be sold by each exporting agent to purchasers outside the Colony: Provided that in making allotments the Board shall take into consideration the quantities of rice exported by each exporting agent during the nine months ending on the thirtieth day of September, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine.

The Regulations came into operation a few days ago. This morning my firm received a circular from the Board which states *inter alia* :—

"Quotas having been determined by the Board after reviewing stock figures, each exporting agent will be notified of the quota allotted to him in the ensuing month for each market."

There is conflict in those two statements; which is going to be adopted I do not know. The Regulations say one thing and the Board issues a circular which says another thing. In the past I have complained in this Council and outside as regards the unfair distribution of sales made by the Board. It was admitted here that the Board did not act within its powers, and the matter ended there.

That is going to happen again. I do not think those things ought to be done in that manner. We are concerned about the progress of the industry and the improvement of the economic conditions of the Colony. This industry offers great scope for statesmanship, and I would ask Government whether in the six years it has had control it has shown any degree of statesmanship? Absolutely none. I would be ashamed to be connected with something that has been a failure such as the Rice Marketing Board has been. Government has the power to do anything here. We simply get up here and talk, and sometimes we are told "You should not say that," and the matter rests there. But responsibility must be placed somewhere, and I am placing the responsibility for the failure of the present state of the rice industry on Government. Immediately the industry begins to improve I shall be the first to congratulate Government on any success that may be achieved, but as things are going at present I cannot see any hope of that. We have to consider the interests of the people first.

It has been said that all parties are satisfied. I desire to express a contrary opinion. I have been told that the majority of the people are not satisfied. In fact there is no proper way of expressing public opinion here. The Secretary of the Board goes around and speaks to certain people and reports to the Board what information he has obtained. Are people going to be satisfied when three-fourths of those engaged in the industry will be out of it? It is not practical to discuss these things in detail in a debate like this, but I think the motion has some merit and ought to be supported, if for no other reason, to know other people's viewpoint and to adjust the Regulations to meet the conditions. I think the Regulations can be improved tremendously, but from the lukewarmness the Elected Members have exhibited I expect that the motion will be defeated. All we can do is to ventilate our views, but very little heed is paid to them. I am not satisfied that this move is going to improve the industry and bring the desired results.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I was not sure how far the privilege of the Council could be exercised in discussing the motion before the Council, in view of the fact that the

Regulations to which the motion relates were made under the Emergency Powers Act, but it appears that my fears were somewhat unjustified. I have risen merely to add my quota lest it be understood that I am in any way supporting the motion in any form whatever. In adopting that role I claim no excuse for doing so, because it is well within the knowledge of Government as well as hon. Members, that I have always advocated, in season and out of season, that my view of prosperity to the rice industry was if Government took a firm hand and introduced a single-selling organisation. I have expressed that view for many years, and I look upon the Regulations as a step in the right direction. I think Government will agree that it is also my view that we cannot hope for perfection in the initial stage, but I do honestly feel that as the work of the Board progresses the various difficulties which may now appear to hon. Members, and those persons who have studied the Regulations, may disappear altogether, and in that way the industry will prosper.

I am in agreement with the Colonial Treasurer when he stated that as far as he knew—and he based his opinion on what was conveyed to him by the Secretary of the Board—there was not all this cause for dissatisfaction referred to in the motion. I should like to say first of all that I happen not to be a speculator in rice. That is to say, I do not try to pay the lowest price for rice and sell it at the highest, but I happen to be a representative of millers, and all rice sold by my firm on their behalf is sold on an agency basis. In other words, whatever price is obtained for rice the miller obtains the full benefit, and all I earn is commission. I have gone to the trouble to explain that so as to point out that whatever profit might be gained is not gained by the firm which I represent. My view of the matter is that no useful purpose would be served by what might be termed a full and free discussion of the Regulations that will shortly become law. My experience is that a discussion of that sort in Council would lead nowhere. Members would express various views and I feel sure that at the end of the discussion the rice industry would be without any form of assistance.

I regard the Regulations as a step in the right direction. The primary object is

that Government will henceforward be in a position to compile proper statistics in regard to the industry. I do not think that at the moment there is any person in this Council, not even in the Colony, who can say with any degree of accuracy what is the annual consumption of rice in the Colony. It is not even possible to say what is the quantity of rice produced in the Colony. We have for several years been working on estimates, and what has been our experience? Our experience at the end of each crop is that our figures have been wrong, and they were bound to be wrong because our crops in the first instance were based on estimates, and our domestic consumption was also based on estimates, with the result that at the end of the season we found that we had more rice than we thought, or that we had a lesser quantity. Is it possible to manage such a large industry without proper statistics? The answer must be "No." It is absolutely impossible to do anything, and I welcome the step which has been taken. I sincerely hope that even after the crisis has passed and it is not necessary for the Governor of the Colony to exercise his powers under Emergency Regulations, this bit of legislation will be continued with whatever improvements which might be considered necessary as a result of the experience gained.

It is no use splitting hairs and pointing out to Government that a blunder has been made at this early stage as regards the transaction to which the Colonial Treasurer has referred. After all that is a matter of opinion. It may be the opinion of one person that Government has blundered, but my own opinion is that it was a very good start to make. We have always been told in this Council and outside that our most difficult buyers were our Trinidad customers, and I know that of my own knowledge. In dealing with Trinidad we have been up against a number of difficulties, and if Government as a beginning was able to strike a bargain with them, and granted that the price in this instance was a bit on the low side, which I do not admit, is that sufficient reason for saying that the Regulations will fail? I submit not. Even if a blunder was made with regard to the price it cannot be suggested that a transaction of that nature is a down-and-out blunder. But let us

admit that a blunder, has been made as regards the price, surely the experience that will now be gained as a result of that deal will be of benefit to this organisation at a later stage. We have always heard in this Council that efforts being made by the Government were not in the best interest of the rice industry, but I must confess that I have never at any time heard any alternative proposals put forward. If these Regulations will not benefit the industry, will those who think so put up proposals that will do so? It is all very well and fine to pick holes here and there in criticising a measure of this kind.

Mr. JACOB: Proposals were submitted by at least one member of the Rice Committee, which submitted a report to Government, as to how the industry could be better run.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I thank the hon. Member for the explanation, but I am afraid he misunderstood me. I said "proposals that will benefit the industry." I was very careful in the choice of my words. I submit that this is a proposal which will benefit the industry, not the individual.

Mr. JACOB: Let us hope so.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: We have always heard that the growers are the people who should be protected. I would like to ask if by these Regulations it is not intended to improve the lot of the growers? There is no doubt about it. If the hon. Member said that even with these Regulations they might not get all they should get I would agree with him, but to say that the growers will not benefit I do not agree. My view is that as time goes on the growers will receive the full benefit of their labours, but that will take a little time. I was very pleased to observe that the matter is not being overlooked, and that steps are being taken to improve the lot of the growers by attempting to fix the price of padi. I do not wish it to be understood that I consider the Regulations are perfect as they stand. We know that it is a difficult task to put down on paper what is intended. The Colonial Treasurer has appealed to those connected with the industry for their assistance and co-operation in order to make the scheme a success. I can assure him that that plea

will not fall on deaf ears, but in turn I would like to appeal to the Colonial Treasurer, who is going to be the Chairman of the Board, and to the members of the Board to endeavour to work with those people who are doing their bit for the industry so as to make the Regulations practical and workable. In that way I feel sure that the Regulations will succeed for the benefit of the industry.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** What seems to be exercising the mind of the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) is the advance sale of 10,000 tons of rice to Trinidad. From the estimated figures which have been supplied to Government I cannot see that any risk whatever is being taken by this Government in agreeing to supply Trinidad with 10,000 tons of rice during the course of the next year. The hon. Member has also said that he feels that the Board should have done more to expand the industry. I hold that it was impossible to expand the industry until it was possible to secure a market, and a market having been secured it is possible to fix minimum prices, which is what the growers want. I agree with what the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) said—that the lot of the grower will be far happier under these Regulations.

**Mr. JACOB:** I want to—

**THE PRESIDENT:** I am afraid I cannot allow the hon. Member to speak again.

**Mr. JACOB:** I wish to correct and explain what the Colonial Secretary has said. I never said at any time that we have not got markets for our rice. My contention has been, and is, that the markets are there but we cannot supply them.

**Dr. SINGH:** I took copies of the Rice Regulations to the rice-growing areas in my constituency and explained them at the several meetings. The consensus of opinion at those meetings was that they agreed with Government in taking over the industry, but they would urge Government to take it over in full, especially as regards the protection of the growers. Rice farmers are appealing for assistance from the time they start to make provision for planting. They feel that at the present time in some cases they have to

pay high rates of interest on the money they borrow, and if the minimum price of padi remained at \$1.20 per bag their position would be no better. They are asking Government for assistance when they start to plant. Of course capital will be needed, and I suggest that each rice grower should subscribe one shilling, rice millers \$50 each, and exporters \$110 each. In that way it is estimated that a sum of about \$400,000 would be obtained, which would provide a nucleus of a fund from which Government could assist the farmers. I am asking Government to consider that suggestion with its exports.

**Mr. WALCOTT:** I had intended not to say anything on the motion, but in view of the remarks I have heard it is necessary that I should say something. I would like to confirm all that has been said by the Colonial Treasurer. I was on the Rice Marketing Board when these matters were being considered, and I can assure Members of this Council that nothing of consequence was overlooked. The Board spent days and weeks in getting down to it, even sitting late at night. I feel that everyone connected with the Colony, and especially with the rice industry, should do everything in his power to make the present scheme a success, and I appeal to Members like my hon. friend on my left (Mr. Jacob) and to the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) to put their personal feelings aside and try to help the Board to make it a success. I am not on the Board now. I resigned last week for purely private reasons. I felt I could not spare the time and could not make the journeys necessary for complete attendance at the Board meetings, certainly not at the beginning. But Your Excellency has my assurance that if at any time the Colonial Treasurer, who is now Chairman of the Board, wishes to consult me on anything I shall be delighted to be of any help I possibly can, and I intend to do all I possibly can to help the Board to make the scheme a success. I heard this morning that there was some idea of my being disgruntled, which made me resign from the Board, but my reason is that I am going to live out of town shortly.

