

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Wednesday, 31st August, 1932.*

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

## PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Major W. Bain Gray, M.A., Ph.D. (Edin.), B. Litt. (Oxon), (Acting).

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. F. J. J. F. McDowell (Acting).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. B. R. Wood, M.A., Dip. For. (Cantab.), Conservator of Forests.

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

The Hon. Q. B. De Freitas, M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.), Surgeon-General (Acting).

The Hon. W. Francis, F.I.C., F.C.S., Government Analyst.

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

The Hon. N. Cannon (Georgetown North).

The Hon. A. V. Crane, LL.B. (Lond.) (Demerara River).

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

The Hon. A. E. Seeram (Eastern Demerara).

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

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

The Hon. G. E. Anderson (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. F. J. Seaford (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. C. Farrar (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

## MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 30th August, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

## DOCUMENT LAID.

The following document was laid on the table:—

Copy of a despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies forwarding Hansard and Minutes dated 29th May, 1931, *re* motion by the late A. R. F. Webber in connexion with Reform of Constitution, as requested by Mr. Cannon (*Colonial Secretary*).

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

### RICE GRADING FEES, ETC.

Mr. BRASSINGTON asked the following questions:—

1. What amount has been collected as grading fees by the Customs Department in connection with the Rice Grading Ordinance up to December, 1931?

2. What amount has been spent in the establishment of the Rice Grading Office, including salaries and wages to the Rice Grading Officer and his assistants?

3. What amount has been collected by the Customs Department from 1st January to 30th June, 1932, in respect of Rice Grading Fees?
4. What is the total amount spent for carrying on the Rice Grading Office from 1st January to 30th June, 1932?
5. What is the estimated expenditure from 1st July to 31st December, 1932?
6. What is the estimated revenue to be received from 1st July to 31st December, 1932?

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture) replied as follows:—

1. Rice grading fees collected from 1st October, 1930, to 31st December, 1931, amounted to \$7,894.68.
2. The expenditure to June 30th, 1932, amounted to \$5,661.
3. \$3,838.56.
4. \$1,607.00.
5. \$1,857.00.
6. \$2,661.44

#### PENSIONS.

Mr. CRANE asked the following questions:—

1. What is the total sum of money paid and payable in respect of the year 1932 as pensions to retired officers from the Public Service?
2. What is the total sum of money paid and payable in respect of the year 1932 as pensions to retired Public Servants *residing out of the Colony*? under the following heads:—
  - (a) Resident in the United Kingdom.
  - (b) Resident in Barbados.
  - (c) Resident elsewhere.
3. What is the total sum of money received by Government as tax in respect of pensions paid to all Public Officers? as follows:—
  - (a) In the Colony.
  - (b) Out of the Colony.

Mr. Mc DAVID (Acting Colonial Treasurer) replied as follows:—

1. \$227,541.
- 2.—(a) \$102,746
  - (b) 18,382
  - (c) 6,924
3. Income Tax for the year of assessment 1931 collected from retired public officers is as follows:—
  - (a) in the Colony—\$1,709.
  - (b) out of the Colony—\$1,784.
 The assessments for 1932 are not yet complete but it is estimated that the total amount collectible will be about double that for 1931.

#### REVISION OF CONSTITUTION.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I rise to move the motion standing in my name:—

Whereas the Political Constitution substituted in 1928 for the Colonial Constitution of 1891 was unwelcomed and undesired by the people of this Colony and has led to grave dissatisfaction amongst His Majesty's subjects in this Colony;

And whereas by reason of the present form of Constitution the economy necessary to rehabilitate the Colony's financial position cannot be effected, and the material progress of His Majesty's said subjects in the Colony is greatly retarded:

*Be it Resolved*,—That this Council respectfully requests the Secretary of State for the Colonies to direct the local Government to appoint a Committee of this Council consisting of not fewer than five Elected and not more than three Official Members to draw up the outline of the Constitution which may be considered suitable to the needs of the Colony and calculated to afford His Majesty's said subjects reasonable participation in the government of the Colony under proper safeguards of Colonial and Imperial interests and in such a form as is compatible with the aspirations and well-being of the inhabitants in general.