With regard to prices I consider the sale made to Trinidad extremely fair and good for the industry. We have obtained from the Trinidad Government the prices



which the Board fixed. They are fair compared with prices paid locally, but they will leave a margin of profit for the Board to accumulate a reserve fund. What does not seem to have been thought of by some of the speakers is that if the war continues we will get even better prices for padi next year, but the whole idea of the British Government is to stop profiteering, and I entirely agree with that. We must expect people to get fair remuneration for their labour. When the war started the growers were selling their rice at \$2.20 per bag. To-day they will receive \$3.40, which I figure is an increase of a little over 50 per cent. Surely they are being looked after. Last year they were getting from 64 to 80 cents per bag for the lower grades. This year they are getting \$1.20 as a minimum, and I know that in many cases they receive \$1.32. That will allow the producer to make some profit on his produce, and next year he should be in a better position to plant his rice without having to borrow money. Therefore the bogey about interest does not worry me in the slightest.

I am hoping to see the industry put on its feet again as a result of this measure which Your Excellency has had the courage to introduce, and I can assure you that I have interviewed hundreds of people, not only growers but millers and merchants, and they were all quite satisfied with the Regulations. They think that the Committee has acted very fairly in its consideration of the obligations placed on various people, but you will find certain disgruntled individuals in this community. On one hand I heard a man say "You put too high a price on the padi; I cannot make good profit on the milling." On the other hand the grower says the price is too low, and the exporter who at one time made a fortune on a bag of rice, thinks 10 cents too little profit for him to make. I was delighted to hear the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) express appreciation of the scheme, and I feel sure it will meet with success if everybody, instead of giving bad advice, gives good advice to the Board.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have to thank the Colonial Treasurer for causing me to speak on this motion. I am never out of favour with the Elective Section, and

whenever a motion is brought forward by an Elected Member I always endeavour to support it, provided there is any merit in it. I never say "Not voting," or "Against" if I can possibly say "For." To-day I purposely remained silent until the Colonial Treasurer raised points which I thought were not necessary at all. I have nothing to offer Government except the warmest congratulations on these Regulations. I have always been against Government interfering with these people, and the answer Government gave me was "They asked for it," and I had to be silent. But this is the time when Government should interfere, and I see nothing to object to in the Regulations, because they offer the prospect at least for the man who is planting padi to get a living out of it. How can a man who is going to get a minimum price of 5/- for padi now complain when all he expected up to last August was 60 cents per bag? The grower has not a grouse. Other people who feel that they should be parasitic in a sense are complaining. I understand that the Regulations will come into force the day after to-morrow. I deplore the fact that I do not see any penalty attached to Regulation 7, because I was told that the lowest price would be 5/- per bag, and I know that there are people running up and down the country buying all the padi they can get at 96 cents and \$1.08 per bag. They are taking advantage of the people.

I am glad for the explanation offered by the Hon. Mr. Walcott. I heard that he had resigned from the Board because they did not accept his advice. I am glad to hear that is not the case. My experience is that when you are on a Committee and everybody does not agree with you the worst thing you can do is to leave, because you make matters worse. I am very much interested in rice because a large number of my clients are padi growers, and I hear everything about it all the time. Even those who are renting land and the owners of the land come to me with their side of the question, and from that point of view I can claim to know as much about rice as anybody else. I know the ordinary poor man's view, and he is quite satisfied with the Regulations. It cannot possibly be true to say that a man who is getting double what he expected without doing anything more is not satisfied. I

do not think the hon. Member's motion has much merit in it. I suppose he must realize that himself now that he has heard arguments from all quarters. Government cannot discover the defects in the Regulations at the very start. I do not think Government will be slow in making the necessary adjustments after experience. The first thing I am asking Government to do is to put a penalty to Regulation 7, because if a man is found purchasing padi below the price fixed by the Board he should be fined \$500.

Mr. McDAVID: I would like to relieve the hon. Member's mind by saying that there is a general penalty of \$250, under the main Regulations, just half the sum suggested by him.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I congratulate Government on the attempt it has made to put this industry on some footing, and to assist the grower, the man who is really bearing the brunt.

Mr. LUCKHOO: Certain statements have been made which might have a disheartening effect on the growers of padi. I should like first of all to join the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) in congratulating Government on taking this very necessary step for the protection of the industry. What we are concerned about is not individual interests but the interests of the industry as a whole, and I think these Regulations will serve a very useful purpose in that direction. When the Regulations were published the Berbice Chamber of Commerce had a discussion, and the only point I remember being raised was the 10 cents commission on each bag, and the question of the grading of padi. Beyond that, although there were varying interests at that meeting, nobody complained that the Regulations were harsh, unconscionable, or were not required.

With regard to the increased rental to be paid by rice growers, I am not aware that in the County of Berbice, which has large producers of rice, there is any increase in the rental of land. In fact I know that the estate proprietors are allowing the people to plant and reap under the same terms and conditions which hitherto existed. I am not aware that private individuals have increased

the rent of rice lands in order to make money out of it.

With regard to the question of exorbitant interest being charged by rice millers I know that at one time the interest charged by them was very unreasonable, but there is Statute law on the point, and I believe that at some time or another Government will see the advisability of tightening up that particular Ordinance in order to prevent moneylenders from exacting exorbitant interest from borrowers.

As far as the Regulations are concerned I see nothing that will effect the industry at all. When the last war occurred I know that people sold permits issued to them at \$10 for the right to export rice, and made hundreds of dollars. The rice growers are the people who should have our sympathy, and I think it would be a very retrograde step if Government did not see that these Regulations were carried out in their entirety. There may be alterations here and there. There is a Board now sitting, and I spent an hour and a half with the Colonial Treasurer this morning. Great interest is being taken in the subject, and there might be amendments later on suggested by the Board. To condemn the Regulations in this wholesale fashion and try to create alarm in the minds of the public is not right, and should not be encouraged by Members of this Council. I wish to assure the rice growers of the Colony that as far as I am concerned I will see that their interests are protected, because they have proceeded with their cultivation with the utmost determination, and I feel sure that now there is an opportunity to encourage them they should be made to understand that Government will do everything in its power to protect their interests and see that they get a square deal.

THE PRESIDENT: Before the mover replies I would like to add to what has been said by the Colonial Treasurer, that it is the earnest hope of Government that the Regulations will prove of great value to the rice industry as a whole. The hon. mover has said that if the Regulations are not debated clause by clause in this Council the responsibility would lie with Government. While I recognize that fact,

and I realize my own responsibility in the matter, it was one that I felt it was my duty to take in the interest of the rice industry of the Colony as a whole. The Regulations will come into force on December 1, and it is not possible for Government to agree to a debate of those Regulations clause by clause before they come into force. In saying that I think I can speak for the Board and say that they will be glad to give consideration to any suggestions that may be put forward for the improvement of those Regulations. There will undoubtedly be some difficulties in the administration. We must expect that, but they are difficulties which we must overcome in the interest of the Colony as a whole, and I would like to add my plea to those of the Colonial Treasurer and other hon. Members who have spoken, in asking that all those who are interested in rice in the Colony should co-operate to make these Regulations a success. I do not know whether the hon. mover will feel that the subject has been sufficiently ventilated for him to withdraw his motion in view of the trend of the debate, but no doubt he will state that when he replies.

Mr. LEE: I will certainly ask leave to withdraw the motion, but I am thinking of the future for the benefit of this Colony, and that is why I asked that the Regulations be debated clause by clause. If Government accepts the responsibility I am relieved of my responsibility, because I have not had an opportunity to voice the views of the people in order to show the weakness in one of the Regulations. I know how difficult it would be when the Regulations become law to have them amended or added to. That is my reason, apart from the responsibility which I wanted the Elective Section to assume along with Government for the benefit of the rice industry, but many of them have not read the resolution of the motion. It is not that I suggest that the Regulations should not be enforced, or that I would like them to be thrown into the waste paper basket. My sole object was to point out certain things to Government and have them debated.

In reply to the remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Walcott I would like to say that I earn my living by my profession. I have no interest in any industry, except

that I have relatives who are interested in rice milling. The hon. Nominated Member spoke of personal feeling; I have none whatever. I would like the growers to get the full benefit of the profits that will be derived from rice. I am not saying that profits will not be derived—

THE PRESIDENT: Is the hon. member replying to the debate?

Mr. LEE: Yes, sir. I will read a notice which has been served on one grower. It states:—

"I give you notice that if you do not send in your padi immediately I shall be obliged to sue and levy on you for land rent, house rent and agistment fees due and owing and money lent and advanced and goods sold and delivered. Please take note also that in the event of my having to sue you I shall give you notice to quit the land now occupied by you."

Those are the things I would like to bring to the notice of Government. The growers should be protected. They are tenants and are compelled to sell their padi to the proprietors who advance them money. Supposing the millers, shopkeepers and moneylenders refuse to lend money to the growers because they cannot buy their padi, is Government going to assume the responsibility of making advances to those tenants? What is there to prevent proprietors, millers and shopkeepers from entering into contracts with growers to supply them with padi at \$1.20 per bag? Would the growers then receive the price they should? If Government is assuming responsibility for the industry Government should take full control. The Regulations are good (laughter), but Government should take full control of the industry. When hon. Members say that the Regulations are not perfect do they agree with the motion? There is one amendment, the necessity for which no member can deny. Regulation 19—

THE PRESIDENT: I would ask the hon. Member to confine his attention to his reply to the debate.

Mr. LEE: I am trying to do that and to point out that in support of the motion certain things have been said which are not provided for in the Regulations. The profits from the Autumn crop will have to be divided and apportioned to the Spring crop. There will be better prices for the Spring crop, but there are places in the Colony where no Spring crop is

planted. Will the profits be equally divided and distributed among the growers? I am glad that Government has assumed responsibility for the Regulations, and I feel that the motion has done some good as it will bring to the notice of the public the policy Government is going to adopt. I therefore ask leave to withdraw the motion with the permission of my seconder.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I had indicated to the hon. Member in a much shorter form the way in which he should have put the motion before the Council. Certain of the grievances he has expressed could be met by the suggestion I made that there might be legislation along the lines of the Agricultural Acts in England. I have also indicated to him that the debate has shown that hon. Members are supporting the interests of the producer.

Motion withdrawn.

PRIORITY FOR LOCAL CANDIDATES  
FOR CIVIL SERVICE.

Dr. SINGH: I beg to move:—

That, whereas, local men and women of British Guiana have been gaining diplomas from recognised institutions of the British Empire in steadily increasing numbers;

And, whereas, it is the desire of these men and women to make a livelihood in this Colony by virtue of their qualifications:

*Be it Resolved.*—That in all cases in which appointments in the Government Civil Service are being considered, the applications of local men and women who hold qualifications of recognised institutions of the British Empire, and who are fully qualified to hold such posts, be at all times given priority over all others.

I would like to take this Council back to the early years of British Guiana—1820 to 1870—when the administration was in the hands of Europeans. As local people became educated and equipped they were tried in subordinate positions, and by the year 1900 we find that at the head of primary schools were local certificated teachers. In the Postal Department also were local men in charge of post offices in the outlying districts and in certain parts of the City. Even in the higher branches of the Government Service we found a sprinkling of local people holding responsible positions. The same thing applied to the commercial houses in Water Street. In those days the only

secondary school was Queen's College, housed in the building now occupied by the Bishop's High School for Girls. Education was cheap in those days and people in the City took advantage of it, but it was hard for the country folk. There were not the facilities for travelling in those days as there are to-day. Education began to progress, and after 1900 there was a general awakening in education. As a result of regular steamer communication with England and the facility of taking correspondence courses we find the people of the Colony making advancement in education.

Simultaneously with the advancement of education in these parts we find that the universities, colleges and other institutions in the British Isles opened their doors to colonial students who are getting very efficient training at those institutions up to the present time. During their sojourn in the United Kingdom those students take every advantage of gathering general education. They come into contact with good residents in the United Kingdom, and we find them knowing something of the lives and aspirations of the British people. When colonial young men and women qualify themselves in this way they naturally entertain hope that they will return to their respective Colonies and secure positions when vacancies occur. But when they see advertisements like one which appeared in a recent issue of the *British Medical Journal* stating that "candidates must be British subjects of European parentage" their hopes are shattered. They realize that their activities or their spheres of livelihood are circumscribed to certain areas in the British Empire, and these young men and women return to their homelands to make a living. That is my reason for introducing this motion.

This Colony gives to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture a grant of \$3,600 per annum. Government nominates one or two students to that College, but when they return they have no opportunity for employment in this Colony. They get no encouragement and they leave this Colony discontented, and go to some other part of the world, chiefly Latin America. We have a depleted population in this Colony, and we would like every Guianese to remain in the

Colony. Instead of that we find that appointments are given to outsiders. It is a very delicate matter. I agree that certain positions here should be held by Englishmen because we have a lot to learn from them—their traditions and culture—but we should not give those jobs to outsiders. Where a local man is qualified for a post it should be given to him. I have said something before on appointments to the Medical Service which also applies to this motion. With those few remarks I commend the motion to the Council.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I had promised the hon. Member to support his motion when he suggested the idea he had in his mind, but now that I see the motion on paper I am going to ask him to move an amendment which would considerably modify it, because as it stands now I cannot support his motion. I cannot stand here and as a creole of the Colony honestly accuse Government of not employing local men.

THE PRESIDENT: If the hon. Member is not seconding the motion I cannot allow him to speak.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am speaking on the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Has the hon. Member seconded it?

Mr. ELEAZAR: Yes, sir, for the purpose of speaking on it. Whenever I stand here and speak, as I have had to do during the last few days, it is generally because a specific case has occurred, and Government might not have known of the intricacies, and other things being equal, might have overlooked somebody who in my view was a suitable person for the appointment. I do not think Government makes appointments without due consideration. I have no grouse against Government generally for not employing local men. As a matter of fact I would not be telling the truth. I see a large number of local men employed here and there, but I know that in some instances it is the best thing to bring in a man from the Home Government. There are institutions for medical research in which new ideas crop up, and we would like to have the benefit of those ideas, since we cannot insist on officers of the Government service taking leave in

order to take post graduate courses. I cannot subscribe to the motion as it stands. I feel that local men, all things being equal, should be given preference, but even that I cannot say Government has not been doing. I have tried to modify the view expressed in the motion, but after I have done my utmost I find that I have suggested just what Government is actually doing. I will read what I have written:—

“That in all cases in which an appointment in the Civil Service of the Colony is being considered the claims of the local candidate holding the necessary qualifications be sympathetically considered.”

But, as I have said, this brings me to what I feel Government is actually trying to do, and has been doing very successfully, except in solitary instances here and there. Government always has the last word, with the Secretary of State's thrown in sometimes. One cannot make it appear that Government has overlooked local men to such an extent as to give rise to a motion of this kind. I would be stultifying myself if I did so. I feel that if my amendment is accepted by Government I would be only asking Government to do what it is already doing. While I do not wish to leave my hon. friend in the lurch, especially having promised to second the motion (laughter), he would himself be able to say that he told me what he had in his mind, but now that he has put it on paper I find that what he had in his mind was not what he conveyed to me. Government must consider the claims of men from outside. We have hundreds of men who can do the work that we bring in people to do, but in a good many of those cases to bring a man from outside is an advantage to the country, because he comes with new ideas. Even the man who comes here to learn the difference between rice and grass brings some ideas with him, and when he goes out he leaves something, even though he carries out something with him.

I hope my friend will see his way to withdraw his motion and ask Government to give a little more consideration to local candidates, because he must see the impracticability of such a motion. Are we going to make the British Guiana Civil Service a closed service? We must expect that some day somebody from this

Colony will go outside. As a matter of fact some of our men have been going outside. I know of one individual who went away—and candidly we did not think very much of that officer in those days—and I know he is an authority on the African question to-day. I think he is a G.C.M.G. I know another officer who went away from here as a Magistrate's clerk and became a Magistrate, but he is Attorney-General somewhere now. He was a British Guiana Scholar. There was another who was a Magistrate and became a Judge somewhere else. I excuse the hon. Member because he would not know those things. He is comparatively young and those things happened before his time. With that knowledge, and the knowledge of what is happening at present, I cannot support the motion as it stands, and I do not intend now even to ask for an amendment, because it would be only asking Government to do exactly what it is doing at the present moment.

Mr. JACKSON: I do not know if I should commend the mover of the motion on his pluck and daring in bringing forward a motion of this kind. I would like to believe that his object in bringing the motion is not so much to get it passed but to bring to the notice of Government the extreme desirability of giving a little more consideration to local persons who are qualified for appointments. What I would really like to see is a unified Colonial Service, and I do not think it is the best thing to ask that persons belonging to any particular Colony be given preference and to remain in that Colony. It is a known fact that one benefits by going out of his Colony and getting acquainted with other conditions. In that way one obtains a wider view of life. I am minded that it is impossible to have a motion of this kind passed in this Council, and I also think that the hon. mover will feel that his purpose has been served, and that after the discussion he will withdraw his motion. I do not see how a motion of this kind, which would tie the hands of Government or the Imperial Government in making appointments, could be accepted. Possibly it was the intention of the mover to put in a word for local candidates, but by the wording of his motion he cannot expect that it will be passed by this Council.

Mr. GONSALVES: I think something

was said within the last few days with regard to the question of local appointments, and I am inclined to the view of the hon. Member who has just taken his seat, that the mover does not really intend that his motion should be pressed to the vote, but merely to bring to the notice of Government in a very forcible manner what his feelings are and the views of the community as regards local appointments. If that is his object then I think it will be achieved by the discussion of his motion. I think it is recognized by everyone in the community that local people should be given every opportunity to get into the Civil Service of the Colony, and I do not think any Member of the Council would say that members of the community have not been admitted into the Civil Service, having due regard to their merits. There have been, of course, certain cases in which complaints have been made, but they are not such as to justify any wholesale charge against Government that local people are not given a chance to enter the Civil Service. Sometimes I think, and often during the sessions I wonder if Members of the Council themselves have not unwittingly done something to affect local men in the Service. I remember when it was intended by Government to put on the Fixed Establishment an officer who had secured a diploma for service in the Colony there was objection from Elected Members, and I wondered whether the Electives could not be told that they themselves were not giving full support to local men in the Civil Service. The officer was one who had obtained a diploma and was fully qualified. It was sought to put him above the line, and there was objection through a misunderstanding as to who he was.

I think that in all cases where local men have qualified they should be given due consideration with regard to appointments in the Civil Service, and if the mover of the motion insists on pressing it I would suggest that the words "That in all cases" be deleted, and the word "When" substituted; that the words "at all times" be deleted, and after the word "given" the words "due consideration" be inserted. I think those amendments would meet the purpose, but I do not think the hon. Member will press his motion, because the discussion has brought out sufficient to indicate the views of Elected Members,

and on the Government side I think there is full understanding of those views. With regard to appointments to be made to the Medical Service, the qualifications of medical men who are in the Colony or resident in England, and would be willing to come out here, should receive due consideration.

Mr. LEE: I would like to support the amendment moved by the hon. Member.

Mr. GONSALVES: I have not moved an amendment; it was only a suggestion.

Mr. LEE: If the hon. Member has not moved an amendment I shall certainly do so in order that it may be put on record if the motion is accepted by Government.