I desire, sir, that any remarks which I may make in commending this resolution to Government for the reform of the British Guiana Constitution Order-in-Council, 1928, will be regarded as expressing the sentiments, the confirmed conviction, of every business man and every public man in the country, supported too by the concurrence of nearly every individual in the community. I have no intention to enter into any discussion as regards the merits or demerits of the 1891 Constitution or the 1928 Order-in-Council, but I think it is due to the Council and to everybody concerned that a short review at least of the circumstances leading up to the Wilson-Snell Commission, whose recommendation was responsible for the Order-in-Council now under discussion, should be given.

In 1926, British Guiana together with the rest of the world was in the throes of serious economic depression, and as a result the Wilson-Snell Commission was appointed "to consider and report on the economic condition of the Colony, the causes which have hitherto retarded and the measures which could be taken to promote development, and any facts which they may consider to have a bearing on the above matters." That Commission, according to its terms of reference, was appointed to enquire into the economic condition then prevailing in this Colony. The Commissioners came and spent the brief period of two months. They left England on the 16th October, arrived here on the 16th November, and left for England on the 17th December. Having made their excursions, though it was only possible for one man to do so, Mr. Wilson

having been ill for some time, the Commissioners found :

“ It appears to us essential, as well on the ground of immediate financial exigencies as on that of future development, that the authorities finally responsible for the solvency and good government of the Colony should have power in the last resort to carry into effect measures which they consider essential for its well-being. This will involve an alteration in the Constitution. . . . ”

The Commissioners came ostensibly to enquire into the economic condition of the country but in reality to force upon this country a change of Constitution. I use the word “ force ” advisedly, because Sir Anton Bertram in his “ Colonial Service, 1930,” stated with respect to the British Guiana Constitution :

“ This is the first time in history that the Colonial Office has itself assumed the responsibility and without local consent has deliberately abolished the long-cherished but indefensible privileges by an Act of Imperial Parliament.”

Note the words “ without local consent has deliberately abolished the long-cherished but indefensible privileges by an Act of Imperial Parliament.” In other words, the Commissioners came to British Guiana in the capacity of physicians to enquire into the condition of a patient ; they made a wrong diagnosis. They did not seem to understand the symptoms and recommended a remedy which aggravated the disease. The Commissioners continue to say in their findings

“ The granting of this power presumes that the responsible authorities will thereupon proceed to restore financial equilibrium and the establishment of a sound financial system by the methods and on the lines which we have described.”

The 1891 Constitution gave the Unofficial or Elected Members of the Legislature the majority over financial matters to check Government's extravagance. They had the power and it was a pity they did not use it more effectively, but that body never at any time in the whole of its history presented to Government an unbalanced Budget. It is true that it had occurred that the estimated revenue was not realised on more than one occasion, but that, I maintain, was due to the fact that Government persistently gave to the Legislature inflated figures upon which they had to work. The Government, which has been inaugurated and foisted upon the com-

munity in the manner I have described to restore the financial equilibrium, has never been able to present a balanced Budget. It is well known that the powers-that-be actually prevented the Legislature of the 1891 Constitution from using certain funds at the disposal of Government—the Harbour Board and Colonisation Funds for example,—but in spite of the use by the present Government of those funds they have never been able to balance their Budget, although in addition they have received nearly three million dollars by way of grants from the Imperial Government. I speak subject to correction as I have not the figures at my disposal. I do not blame the Government but their machinery. That machinery is unsuited to the needs of the country and Government have failed because of that machinery. It stands to reason therefore that an enquiry should be made to see whether it is not possible to find a Constitution which will measure up to the recommendations of the Commissioners.