Mr. JACOB: I desire to support the amendment lest it be thought that the motion has not my sympathy. I will just say a few words. I believe that with the exception of certain administrative posts like those of the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General and a few others, local men should be given preference. I think there is talent and ability in this Colony for local men to give equal, if not better service, and I think such service could be given more economically. I think that our present Constitution is a hindrance in matters of this kind, and I should certainly like those responsible, particularly the Secretary of State, to understand that if men are given opportunities under a different Constitution this Colony would progress very rapidly.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Perhaps I may in a few words express my views, because it is said in certain cases that silence means consent. I cannot say that the tendency of Government has been to exclude the appointment of local persons holding the necessary qualifications. Have we not several instances to the contrary to-day? We have only to look at the Department with which I am in constant contact, the Magisterial Bench. Is there on the Bench anybody who is not a born Guianese? I can cite several other cases. I can say unhesitatingly that there are several posts which should never be held by local people. I can also say unhesitatingly that if this motion is directed against any individual I would not subscribe to it. If it has general application I shall

support it. Whether yesterday's debate indicated it or not I sincerely trust that we will never again find hon. Members taking sides and supporting Mr. A against Mr. B, as was done yesterday. Whatever form our Constitution may take I hope that where there are two local men suggested for a post we will not find Members advocating the claims of one against the other.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am sorry that the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) did not follow the good example of the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) by not moving an amendment for the very good reason given by that hon. Member. He pointed out that Government has given very full consideration to all applications for positions in the Civil Service. The hon. Member in his motion refers to those who are fully qualified. There are instances in which it is necessary for an officer not only to have a diploma but practical experience for the particular post. There are such posts in which, as the Director of Medical Services indicated yesterday, it is not always advisable to appoint someone from a university. It may be necessary to have somebody with experience in the particular branch of work. Government has recently appointed a large number of local men to fill posts. Members have only to take their minds back a few weeks and they would recollect that on the creation of a new post a local officer was appointed. I can assure hon. Members that Government gives every consideration to the qualifications of local candidates, but it would be impossible to expect the motion moved by the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) to be accepted by Government in its present form.

Dr. SINGH: I accept the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves).

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member for Georgetown South did not move an amendment.

Mr. GONSALVES: I made a suggestion that if the motion was approved it should be amended in that form.

THE PRESIDENT: An amendment has

been moved by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee). I would just like to add to what the Colonial Secretary has said, that I think hon. Members will realize that in principle Government cannot accept a motion of this sort which purports to tie the hands of the Executive in making appointments. All that I can say in that regard has already been said by the Colonial Secretary—that in all cases Government considers the local man, and all things being equal the local man would be appointed. But all things being equal does not necessarily mean the holding of some diploma. Each case is treated on its merits, and I think with that explanation, and in view of the debate we have had on this motion, the mover will wish to withdraw his motion because, frankly, that is the policy of Government in the matter. It is not possible for Government to accept a motion of this nature.

Dr. SINGH: My sole object in bringing this motion is because outsiders besides Englishmen are appointed to posts in this country, and we would like our people to be given those posts after Englishmen. We do not like to see people from other countries given appointments in preference to local men. We appreciate Englishmen coming to this Colony, and after them local men should get any crumbs that are offering. I accept Your Excellency's explanation, but I do not feel like withdrawing my motion.

THE PRESIDENT: If the hon. Member wishes his motion to be put to the vote unfortunately the Government members will have to vote against it.

Dr. SINGH: With due respect, sir, I would prefer that.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the hon. Member wish to reply any further to the debate?

Dr. SINGH: No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Will the hon. Member give me his amendment in writing?

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Did I understand that the hon. Member withdrew his motion?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the hon. Member is pressing his motion.

Mr. GONSALVES: To a point of order; did I hear the clock strike?

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am asking you, sir, to adjourn the Council now so that I may get a little nearer to my hon. friend.

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

2 p.m.—

The Council resumed.

Also present:

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

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

THE PRESIDENT: I am not quite certain whether the hon. Member wants his motion put to the vote?

Dr. SINGH: I am supporting the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee).

THE PRESIDENT: The amendment by the hon. Member for Essequibo River reads as follows, the whereases standing as in the original motion:—

*Be it Resolved*,—That when appointments in the Government Civil Service are being considered, the applications of local men and women who hold qualifications of recognised institutions of the British Empire, and who are fully qualified to hold such posts be given due consideration.

As I informed the hon. Member before the adjournment, I cannot agree that Government should vote in favour of a motion of this nature, although I am in sympathy with the idea the hon. Member has in mind.

Motion as amended by Mr. Lee put.

The Council divided, the voting being—

*For*: Messrs. C. V. Wight, Lee, Jacob, Peer Bacchus and Dr. Singh—5.

*Against*: Messrs. Mackey, Jackson, Walcott, Eleazar, Wood, Crease, Case, D. Andrade Austin, Seaford, McDavid and Dias, Professor Dash, Dr. MacLennan, the



Attorney-General, and the Colonial Secretary—16.

Motion lost.

ESTIMATES, 1940.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1940, which have been laid on the table.

MISCELLANEOUS—(b) SUBVENTIONS, ETC.—  
OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL.

MR. DE AGUIAR: Generally speaking, under this Head there are a number of items this Colony contributes for one cause or another, and I have made an attempt to total the annual contributions. I was quite surprised to find that a sum of \$11,209 is being contributed by this Colony to various funds. It has occurred to me that now that we seem not to be in a position to make two ends meet and also in view of the fact that many of these contributions were suggested to us by the Secretary of State and at a time when we were obtaining financial assistance from the Imperial Government, we might ask that this Colony be relieved temporarily of these contributions, if it is at all possible to do so. I do not wish it to appear, however, that the Colony is going back on any promise that may have been made in past years, because I do know that (as will be noticed from the marginal note) in some cases these contributions are for a period of three years—others for four years, and others for five years. In view of the fact that we are trying to make ourselves independent and, if possible, to relieve the Imperial Government of making further grants-in-aid to us during the present crisis, the Secretary of State may find it possible to relieve the Colony of these contributions. I am not pressing the point, but I am putting forward the suggestion in view of the fact that these contributions aggregate a fairly large sum, as I said before, \$11,209.

THE CHAIRMAN: The only thing, I can say in regard to that, is that all these contributions do fall in the category the hon. Member referred to—contributions in respect of which a promise has been given

for a period of years. I think that the longest is a period of five years and so, as the hon. Member must realize, nothing can be done about it at the present time.

MR. DE AGUIAR: Perhaps the attention of the Secretary of State may be drawn to the remarks I have made.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is so. Some of them may not be renewed in case some are research measures.

MR. SEAFORD: Does the hon. Member refer to any specific item?

MR. DE AGUIAR: I dealt with the question as a whole. Take for example the items under A, B, C.

MR. SEAFORD: It seems that whether an actual promise was given or not, whether we give allowances to institutions for research work or otherwise, I think it would be a great misfortune if we should withdraw these contributions. If the other places do the same thing, it means that all work will have to stop and all labour lost.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I was very careful with the language I used. I am sorry the hon. Member has not followed me more closely. All along in referring to the matter I said in view of—

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member means each case must be treated on its merit. That will be done. The majority of them is important research work in which we are interested.

MR. C. V. WIGHT: Perhaps item 12—"Contribution towards the Imperial Economic and Shipping Committees"—may be considered. I do not know what the position is, but speaking generally that item may be considered in view of certain measures, which we know are being adopted at the present moment and will be adopted during the continuance of the War.

THE CHAIRMAN: No doubt the hon. Member will refer to specific items as they come up.

Item 4—Grant to Infant Welfare and Maternity League, \$13,824.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I observe from the last annual report of the Infant Welfare and Maternity League that the deaths for 1938 exceeded that for the years 1929 to 1937, with the exception of one year, 1934, when there was a death rate of 160 odd per thousand. The death rate per thousand of infants born was 166 for the last year. Several reports are sent in by various committees operating in various directions. I wonder if something more might not be done in order to carry on this work with a little more vigour. There can be no doubt as to the preponderating importance of the improved standard of public health in the economic rehabilitation of this Colony, and therefore it is our obvious duty to preserve as much as we can the infant life of the Colony and reduce the terrible death rate which takes away annually so many who otherwise will ultimately add to the resident population of the Colony. I observe from a report of the hon. Director of Medical Services that the death rate has gone up, and he attributes the increase principally to a malaria epidemic more or less in the Colony in general and particularly in the Corentyne District. I should certainly like to see some better effort made by the Department to save the infant life of this Colony. I am quite aware that the duties are performed by individuals who are selected in the various centres to assist the Medical Officer of Health in educating the people along the right lines, but I do not know whether that is all they should confine their efforts to. I know that in some cases milk is distributed to the poor and indigent. It is very laudable and praiseworthy on the part of the Committee in doing that, but with respect to the mosquito campaign that is fraught with a great deal of difficulty at the present time.

Reference has been made in that report to the supply of mosquito-netting to children living in outlying districts. I do not know whether in that particular vote something is taken out to provide mosquito-netting in deserving cases to prevent the infants being fiercely attacked by those insect pests. There is no doubt that most diseases are due to insect pests, and every effort should be made to try and eliminate that danger in the community. As one hon. Member remarked yesterday,

prevention is better than cure. That expression has got so worn out now that it has really lost its effect, but at the same time I think that if in these campaigns, as I hope, the Medical Officers would try to concentrate their efforts in the near future in seeing that the people are educated along the right lines and that health talks are given them by those competent to speak on the subject, a great deal of this trouble may be avoided. I refer particularly to the Crabwood Creek centre. I find from the report that there is no Nurse stationed there, except a subsidized midwife. I would rather like to see an Infant Welfare worker actually stationed in that locality. It is a populous centre and a rice growing district which has come into prominence a few years now on account of the rice production there. I hope the hon. Director of Medical Services will see his way to appoint a Nurse-midwife to that particular area, so that her advice may be obtainable by all at any time. I make these observations because I feel that the Committee is doing its work quite cheerfully but, I do not think, it is getting the best results. I would like to see a little more energy thrown in so as to educate the people along proper lines.

Dr. MACLENNAN: The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) is quite correct in what he has said. Unfortunately the infantile mortality rate in 1938 was 166 per thousand, a much higher figure than it has been for some considerable time. This has been attributed to the ordinary endemic malaria of the Colony assuming epidemic proportion, because as you know malaria is a very fatal disease with young children. With regard to the system of infant welfare work in this Colony, I must frankly admit it has considerable defects. As you know, it is run by a Central Committee with a number of small committees in various districts. What we are really lacking in is centres for holding clinics—centres, where people can go. At the present time these clinics are held once monthly or fortnightly in large rooms, or offices, or school rooms all over the place, but there is no real place the League can call its own where people can go and meet the Health Visitors and get the information which they should get. The vote as it stands at present is just barely sufficient

to carry on existing services. Until more funds are available we cannot do very much more than we are doing. I hope, however, that we will begin with these health centres next year—only four—and if they prove successful I am sure the Colony would be able to see the value of them and endeavour to increase their numbers later. These centres will be started with permanent health visitors and the public will have the opportunity of getting some value in the way of health teaching and health talks. That is the only encouragement given at the moment. I am very grateful indeed to the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice for his remarks, drawing attention to one of the most important branches of public health work in this Colony.

Item 21—Grant for Expenses of management and administration of New Widows and Orphans' Fund, \$720.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Cannot this vote be reduced? \$50 per month seems a little high.

Mr. Mc DAVID (Colonial Treasurer): That is a statutory payment. The Widows and Orphans' Fund has been based on actual calculations which do not admit of any charge for management, and so it falls on public revenue. I am very sorry it cannot be reduced.

Item 22—Grant to Ex-Servicemen's Association, \$720.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Since the Estimates have been printed, Government has given further consideration to the grant made annually to the Ex-Servicemen's Association. It has been found that these ex-servicemen as they get older become very infirm and find it difficult to get employment. I move that the item be increased to \$1,200. It used to be \$960 and was then reduced to \$720. I think that the Association should be given at least \$1,200 so as to enable it to help these men. I move that the item be amended accordingly.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am glad to hear the hon. Colonial Secretary's remarks on this point. It is very deserving. These men have given of their best to the Colony and the Empire, and I think such services

should be rewarded in some way. There are more men in a very decrepit condition seeking charity and, I think, the Colony should make a better contribution than in the past.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item increased.

Item 58—Payment to New Widows and Orphans' Fund of difference between 6% on permanent investments and actual interest earned (Section 3, Cap. 207).

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would suggest that the investments here be enlarged to a certain extent. I think they can readily invest in mortgages locally and get 6 per cent. Though mortgage security is not quite good trustee security—at one time it was considered such in this Colony—I think that in certain instances it is. Is there any necessity to make permanent investments?

Mr. McDAVID: The Directors of the Fund have power to invest in the Colony but, I think, the hon. Member would agree that they should adopt that policy with caution. This fund has a very serious liability and one cannot take much risk, but I do know that in one instance a certain local investment was made. My own personal view is that as trustees the Directors should be extremely careful and invest in absolute fool-proof securities.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): I can add to what the hon. Colonial Treasurer has said. I am not the principal Director of that Fund who influences most of the investments, and I am sorry my colleague, the hon. Member's father, (Mr. Percy C. Wight) is not here to answer him. The question of local investments has been considered by the Committee responsible and very carefully too. The point of view of investing wherever possible is always at the back of our minds. That fund is analogous to insurance funds which have to be invested with very great care indeed. It is a new fund and is building up quite rapidly. There are heavy liabilities and risks cannot be taken. Consideration has been given to local investments, and I think two—speaking from memory—have been made recently. That matter is always before the Directors when they meet.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I thank the hon. Conservator of Forests, and it is unfortunate that the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight) is not here. While being a dutiful son, I think he is aware that perhaps my colour scheme does not agree with his.

Item 57—Subsidy to Canadian National Steamship Service, \$40,800.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: As regards this item I would like to enquire if Government has any information on this matter, because as far as I know the payment of this subsidy expires at the end of this year and probably some new negotiation is going on or we may carry on as at present. The point I wish to make is this. Whatever the decision may be, I take it that the Government will in due course inform this Council of the negotiations or rather the progress that is being made in connection with the matter. I do not think the Government of this Colony should be committed either for a short or a long period for the payment of an annual sum, especially such a large amount, without bringing the matter before the Council so that the views of hon. Members of Council may be known.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It has been suggested in some quarters that the agreement may be extended. As hon. Members are aware, on the outbreak of War the negotiations had to be deferred. I cannot give any more information officially.

THE CHAIRMAN: The only information I have seen on the subject, is the statement in the Press to the effect that it was thought the Canadian Government was going to make a suggestion that it should be continued. Probably the hon. Member saw that himself. I have no further information on the subject. I can assure the hon. Member that as soon as any communication is received on the subject this Council will be informed about it.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: For the present at any rate this vote should not be accepted by Government as an indication on the part of this Council to give Government a free hand in the matter. This money should not be paid out without coming back to the Council. Our arrangement expires at

the end of the year, and we are now voting the same sum for next year. I take it that whatever the arrangements are going to be, before they are actually made, this Council will be informed about them. I am not so much concerned at the moment about the new terms, whether they are likely to be more favourable or less, and I am not prepared to go into them now, but I am rather anxious that whatever the new terms are, this Council must be informed so that the views of hon. Members may be known. I am looking at this vote in the nature of a token vote, that it is not a final decision, and that the amount will not be paid without further reference to the Council.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I wish to make it clear that the payment is due about September or October. I gather from the hon. Member that he is not suggesting that in the event of no decision being arrived at on the agreement between now and then this money should not be paid. Supposing the service continues until September or October and the payment becomes due, is he suggesting that we should then inform the Company that we are not prepared to pay the amount?

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I take it that as the contract will end very soon, negotiations will commence soon. I realize that at the present moment Canada like the Home Government is busy with other matters and unable to give the matter the attention required, but I certainly do think that before the date arrives for negotiations to commence this Council may be informed. I do not think there should be any fear that payment would be withheld before any arrangement is concluded.

THE CHAIRMAN: I take it the hon. Member is not referring to the mere continuance of the existing arrangement, the hon. Member knows that before the contract has come to an end the Canadian Government has given notice of termination. It is now understood to be possible that the Canadian Government will withdraw that termination notice, in which case the contract will go on for a further period. The hon. Colonial Treasurer will be able to say whether that is an exact statement of the position.

Mr. McDAVID: As I understand, the

treaty is coming to an end because the Canadian Government has given notice that it desires that. The present position is that owing to the War possibly they will either withdraw it or suggest to the Governments concerned that the treaty continue for another year or perhaps for the duration of the War. This vote is in anticipation of some such agreement being reached. The moment that is done, it will be communicated to this Council.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am not against that, and I quite understand it up to that point. I am hoping that opportunity would be given to examine the whole position in the light of the notice given. We may agree to accept the same terms. I only want us to be given an opportunity to examine the position in the light of experience gained. I do not think it comes with good grace on the part of the Canadian Government to withdraw the notice now, even in spite of the fact that conditions have changed. I think that notice having been given, the local Government should be given an opportunity to examine the position. As far as I know the terms may remain the same and acceptable to this Colony. I feel that the opportunity is one which should not be overlooked.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member would realize that during the War it would not be possible for the Officials of the Canadian Government to give the attention to this matter which is necessary in order to arrive at any new agreement, nor would it be possible for the various West Indian Governments to give attention to it, it seems probable that the only course to take in the interest of all parties concerned would be to continue the existing agreement for the time being until it is possible to give that attention to the matter which it really deserves.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I take it, that in such a case the renewal would be one from year to year and therefore there could be no objection from me, but if you are going to make any arrangement whereby we might be committed for a long period I would not agree to it.

Item 64—Contribution to the African Development Association, \$100.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is a new item, and I think the proper

place for it is under Head XXIX.—“Poor”—where there is a similar item. If agreed to, I move that the item be deleted. Later I shall move that it be reinserted under Head XXIX.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item deleted.

Item 65—Contribution to British Guiana Airways, Ltd., \$21,600.

Mr. LEE: I do not know whether I am quite in order, but I would like to find out from Government what is being done with respect to the Jewish Settlement Scheme for this Colony. (Laughter).

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know if the hon. Member is really serious about that question.

Mr. LEE: Quite serious, Your Excellency. As far as I know, this Company has been subsidized because it would provide an easy means of getting to the interior.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member was misinformed.

Item 66—Subsidy to British Guiana United Broadcasting Company, Ltd., \$1,800.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the amount be increased to \$3,000. That was a recommendation of the local Broadcasting Committee. The question of granting 75 per cent. of the annual licences was in respect of subsequent years. I move that the item be carried out at \$3,000.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item increased.

#### OFFICIAL RECEIVER.

Item 1a—Official Receiver, Public Trustee and Crown Solicitor (\$4,320 by \$120 to \$4,800), \$4,800.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am going to ask Government to consider the advisability of commuting the various fees drawn by the holder of this office. I would like it to be understood that what I intend is, that the officer should obtain the fees but that they

should be commuted and added to his salary. I am sure the officer would feel more satisfied in mind if that is done and he has not to chase around for a few dollars due as fees. I know there have been one or two quite unpleasant instances and also instances in which the officer lost thereby. I remember in one particular case he actually pointed out to me that the profit made would be counterbalanced by any fees which he might take. I may say he is a reasonable officer. He saw the reason for it and generously waived his fees. That placed him in an awkward position and also myself as I had to make the plea.