Have Government succeeded in establishing “ a sound financial system ”? No ; Government have carried on the system which has been repudiated by the Commissioners, and have been tinkering with it in a way that the Legislature under the 1891 Constitution never did. The Tax Ordinance is altered three or four times a year. Government have not established a sound financial system and in the meantime taxation has reached its highest point. Everything that can possibly be conceived of has been taxed, and, that notwithstanding, Government have failed to balance the Budget. That is the fault of the present Order-in-Council under which the country is labouring, and it is a good reason why enquiry should be made to see if it is not possible to find something more in keeping with the needs and well-being of the community. The Commissioners further stated that in addition to Government restoring financial equilibrium and establishing a sound financial system :

“ They will simultaneously continue energetically the policy of freeing the coastal area from the danger of floods, drought and contaminated water, of assisting and encouraging the introduction of new industries, such as ground-nuts, through an efficient Agriculture Department, of stamping out preventable diseases through the instrumentality of an adequately staffed and supported Public Health Department, and of reforming the educational system in accordance with the recommendations of the Education Commission.”

Irrigation has not been touched, drainage has been a scandal, and pure water supply has been worse than that. Nearly every well that has been sunk has since ceased to function and those which have not have all but ceased. There is one redeeming one at Mahaica as a relic of the money wasted. We are told by the Government which have the power to govern that the experts did not discover the fault, and that there was something wrong with the soil of the country which prevented the wells from functioning. Where is the wisdom of a Government which embark on so large a venture at considerable expense without first carrying out experiments? That will not be tolerated by any other than a Government by official majority.

The 1891 Constitution contained the germ of democratic government—taxation with representation. That was taken away and in return we were given an official majority—the essence of Crown Colony Government. Government cannot say that in return for that privilege Government have taken into their Executive Council Members of the Elected Section. As a matter of fact Government have deprived the Legislature of the help of those Elected Members who have been elevated, if not imprisoned, in that Cabinet, because instead of their being a connecting link to convey the opinion, the feelings and the views of their Elected brethren to the Government, they have gone there and all that they do must be treated as sacrosanct. What are they doing? Government convey their policy to them and they in the minority can accept or reject it, but they very often come into the Legislative Council and assist Government in forcing down the throats of the other Electives something that is unpalatable.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: As an Unofficial Member of the Executive Council I take exception to that remark of the hon. Member. It is most unfair.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I also join in the protest. I have always exercised a spirit of independence in this Council.

Mr. WOOLFORD: The hon. Member is quite in order to express his personal opinion. If he is not correct in his remarks the Members concerned can reply,

but it does not form any ground for interruption. It is quite competent for the hon. Member to draw his own conclusion as a result of his own observations. I ask the President's ruling as the incident very frequently happens.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I regret if I have trodden on the corns of my colleagues who are on the Executive Council. They are mistaken as I am only expressing my personal views on the form of the Constitution in principle. My colleagues on the Executive Council are sworn to secrecy and as honourable men we do not press them but we know that sometimes some of them do not vote in the Legislative Council, while others absent themselves because they do not want to go against what they had decided in the Executive Council. That is an open secret.

The drainage of the coatlands which the Commissioners recommended has also failed. We are still clamouring for drainage in the districts, and in those districts in which it has been attempted the cost is such that it would have been better if it had not been attempted. As regards the introduction of new industries, such as ground-nuts, the Director of Agriculture said we cannot grow them profitably in British Guiana. Must I, therefore, conclude that the Department of Agriculture is not efficient? The Department has not discovered a single new crop but has confined its energies to crops which have been growing very well without its assistance. I refer to sugar and rice. The expenditure on the Department is out of all proportion to its usefulness, and that is only because the Government have power to govern and because we are being governed by an official oligarchy. It has been said that the pineapple cannot grow in this country, but in the case of a plant growing wild I cannot see by what parity of reasoning a man can say it is not indigenous to the soil. I maintain that if an analysis is made of the soil in the districts where the pineapple grows wild, and if they make a survey of districts where the soil is similar, they will find that the plant can be cultivated to great advantage. Nobody thinks of doing that, but the Director simply remains in his laboratory and says it cannot be done. All that is permitted by an Official Government.