There is also another matter in regard to the making of Government contracts. Government draws up a contract but on the other side wanting their lawyers to peruse the contract they must pay fees. That imposes a hardship on those persons entering into contracts with Government. I am sure that if the amount of fees the officer is entitled to draw be commuted per annum, he would be only too glad, even if Government found it necessary to collect the fees rather than allow them to go to the officer personally. I make the suggestion because every legal Member of this Council would be able to verify certain statements which I have made. I am not considering Appendix D—“Statement of Emoluments received by Officers in addition to the salaries voted in the Estimates”—as there may be a little extra work entailed in other matters. Looking at the bald figures I do suggest that some consideration be given to the matter of commuting the fees of this officer and waiving the fees generally of this Department for the drawing up of contracts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I propose to move the insertion of an item to provide for the payment to Mr. King (Official Receiver, Public Trustee and Crown Solicitor) of fees received for prosecuting in cases involving the protection of revenue. I do not know whether that covers the point raised.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: That is an entirely different matter. That is an additional amount, also the fees for prosecuting in cases of evasion of Customs Duties. What I am saying is that this officer should have the fees for drawing up contracts or bonds where there is a specified fee.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member thinks that the fees paid by private individuals and by Government should be made in a lump sum.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The effect would be that certain of these fees would be paid by Government in lump sum, even if Government deems it fit to collect a certain portion of those fees.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: If I understand the hon. Member correctly, the suggestion he is putting to Government is, that all fees payable to the Official Receiver for any legal work for which a private individual has to pay a fee should be commuted and added to his salary. I would not like to be the officer of Government responsible to arrive at the amount to be added to his salary, because Government may very well find itself committed to an annual sum far more than the officer receives. I do not see how it is possible to strike an average. In one year there may be a large number of bonds and contracts to be drawn up, and Government will gain in that way. I presume the suggestion goes further by providing that private individuals pay the fees into revenue. That is too much book-keeping. I think that in the circumstances the present arrangement is the best, having regard to the fact, that we are committed to this particular officer in connection with this post. The matter may be considered when the time arrives, as to whether or not the new officer to be appointed to this post should receive the fees at all. That is a matter which cannot be gone into to-day. If that is what the hon. Member has in mind, I am with him 100 per cent. I cannot, however, see how we can dispose of the present arrangement in such an easy manner as the hon. Member thinks.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I am glad to have this opportunity of discussing these fees, because I know a great deal about the matter. The present officer holds many official appointments. I should say that as Official Receiver he has very little to do, as there are few bankrupts and the investigation of affairs in bankruptcy occupies very little of his time indeed. As Crown Solicitor he has a very considerable amount of work to do, and I am one of those who at one time attacked the emoluments payable to the person who fills that

office, but I have lived to see the effect of legislative enactments very considerably increasing the duties to be performed by that officer. I would give one direction alone in which that has happened—the Workmen's Compensation; he has to advise the Transport and Harbours Department and gets nothing for it. He has very considerable duties and duties of very great responsibility in advising Government. At first sight it looks like he is well paid, but in actual practice all the advice which he has to give for nothing can earn him a considerable sum. As Crown Solicitor he has to advise the various Government Departments, especially the Police, and assist the Attorney-General's Office in the examination of depositions and in determining whether a *prima facie* case has been made out. Therefore on the whole, although the officer appears to be well paid, I think that his work judged by values paid to other professional men calls for an extremely experienced officer, but he is not a highly paid officer.

The proposal put forward is that that part of the emoluments drawn by him for which he is allowed to make a charge should be borne entirely by Government. I do not think that would be a wise arrangement. I have had a case in which he, as Crown Solicitor, has had to examine titles in respect of certain papers submitted to him. In a good many ways, I think, it is valuable to Government that independent advice be obtained in these matters just as it is for members of the public to have independent advice on their own behalf. It would never do to have contracts and agreements being vouched by one officer, if that is the object of the hon. Member's suggestion. If all fees and charges are to be borne by Government then in contracts members of the public will have no advice because if they have they will have to pay for it. I cannot see that in any way it will be cheaper, and I do not think it will be a good arrangement.

When this office becomes vacant, I hope Government will be able to come to some decision before making the appointment. The father of the present holder of the office was a clerk in the Registrar's Office and was appointed Crown Solicitor and given the right to private practice. The present holder of the office had worked with his father and succeeded him. I think,

there is one direction in which the Government may make a change, and that is by making the office of Official Receiver and Public Trustee separate and distinct. I do not think anyone would like to discharge the duties of Public Trustee. It is an exceedingly troublesome position to occupy. Several people die with no representation and their heirs come forward and make claims. It does not appear to me that the Public Trustee has the necessary staff. The one officer who does the work has to be very careful in examining cases, and that the work is taking too long a time is due to that simple reason. I think the time would arise when the office would be of very great importance as in England, and better opportunity should be given than exists now for people to be represented in the administration of deceased persons' estates by such a person as the Public Trustee with satisfaction. I know in a good many cases there has been too long a delay between the administration of an estate and the final winding-up. There again there was no Public Trustee appointed when the officer was appointed Crown Solicitor. In two respects his duties have been considerably added to.

I am only making these observations in the hope that the officer's duties will not be added to. On the other hand I cannot say myself that the \$700 or \$800 put down for the post of Crown Solicitor is a large or small amount. It all depends on how it is earned. As we know, he gets fees not only for agreements but he gets *fiat* fees, and so far as I can see that officer has quite a great deal of work to do and a great deal of responsibility. I think the present arrangement, having regard to his personal experience, should remain as it is. When the post becomes vacant, the Government of the day should consult the Legislature before making the appointment of an officer who would be expected to do these combined duties.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) having referred to the Public Trustee has afforded me an opportunity to draw Government's attention to something I discovered not very long ago in connection with the fees charged for administering estates. I am inclined to believe that the present rates are too high and act as a deterrent to persons making their wills and

appointing the Public Trustee to administer their affairs. It might be thought in some quarters that it is a good thing to do, as estates should be administered by private individuals, but we all do not think in the same direction. Some people are unfortunate through not having near relatives who they can leave behind to administer their affairs, and they would undoubtedly die happier if they thought their affairs would be in the hands of a responsible Government Officer to administer rather than in the hands of certain people I am thinking of at the moment. I do know, and I have heard it expressed in more than one quarter, that the present rates are high. I also do know and have heard it expressed that if the rates were lower than they are at present it would be an inducement to certain people to appoint the Public Trustee to administer their affairs after they have gone to the Great Beyond. I am very grateful to the hon. Member for New Amsterdam for referring to the matter and thus giving me the opportunity to make these observations which, I hope, Government would take into consideration when the proper time arrives.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I did not intend to say anything on the matter, but the remarks of the hon. Member remind me of a very rich gentleman who wanted to die in peace and his lawyer was sick. He told his lawyer to go for a change, and the lawyer said in reply: "I think I had better ask you for a loan of £100 for the purpose." The man then said to the lawyer: "I now know you are sick in truth, because you have fever in your head." (laughter) If people want to die in peace, must the Government pay the Public Trustee for them to get his services cheap? Whoever wants the Public Trustee to do his work must pay the same as if it was a private practitioner doing the work. There are plenty of lawyers outside of those my hon. friend has been thinking of, who are willing to do the work but want to get their fees. I think that the Public Trustee's duties are onerous, but he is allowed to do this other work and to charge for it, and I do not know that his charges are very exorbitant. Let him get it as he has been getting it before, but to suggest that he be paid in a lump sum by Government and then Government must hope to collect from the other people is not good enough.

Mr. De AGUIAR: With Your Excellency's permission I would like to correct the interpretation of my remarks by the hon. Member. I never dealt with professional fees, nor with lawyers. As a matter of fact I tried to keep as far away from them as possible. The fees I had in mind are the statutory charges for administering estates. I may tell the hon. Member that a very responsible institution in England and even in this Colony administers estates at a lesser charge than the amount fixed by Statute for the Public Trustee. It is 8 per cent. by Statute, and it would be seen that this charge is high for administering estates. I am in a position to know that you can administer an estate for a smaller charge than that. The point I was making was this: It is my opinion and that of several responsible persons in this community, who at some time or other had estates administer, that the high charge is definitely acting as a deterrent to appointing the Public Trustee to administer estates. Not long ago I had a personal experience and, I think, the hon. Member after hearing this explanation would know that I know something of the subject and that is why I have brought it up.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am not surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar). I do not know whether the hon. Member has had the fortune or misfortune of association with lawyers—

Mr. De AGUIAR: I am sorry to interrupt. I never mentioned anything about lawyers.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: No such suggestion is made at all that the officer should be deprived of those fees. It would be a great relief to persons contracting with Government, as both parties would stand their own share. I am not talking about depriving the officer of any fees he is entitled to, nor saying that he has no work. He is hard worked and has several duties. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam suggested that the Public Trustee's office may be separated when the next officer is to be appointed. I would like to hear from him if he would not be creating an added burden thereby in appointing a new Public Trustee at an increased salary.



THE CHAIRMAN: I think the duties of these offices have been adequately ventilated in Council this afternoon, and I will now put the Head as it stands.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of the following item—  
“Fee to Crown Solicitor for prosecuting in revenue cases, \$240.” These fees were previously paid from another vote.

THE CHAIRMAN: The same rate of fees was received previously until put under this Head.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item inserted.

#### POLICE.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Under this head I cannot find very much to complain about, except that there seems to be a wave of burglaries being committed in New Amsterdam. I do not think the Police are sufficiently vigilant. I think they should do a little more in that direction. Not very long ago a burglar was caught in New Amsterdam, and the man who was the victim played the part of a detective so well as to result in the man's capture and the Magistrate enjoining upon him to join the Police Force. The Police do not seem to exercise any tact. I do not know why they cannot suppress this wave of crime. Every year I come here and make the same statement and Government does not heed it, but I think this time some heed should be given to it. I refer now to the case of married policemen in Georgetown who continue to get \$3 per month as house allowance. It is well known that in Georgetown the room a man can get for \$3 per month is anything between 8 and 10 feet square. How can a man with a wife and two children live in anything like decency in a room of that kind? Government knows it but takes no heed of the complaint. A Fourth Class policeman gets \$28 per month. I do not know the difference between a Fourth Class and a Third Class policeman in point of duty. When a man is taken on for the first three months he gets \$28, but it is not sure how long he is supposed to remain there in order to get \$32 as a Third Class. What has added to the men's discomfiture is this: Now that the War is on, their pay which was already inadequate

is not commensurate with the increasing cost of living, and the men have to face increased liabilities. It is really painful to see a policeman very often taken before the Magistrate because he has not been able to pay his shop bill.