The Commissioners go on to say that

the granting of this power presumes that the responsible authorities would also stamp out preventable diseases through the instrumentality of an adequately staffed and supported Public Health Department. Government have a Public Health Department which went into travail for five years and brought forth a wizened small white mouse, so small that a microscope was required to see if it were white; but Government had the temerity to present a Public Health Bill to this Council before it was realised that they had to withdraw large portions of it because of their unwillingness to do a little bit of original thinking and looking around for themselves, as a result of which they had to borrow from out-of-the-way and backward African Colonies measures which they discovered afterwards had failed to secure recognition where they were first conceived. That is the kind of thing the present Constitution permits. The Commissioners set out what they think should be done and have taken the Constitution from the people who pay the taxes and hand it over to Government Officials that they may, amongst other things, bring in a decent Public Health Bill.

The Commissioners spoke of "reforming the educational system in accordance with the recommendations of the Education Commission." Have we anything in the education system that one can be proud of? Is the education system better to-day than when that sentence was written in 1925? I maintain not. Primary Education is supposed to be guided by the Code of 1919, but we will not recognize that Code in view of the circulars which have been despatched by the Department. Primary Education is carried on now not under the Code of 1919 but by circulars issued by the Department at the rate of two per day with half a dozen perhaps on Sundays for despatch on Monday. Those circulars have overshadowed, if not entirely obliterated, the Code of 1919. The result is that the managers are disgusted, the children bewildered, the teachers dissatisfied, and a bunch of duffers are being turned out. The children cannot spell. The Department says: "Don't teach them to spell, don't give them dictation, don't teach them grammar, teach them spoken English"—that in a country where nearly everybody speaks English. It is a deliberate attempt to hoodwink the community and to retard the educational progress of the country.

Secondary education is in no better case, and the alternative is a lower standard in the country. The people have for generations enjoyed cultural, political and other privileges which have led them to aspire to very much more than is being served out by the official majority under the present Constitution. We have a right to ask for reform of this Constitution and that the inquiry be made by people on the spot. I say "on the spot" advisedly, because I do not wish it to be said that we are getting money from the British Treasury, and therefore Government will not spend public money to send a deputation to London. Consequently, I urge a local inquiry. Government may reply that a local Commission recommended the present Constitution to the Secretary of State. Mr. Amery did say that in Parliament, but I respectfully maintain that, whatever else that was, it was not honourable. The local Commission was not asked to outline a Constitution for the country. That packed Commission were put into a hidebound receptacle and could not go beyond what they did. The onus was sought to be thrown on the local men, as it were, who could not at all express the opinion of the community. They were given an order to formulate a Constitution within special limits.

The Constitution of 1928 is unwelcome because it was never solicited. It is also undesirable because it was never wanted. That it has given dissatisfaction there can be no question. There is not a single individual, and I am not certain that if Government Officials have their way they would not be similarly disposed, who would recommend a Constitution of this sort. But if an Official were to oppose what Government conceive to be their policy it is tantamount to resigning his position. Dissatisfaction has not only been in that direction but in others as well. The Commissioners recommended the opening up of the interior by a railway with all speed, but can anybody say that such a project has been at all touched? Nothing has been done and I fancy I hear Government chuckling that they have a Forest Trust. I think I recollect a motion before the Council by the Conservator of Forests for the abandonment of the Trust, so that the single attempt Government have made to carry out something that has been recommended by the Commissioners they have dropped like a hot

potato. The result is that not a single foot more of timber has been sent out of the Colony than was the case before. Are we to be strangled all the time and have a situation which will not allow us to stir in our own interest?