I am wondering whether Government cannot see its way to increase the emoluments of these men. I know it cannot be done in these Estimates, but I think it can be done by Government undertaking to enquire into the possibility of increasing them in some way or other. I remember on one occasion when the Police Force came into the realm of practical politics, it was said you cannot do it for the reason that you have so many men—800 in number. One can understand when you have 800 men to deal with that a very small amount to each will make a large amount on the whole. I can see that that tends to bother Government as there are so many people involved, but that is no reason why they should not be given some assistance. The argument used in that instance was that Government intended to look after these people, but the War has come about and Government finds it is impossible to be done. As the result of the War coming about I should think the men's responsibility becomes greater and their expenses are also greater. It is not good argument to say when there was not all these added responsibility that you intended to give some consideration to the matter, and now that there is more responsibility to say it cannot be given. It is bad logic, and all the more reason why it should be given.

I think we can do with some more policemen. I walk the streets of New Amsterdam and find large areas without a policeman because there are not sufficient men available. When there was a little trouble on the Corentyne Coast, New Amsterdam was left at the mercy of dishonest men. I think Government should consider the advisability of increasing the strength of the Force, because when times are as they are at present people are inclined to be very mischievous, and there has been a lot of mischief going around. It is not because the policemen are not doing their level best, but because they are too few in number. I am very scrupulous in looking around and expecting to get a fair deal for the community

and, I think, the men should also get a square deal. They still complain about the House Allowance and the Fourth Class Constable's pay. The price of sugar and of rice has gone up, and this calls for a little more expenditure on the part of the men in their house-keeping, and to have the same old pay it strikes hard against them. There is no question about the men being contented as they still complain, and it is dangerous to have a discontented Police Force. If a little is done in the direction I have mentioned it, would be seen that Government is trying to ameliorate their position. I do plead with Government to give the matter some consideration.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: With regard to the point about the increased cost of living, Government cannot pick out any particular class of employees and decide to give them increased salary. I must refer the hon. Member to replies given by Government on the question, and if he reads them he would be satisfied that Government has the matter under consideration but is unable to make a pronouncement at the present time. I gather from the hon. Member that the pay of a Fourth Class constable should be increased. Only two years ago the Unclassified Branch of the Service was considered by Major Bain Gray and recommendations were made and dealt with from time to time. As regards increasing the Force, only last year the strength was increased by 100 men. As regards his views that if the Force is increased there will be fewer burglaries, that may be, but I can only inform him that it does not matter how many policemen you may have burglars will dodge them if they intend to rob anybody's house.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I cannot allow this talk about Major Bain Gray's Scheme to be any part of this debate, for the simple reason that when Government was about to reduce the Police Force by 100 men. Government was told not to do so as it would be a mistake. Notwithstanding that fact Government insisted and reduced the Force. When Government saw the mistake, which it seldom sees, it decided to put back the 100 men. Government called upon Major Bain Gray, a man with a lot of brains which he can use in the destruction of other people very much indeed, who then made a Fourth Class, which was not

there before, for those men. It was a brilliant idea to keep the people out of money, as they would only get what they are getting now and not what they used to get before. I am asking that this Fourth Class constable grade be abolished, as it was created only for the purpose of reducing the salary from \$32 to \$28.

Mr. SEAFORD: Is Government satisfied that the Police Force to-day is strong enough to deal with conditions in the Colony as they exist, and further is Government satisfied that the Police Force is capable of dealing with any emergency arising in this Colony?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I should like the hon. Member to give notice of that question.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member must realize the magnitude of any disturbance he has in mind is too difficult to visualize, and he must realize that it is extremely difficult for Government to make a definite pronouncement on such a subject. I can only say that Government considers that the Police Force is adequate to protect the Colony in any circumstances that we can foresee at the moment, but to say that in all circumstances is more than anybody can be expected to say.

Mr. SEAFORD: Government considers it adequate to deal with any circumstances which Government can foresee at the present. Is that what is meant?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is what I mean.

Poor.

Sub-head 1—Personal Emoluments.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of the following item—“i.—Temporary Clerical Assistance, \$120.” Through an oversight the provision was not made in the draft Estimates. It has been in all other Estimates.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item inserted.

Items 13, 14 and 15—Outdoor Poor in Rural Districts, \$23,000.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Is there any necessity to reduce the original various amounts by \$100?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The explanation for the reduction is given on the right-hand page.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not really a reduction. Small amounts have been taken from each vote and put into one annual vote to cover the cost of travelling—item 11. The total remains the same.

Item 21—Contribution to the African Development Association, \$100.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item 21—'Contribution to the African Development Association, \$100.' This item has been transferred from Head XXV—'Miscellaneous—(b) Subventions, etc., other than Municipal,' item 64. If it is carried I move that item 21 on the printed Estimates be renumbered 22.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item inserted.

Item 21, as printed, renumbered 22.

#### POST OFFICE.

Mr. ELEAZAR: This is a Department we have very much to say about, but we cannot take up much time about it. What one seems to deplore is the number of innovations in the Post Office which cannot be called requirements. Mere innovation is not requirement, and that is what the Post Office seems to be practising and becoming experts in. I have not yet met the Postmaster General, but I hope to make my acquaintance with him and tell him about it. What I understand is that he is a very able officer but he always says: "This is not done in Nigeria." We pride ourselves in being ahead of a backward place like Nigeria and expect to be told: "This is not done in London." I might inform the present Postmaster General, that Sir Frederick Hodgson commenced his official life in the London Post Office and after remaining there for some time came to this Colony and was Postmaster General for a long time. He simply carried on at the Post Office the system as he knew it in the London Post Office, and had brought the Post Office to a high

standard when he left it to subsequently return from the Gold Coast as Governor of this Colony and bring to perfection what he had initiated in the postal service. The Post Office at one time in this Colony, everything being considered, was as good as the Post Office in London as regards the principle on which it was built and carried on.

We do not like to have these changes and to be told: "This is not done so in Nigeria." Only a day or two ago a gentleman in New Amsterdam mentioned that he sent a parcel to the Post Office for despatch by Air Mail and asked that it be weighed and stamped accordingly. A day or two later when he had thought the packet was on its way he was told: "We are putting on a charge of \$3 more for the overweight as you only paid \$3." That is not carrying on the job efficiently. I understand there are stamps of large denominations, and what is the trouble of surcharging it. Because there are not sufficient large denominations and so many smaller ones have to be used as to affect the weight the person must pay more? They cover the whole envelope with stamps so that the weight of the stamps put on another ½-lb., and you have to pay extra for it. Those are things the Department should look into, because they are very annoying. Apart from the fact that people do not like changes as a rule and it may be very beneficial as sometimes it is a change for the better, the innovations may not all be very bad but the two I have mentioned are. I do not know what I pay now for telephone service. When I get a bill it is then I know how much it is. There are so many charges and cross-charges. If you telephone to Mahaicony you pay so much, if you go at 8 o'clock you pay so much, and at 9.30 o'clock you do pay another amount, and now I understand you are going to be charged extra. I want to know what the Post Office is going to do next. The Post Office is just as bad as the fruit-seller at Mahaica, who charged eight cents for a pear for which she hitherto charged four cents. When she was asked why she charged double the amount, she said it was on account of the War (laughter) Everybody is charging more on account of the War, and the Post Office is doing the same.

These innovations, small as they may be,

are annoying and, perhaps, the gentleman in charge of this Department if he hears the criticism which is being levelled at his Department would work to set things right. He need not worry himself about the foundation and policy of the Post Office as they are after that of the Post Office in London, which has one of the best Postal Services in the world. I feel that we are in good company when we follow them. It does not matter what happens in Nigeria, we do not think very much about them however much they may think of themselves. There was one Government Official who had come from Hong Kong, and everything was Hong Kong for him in so far as the Government Service was concerned until he got tired and said nothing more. Let us have the best example to follow.

MR. DE AGUIAR: Under this Head I would like a bit of information about the interchange which took place between the Post Office and the Income Tax Office. I desire to enquire whether it is now proposed to fill the vacancies by two Class I clerks. Is it intended to abolish the offices of Book-keeper and Inspector of Post Offices? It seems that these two offices will disappear now altogether and the positions filled by two Class I clerks. I would like to know if these two clerks would be required to perform all the duties of the offices referred to as Book-keeper and Inspector of Post Offices.

MR. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to know if the Postmaster General is of the same opinion relative to the salaries of Postmasters as the hon. Director of Medical Services is with regard to the salaries of Dispensers. There is another small matter which arose at the last meeting of the Georgetown Town Council, and the members of that Body asked that perhaps Government's attention might be drawn to it. It is the question of insufficient lighting arrangement around the stamp vending machine at the General Post Office. It was there stated that the reason for the non-installation of an additional light was the fact that Government was out of funds. I do not know whether Government will be able to find a small or very insignificant sum for the purpose.

MR. McDAVID: With regard to the question by the hon. Member for Central

Demerara, (Mr. De Aguiar), I thought I had made it clear before that this Senior Clerks Scheme was a new scheme introduced in 1938 and that the whole thing was set out in a Message laid before this Council. It was therein pointed out that Government wanted to provide room for promotion and, therefore, introduced twelve new high grade posts called Senior Clerks, and to those posts were appointed first class officers who were getting the maximum salary of Class I plus Service Allowance. They were just called Senior Clerks. It was carefully pointed out at the time that on the occurrence of vacancies those clerks would be transferred to other Departments as the necessity arose. In the case before us two vacancies arose, and those posts were transferred to Departments where they were more needed at the time. There was no selection of Departments to place Senior Clerks. Officers appointed Senior Clerks would be transferred as the circumstances arose. The transfers made were one to the Income Tax Office and the other to the Supreme Court.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I have not got an answer to what I asked. I quite appreciate all the hon. Colonial Treasurer has said, but my question is rather specific. Is it intended that these Senior Clerks would perform the duties of Book-keeper and Inspector of Post Offices in this Department? I do not know what are the duties of these two posts, but what I want to know is whether they will be required to do the work of these two posts which are being abolished.

MR. McDAVID: That is so, and before the introduction of this scheme to which I have referred those posts were Class I posts, the same grade as the holders were as clerks.