We pay the taxes and have not a word to say as to how the money is to be expended. The Commissioners expressly recommended the construction of a railway into the interior. Everybody knows the interior cannot be opened up by any other means. I would like to know how many logs of timber a motor lorry can bring from the interior. Roads, too, are very expensive, and I think Government will find themselves with a "white elephant" in respect of the road they are now constructing with so much *éclat*, as the next rainfall will wipe it out. Railways have been the means of opening up all countries and are still the pioneers. The fear in the old days was that a railway would deplete the labour population of the sugar estates, but the present-day planter does not so regard it. The average planter to-day is aware that a railway into the interior will bring its own population, and the Commissioners so found. Government's policy is exactly the opposite to what the Commissioners recommend. They started to build a little bit of road, then conserved a piece of land nearby and counted on people going there. Now they say they do not want any more, and they have done what the Commissioners said they should not do, that is, to take the people from the coastlands into the interior, instead of doing something which will attract people from outside. They started the Bush Lot scheme, which is another "dead." The coastlands will yield almost everything if drained and irrigated. Drainage has been a half-hearted effort but nowhere has irrigation been established on the coastlands. I have heard of an attempt by Government to build a road on the Corentyne, but if that is not folly I do not know. I have known of a big machine at Clonbrook which was known as "Buck's Folly," because it never dug an inch of drainage trench work before it was scrapped. I do not know whose folly the present effort is.

The gravamen of the case against the Constitution is that as we get grants from the Imperial Government, we cannot have

an adequate share in the Government of the country. Then we are doomed, because we cannot get out of it except by a miracle, and Government seem to be hopeless. Sir Cecil Rodwell has made a remark in which he blamed neither side under the 1891 Constitution—one had responsibility without power and the other power without responsibility. The alternative is democratic Government saddling the man with power with a little more responsibility; but by the present Constitution Government took the power from the man who had it and gave it to him with the responsibility. The position is indefensible. Nothing can be urged as a reason why this Constitution must continue very much longer. Every day that is lost is simply another nail in our coffin. We are bankrupt already. Government in their recent efforts at retrenchment are saving a penny here and spending a pound there, by dismissing the underdog particularly and increasing the emoluments and pension rights of senior officers as a result. And the Electives are powerless to interfere as Government have got the power and are using it.

Our claim for constitutional privileges is nothing extravagant. Government said they were not aware that there is any great dissatisfaction with the Constitution. I do not think that either Your Excellency or any man in this community will have the effrontery to stand up to-day and say that the people of the country are not dissatisfied with the Constitution. It has been tried and found wanting. We have given Government full opportunity to try the experiment which they said would work marvels, but their hopes have not been realised and we say "Give us an opportunity of handling the wheel and see if we cannot steer the ship to anchor." Government have been jettisoning the ship and we want now to save it. It is public opinion that the time is fully ripe for a change of this Constitution, and this is the time, to my mind, when not only the Elected Members and the community but Government also to combine and do something to save the situation. Government cannot congratulate themselves on their achievements. I give Government credit for the best intentions, but Government know that the system is bad. Government should find no difficulty in accepting this motion. Let us put our heads together and endeavour to find some means to

ameliorate our troubles. Unless something is done to bring to an end a state of things which must be remedied this country is deemed forever. We have got the last and the worst of all evils in the present Constitution, that is to say, men without popular confidence, men without public opinion, men without mutual trust entrusted with all the powers of Government. That is carrying us on to a state bordering on slavery or a state of confusion and we want our freedom. I ask Government not to allow things to drift until we come to that sorry pass.

Mr. WOOLFORD : I beg to second the motion.

Mr. CRANE : The importance of this subject, the welfare of this country and the well-being of the inhabitants, I submit, justify the imposition of this motion between even the pressing business of this House. On the last occasion on which I spoke on the Constitution here, I said there were a number of us who had set ourselves the task, however feebly we may perform it, of leaving no stone unturned until we had destroyed the Constitution of 1928 which was forced upon this community. I told the House that if we fail to achieve that object during our mortal state we shall commit it as a sacred trust to our children to exert unremitting energy and toil to wrest the helm from the Government. I have been torn as it were in two quarters—I have been halting between two opinions. I wanted to give this mongrel Constitution sufficient time to develop its usefulness or its inutility to the country. I think sufficient time has elapsed to make it clear to any impartial mind that that was not the change required in 1928. We went backward instead of forward. My views are too well-known to point to me the accusation of being disloyal. I stand with those whom I can influence and for myself for undying loyalty to the British Crown. I should never like to see the day when this country or any other country in which I live permanently under any other leadership but British leadership.

I stand for the government of the people by the people themselves. I stand for that system of Government because it is the only system of Government under which people have progressed in the past. I have reviewed pages of history and I

have found that wherever people live under a Government such as that we live under to-day their commerce has been retarded; they pay tribute to Cæsar and receive nothing in return. Their entire development has been cramped. I have seen in contradistinction the countries to which self-government has been entrusted flourishing like a green bay tree. Why should I not then in the land where I was born, and the only place in which I have a right to be, crave that system of government which alone, I am convinced, will bring prosperity to it. The present system is a curse to this country because it exposes it to the domination of strangers. I hope nothing I shall say to-day will convey to any official around this table, for whom I have the greatest personal respect, anything of a personal imputation against their integrity and their honour. Let us give them all the credit we can and the credit to which they are justly entitled. They are operators of a system which is calculated to cramp the just aspirations of the people of this country and not calculated to lead to their well-being. The executive government of every country within the British Empire is vested in His Majesty, even in the great Dominions, but there are principally two ways by which that government may be carried out. That government may be carried out through permanent officials brought into the country who have not the confidence of the electors and the general body of inhabitants. That system of government may also be carried out by entrusting the government to those who have the confidence of the majority of the Elective Members, in effect, to the people themselves who are resident in the Colony.

I have heard a great deal of criticism that politicians are out to serve themselves, that it is easy to beat up interest in a particular subject, and to gather a crowd and make a demonstration. What right, I ask, have people who will not make this country their home and who have an opportunity of doing so to say "We will come to this country, we will govern it, but we will not reside in it?" I believe in the motto of our city "Damas Petimusque Vicissim," but many people come here and get something from this Colony without giving anything in return. That is the system under which we now live. I would welcome half a million settlers from Great Britain in this country.

I pay them the tribute that they will stiffen this community, that they will infuse this community with the spirit which is calculated to assist it in progressing and developing, but I deny the right to any person from the other side to strangle, as it were, the just aspirations of the people of this country by what is called Crown Colony Government—Government by permanent officials who have made a mess of things and then retired and left us to bear the ills which they have created. That is the dragon which we have decided we must destroy before a better form of government can be obtained by us. Have we not seen the spectacle of a Government Official who, entrusted with hundreds of thousands of dollars for carrying out drainage and pure water supply schemes, made an unholy mess of the whole thing—a mess which cannot be cleared up now even with all the ingenuity of his official brethren? Have we not had the spectacle of his official confreres voting against a motion to make representation to the Secretary of State asking that he be made to refund certain moneys which were lost by his incompetence? We are living under a system which promotes incompetence. What are you to think of that system? It is the system we are after in the main. We will welcome permanent residence of every official and welcome him as a Guianese. We say you must live with us and share the evils as well as the success of the administration and not leave us to perish when you are enjoying pensions abroad.

I am not going to claim for this community that it should have Responsible Government in the generally accepted sense of the term, but I am claiming for this community the right to have a controlled form of responsible Government—a form of Government in which the Governor would be entrusted with very wide reserve power while the actual carrying on of the Government would be entrusted to representatives of the people. This has been tried with success in many places in the British Empire. It is a new system, a compromise between Crown Colony and responsible Government, but it is a system which, I venture to say, has come to stay because the people of the world, moved by the spirit of self-determination, are not going to tolerate much longer this veritable hell of Crown Colony Government.

I want at this point every commercial and planting interest to take a note of what occurred in Malta. If they had combined as responsible and temperate members who represent the public they could have obtained in 1928 a Constitution far better than the one we have at the present moment. But they did not co-operate. What has happened in Malta? In a Senate of 17 members 10 are special members—who are appointed by each of five communities—the Clergy 2, the Nobility 2, the Graduates 2, the Chamber of Commerce 2 and the Trades Union Council 2. Today in this Colony the planting community and the commercial and trading communities have to depend on the grace of the Government for a seat in this Council. The five Nominated Unofficial Members have my unqualified respect and admiration, but knowing them to be as manly as they are and to be possessed of self-respect which should inform the opinion of any man, they could not be satisfied with the position they occupy in this House. Continual fear must pervade their minds as to whether Government who hold the pen of their appointment would be satisfied with the vote they give in this House. Independent as they are, careful and cautious men as they are, they could better maintain a spirit of independence and even join the Elected Members under the system I am suggesting. At the same time they would be free of that ultimate fear that Government will not renew their appointments because they dare to oppose their will. Members are here to exercise their own independent freedom of thought and action and not to vote as sycophants.