THE CHAIRMAN: They held those titles but were classified as Class I clerks.

MR. DE AGUIAR: It seems to me therefore, that they are not really specially qualified posts and can be filled by any First Class clerk.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: As

regards the question asked by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) the matter will be investigated in order to find out if an additional light can be provided.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I thought I would have heard a comment from the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, who represent Georgetown Central and Georgetown South respectively in this Council. I was speaking for the members of the Town Council and, perhaps, they might be able to indicate more clearly where this light should be placed.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is disappointed, it seems.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I would like to inform the hon. Member that I do not like to repeat things unnecessarily, because we will get through our business more expeditiously if I do not.

Mr. GONSALVES: I say the same thing too.

POST OFFICE—TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS' BRANCH.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) shortly before leaving the Council Chamber desired of me that I should make some remarks on his behalf in connection with the charges for Telephone Rent. It is proposed to increase the rent by 25 per cent. and he desires that the attention of Government be drawn to this point. Only quite recently the country renters obtained some form of relief in that a new residential as well as a business rate was introduced. It is now proposed to take back that measure of relief by putting on a surtax of 25 per cent. When the hon. Member mentioned that to me, I pointed out to him that as a businessman I look at the Telephone Service, in the same way as I do with any commodity, in the light of supply and demand. There is no reason why Government should not take advantage of the increase of demand over supply. I, however, promised him to make reference to the matter. An increase of 25 per cent. would appear to be high especially to those persons in the country districts, as the service they are getting at the moment is exceedingly poor. It has been discussed time and again, and it is all a question of

money. Government finds it extremely difficult to improve the service at that end, and to go now (immediately after affording them relief by introducing a residence and business rate) and say that they must pay a 25 per cent. more is very hard.

Mr. GONSALVES: I have not yet received an answer to the questions I have sent in to Government. In respect of the absence of telephonic communication between Garraway Stream and Potaro, I wrote the hon. Colonial Secretary on the matter and have received a reply to the effect, that such a service would cost \$1,000 and Government could not see its way to do it. I raise the question now again, because the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) has enquired about the adequacy of the Police Force in regard to conditions generally. In my questions before the Council I enquired about the views of the Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Lands and Mines on that question. It does seem to me that places like mining districts should have such communication. It seems a peculiar arrangement to have telephonic communication between Bartica and Garraway Stream and none between Garraway Stream and Potaro, a further distance of about 20 miles. It does not seem quite a proper state of affairs. You have Government institutions in the Potaro District—Police Station, Warden's Office—and still in cases of emergency you cannot get a message through, but have to depend upon despatching it either by lorry or by someone on foot along the road.

There has recently been introduced to Government some kind of wireless set which can be conveniently used. It was used recently on the sugar estates in co-operation with the Police Department and was found to be very useful in the absence of direct telephonic communication. I think, Government should enquire into the question of its use in the absence of such communication between Garraway Stream and Potaro and see if it is not possible to get one for that locality. There is also the Medical Department to be considered, because there is a Dispensary in the Potaro District and direct communication may be necessary. I raise the question though I do not know what the reply would be, but I hope the matter would be given consideration.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Arising out of the remarks by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves), I also desire to put in a plea for telephonic communication between Suddie and Georgetown. As a matter of fact, dogmatically I may say the only benefit one gets in endeavouring to have a conversation by telephone between Georgetown and Essequibo is to hear the operator say "Time is up." Sometimes it is absolutely impossible to hear. There was some talk about the laying of new cables from that point. It is impossible to get communication between Georgetown and Charity unless one comes right down to Suddie and telephone from the Police Station after certain hours. While I hear a lot about Nigeria, I do not think the telephonic communication there can be more primitive than in some parts of this Colony. I ask Government to consider the telephone service in Essequibo. I think the service there is appalling.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member for Georgetown South has remarked about telephonic communication between Bartica and Garraway Stream. He is correct in saying that Government made enquiries in regard to the linking up with Potaro and found that it would cost \$1,000. With regard to the wireless telephone to which he referred, I saw one only a few days ago and I told him that I would ascertain what the cost would be and see if it is possible to make use of it in that district. That will be followed up, and if anything can be done in the matter I will let the hon. Member know.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Arising out of the remarks made by the hon. Colonial Secretary, I do not know if he refers to the wireless telephone which was made locally and, I believe, is now in service on the B.G. Airways. There is an excellent wireless set there which was made locally, and I do not think the cost is exorbitant.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was a locally made set I saw, which was being considered at the last meeting of the Transport Board.

#### PRISONS.

Item 1 (b)—Assistant Superintendent of

Prisons (\$1,680 to \$2,160 by \$120), \$1,680.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$30 and the amount carried out at \$1,710. Through an oversight no provision was made for the officer's increment. The post has been filled and an increment is due to the officer next year.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item increased accordingly.

Item 1 (m)—House Allowances—Superintendent of Prisons \$360, Accountant \$300, Warders, Georgetown and New Amsterdam \$1,716—\$2,376,

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the word "Accountant" and the sum of \$300 be deleted, and the total amount carried out at \$2,076. This has become possible owing to the new appointment made to the post.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item amended accordingly.

Item 7—Uniform for Officers and Warders, \$885.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the item be carried out at \$861.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item increased accordingly.

#### PUBLIC DEBT.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I just rise to point out something which is astounding to me. Of this amount of interest payable here one-third goes to pay Pensions and Gratuities. I can quite appreciate the position. I am always scared of this item of Pensions and Gratuities

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Does the hon Member mean to insinuate that if there were no pensions to be paid there would be no public debt?

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: The hon. Colonial Secretary is, perhaps, drawing on his imagination. Had we to borrow this money at from 3 to 5½ per cent., two-thirds of it would be required to pay these pensions and gratuities.

Mr. SEAFORD: Does the hon. Member suggest that we do away with pensions and gratuities?

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Item 1 (10)—Surveyor (\$1,392 by \$72 to \$2,400), \$2,400.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be amended to read "2 Surveyors (\$1,392 by \$72 to \$2,400), \$3,792." One of the Senior Surveyors has been transferred to the Lands and Mines Department, and I shall also move as an amendment that item 1 (12)—"Assistant Surveyor, (\$1,176 by \$72 to \$1,392)" be deleted as that post is transferred to the Lands and Mines Department. I am taking both items together because there has been an interchange of posts. Item 1 (10) will be increased to two Surveyors and the amount carried out at \$3,792, and item 1 (12) deleted.

Question put, and agreed to.

Items amended accordingly.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not see the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) present, and I do not know whether he intends at this point to raise the question upon which he was so vehement when the matter of the Pure Water Supply Scheme was raised. Perhaps, I may leave over my remarks until we get to Public Works Extraordinary.

The CHAIRMAN: I think that would be more appropriate.

PUBLIC WORKS—ANNUALLY RECURRENT.

Item 1—Maintenance and Reconditioning of Public Buildings, \$71,500.

Mr. MACKEY: I am not rising to take objection to the vote. I would like to see it enlarged. On looking around the Council Chamber I see that quite extensive repairs are being done to the ceiling. I have heard from time to time that the Public Works Department is using local wood, but from what I can see here it is purely imported wood that is being used, and yet Government expects us to use local wood. Government should certainly set the example.

Mr. WOOD: I desire to thank the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Mackey) for what he has so charitably said, but I am afraid that if I had the assistance in the past from the hon. Member's firm which owns two sawmills (but which I hope to receive in the future) it would not have been necessary to use white pine boards, which were imported before the War and before there was any restriction on the importation. Government has taken all necessary steps to use only local wood next year itself, although it does not possess a sawmill. I do hope that those who own sawmills will follow the example.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am very much surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. Conservator of Forests, as he is very well aware that only recently that firm acquired sawmills in this Colony. Furthermore one, naturally thought that the results from the revolving fund granted Government to show how this lumber should be cured and used might have been used here. What has happened to all that cured wood? Why was it given up?

Mr. WOOD: It was given up in order that this scheme should be substituted in its place. The Public Works Department were so anxious to get the stuff that they used it up in 1937, and there has been none since. It only takes about four months to season local wood, and I do not think that firm has only had the sawmills four months. Apart from that, I think, if that revolving fund did disappear it was because we were sawing by hand as a matter of solution of the unemployment problem. Even though the fund disappeared and although we sawed by hand, the cost per board was found to be much less than some quotations for local lumber to-day.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am not surprised about the price. The only thing I know is that you had to pay more for the hand-sawn stuff produced in the Colony than what you would import it for.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I desire to express the hope that the firm of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) would not discontinue operations in the Supenaam Creek. I further desire to ask the hon. Director of Public Works that all reconditioning and maintenance work be done in Esse-

quabo with lumber produced in the district. I have been in communication with the hon. Conservator of Forests about the matter, and I sincerely trust that the project he has in mind would bear fruit and in a very short period of time.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I hope the hon. Director of Public Works has not lost sight of the unsightly building we have here for the want of paint. It looks disgraceful, and I hope that some attention would be given to it.

Item 4—Artesian Wells and Distribution Lines, \$2,050.

Dr. SINGH: Only this morning I received a sample of water from residents of Windsor Forest, which I showed to the hon. Director of Public Works and the hon. Director of Medical Services. The artesian well is intended to supply people with pure water. The people at Windsor Forest are some distance from the well and are using water for drinking purpose which is very unwholesome. It does not need much piping from the road to the

spot in order to give the people a pure water supply.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Perhaps I may leave the major issue of artesian wells generally until we get to Public Works Extraordinary, but I would like to ask the hon. Director of Public Works a question, which has just occurred to me, dealing with the Suddie District. It is the question of distribution lines—the utilization of some of this amount to connect to the main line pipe-lines from the premises of residents there. They are perfectly willing to pay for the pipe-lines and for the connection work. I think it was referred to the District Commissioner, but nothing further was done. It is only a question of gaining the necessary permission from Government to extend the pipe-line into private places.

Mr. CASE (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences): I will go into the matter.

The Council resumed and adjourned to the following day at 10.30 a.m.