The system which makes sycophants in a Legislative Council ought to be destroyed. Can you say, sir, turning the pages of the Hansard over the past 25 or 30 years, that the men in the Legislature of this Colony did not possess discretion and ability to operate the reins of Government? In my time I have known but a few. But I have heard the names of men like Dargan, Browne, Davis, Wreford, Duncan and many others, and I add to that illustrious band the name of our late lamented brother, Webber. I respectfully and humbly submit that they could have handled the reins of Government as competently as any Government Official whom I have had the pleasure of seeing occupying his seat in this Council. I refrain from mentioning the names of hon. Members who



are now alive. I would not be guilty of such pedantry to refer to the present men who by your own eye and judgment you can determine as men capable to handle the affairs of Government. There are men in the community to-day who have run businesses far more complicated than the routine machinery of Government run on the red-tape system, files and jackets passing from one to another; and the art of Government will not frighten men who have handled great problems of finance and have made successful business enterprises both in sugar and in commercial transactions in the street. Those men reside here for a long number of years and have at heart the interest of the community. They are not like the five or seven-year men who are only looking to clear out as soon as the time comes. This system I cannot describe as other than a curse to this country.

In 1931, I think, a new form of Constitution was provided for Ceylon. It is not very different from the Constitution provided for Malta because, fundamentally, what was done for Ceylon was to entrust the Government of the various Departments to those persons who had the confidence of the majority of the Elected Members, the Crown reserving to itself three Departments of State—the Chief Secretary, the Legal Secretary and the Financial Secretary. What Ceylon is kicking against is the fact that the Crown has retained even those three Departments, and the people are clamouring for the Crown to yield up those three Departments and to put them in exactly the same position as the other Departments of State. But what has been said in the case of Ceylon has been said about British Guiana, and by quite different Commissioners. I was astounded to find the same words used by a different Commission to that which reported on the Constitution of this Colony, and yet after they had considered the matter they recommended that form of Constitution. The Ceylon Commission stated :

**“ These unofficial members, who are debarred from public office, and are, generally speaking, persons not experienced in business affairs of importance, have power without responsibility, and, especially when sitting in Finance Committee, appear to have directed their energies mainly to the harassing of Government and the baiting of public officials, and have so thoroughly exercised these privileges as sensibly to**

**impair the prestige and vitality of Government without giving that assistance in debate that Government would expect from a legislative body.”**

I would like these words taken to heart. No one who knows this Legislature can accuse the Elected Members of not giving Government that assistance in debate which Government expected. We have offered it and Government have used it over and over and, unless Government take up the position of an arrant coward, Government would say once and for all that they cannot make such an accusation against this body. I emphasise that passage from the report of the Ceylon Commission because it shows the type of individual that has been described by a very competent British Commission. The Commission thought the Elected Members were merely obstructionists without capacity, and yet we find on full consideration of the report the British Government establishing for them a State Council of 146 members and handing over to them 7 Departments out of 10. These Departments are run by seven Committees, with a Chairman each, along with Government members to advise them. If the British Government entrust to men, described in the language referred to, power of that kind, I claim you can entrust it to men against whom you cannot say the same thing. If that is the correct description of the Ceylon people, we have a stronger case than they had for vesting the Government in the elected representatives of the people, with extensive reserve power in the Governor to thwart any improper action on the part of Elected Ministers. We have a case, I consider, to justify our asking His Majesty to direct that that Government be established.

It requires no great constitutional changes to establish the Government which I have briefly outlined. Responsible Government was introduced in the Dominions without any change in their Constitution. In fact, it is one of the peculiar advantages of the British Constitution operated in the Colonies that you can establish such a form of Government without actual legislation. It is done merely by the direction of the Secretary of State to the Governor that in future the Government should be entrusted to persons enjoying the confidence of the majority of the Elected Members. But in

our case I am prepared to admit that some sort of new enactment will be required, because I do not claim for this Colony that unfettered form of responsible Government which was applied in the Colonies before the first federation took place in 1867. I want to see ample security provided against the improper use of new power entrusted to the people. I want to protect the Colony from itself and therefore, like Malta and Ceylon, express provisions will have to be made in entrusting those powers. Over and over we have been told by the highest statesmen in the Empire, nay, by His Majesty himself, that these Governments are a trust for the native people. The British Government will control only so long as it is necessary to conduct that Government for the people, but the moment the people have reached that state of development that Government can be entrusted to them Government will be handed over to them. That is the express purpose for which British control exists.

How long is this tutelage to last? How long is this trusteeship by permanent officials to be carried out? Do you intend to give the native, as you call him, a chance to learn to govern himself? If you do not give him a chance of gaining experience, how do you ever expect him to give evidence that he can govern himself? Let us take this matter beyond mere words and beyond platitudes and push it to its practical and logical conclusion. The people have progressed far enough to begin to handle the reins of Government. Government should not retain its trusteeship long after the beneficiaries have attained their majority. The time has come and if we were to sit down tamely and say nothing we would deserve the form of Government we have, if, as we are told frequently, a country has the form of Government it deserves. I do not say that we would have no use for people from abroad if a measure of responsible Government is given to this country. We will want them, but we will want them as experts, as scientists and not as politicians. We will pay them as officials to benefit the country. Here you have the experience around this table—officers of forestry, agriculture and all the other sciences. Here you have men of experience whose time is being absolutely wasted. Under the new sys-

tem that I visualise these gentlemen will not be here, but will be at their desks working to secure the development of the country and not be sitting here as mere automatons under circumstances which make it necessary for them to say “aye” or “nay” when the contrary is in their view.

The very fact that Government is forced to provide itself with a number of Members who must say “aye” or “nay” shows that the system is rotten to the core, and that very fact makes its destruction necessary. I cannot help thinking that there was some evil genius behind the change of the last Constitution, although I am going to admit that the last Constitution was ripe for reform. But it was a reform the wrong way. It was a reform downwards instead of being a reform upwards. I agree with those who say that you cannot govern a country, or anything for that matter, with an unofficial majority. I agree that any form of Government in the world which discloses a majority in the opposition is an impotent Government. If the opposition wants to control it must by some means or other put itself in office. If Government is to be run it must have an opportunity for carrying out schemes which it has worked out and put before the Council and approved, and I cannot, unless I am forced by a very strong majority of my constituents, vote for an Elected side in the majority. I hope we will get some investigation into this Constitution. What we want is a share in the management of the country. It is our country. We live here and have our being here, and what we want is a share in the Government. I said there was some evil genius behind this change and the belief is that the genius succeeded in reform being effected in the wrong way. I remember in 1922 when Major Wood (now Lord Irwin) came to this Colony he investigated the question with a great deal of statesmanship. He did not come for one purpose and afterwards decided that he should draw up a report for another. In February, 1922, the public debt of the Colony was something like \$12,200,000, loans which, with very few exceptions, had been floated locally. What did he tell the Home Government :—

“The loans of this colony have with a very few small exceptions been floated locally. If

the colony at any time sought to obtain anything in the nature of large loans in London through the Crown Agents the question of the Constitution must inevitably be raised, but so long as the colony is able to finance its current expenditure and to obtain money on loan without the assistance of the Crown Agents it would be a mistake to raise without adequate cause the question of revising the Constitution which has special historic traditions behind it and is regarded with pride by so many of the inhabitants of the colony."

The Colony did not owe the Crown Agents then. Our loans were, for the most part, raised locally. The Town Council in 1923 wanted to raise \$2,500,000 and were told by the Crown Agents "We can raise it for you by current advances." That sounded very reasonable, but that genius had in mind the warning of Lord Irwin. He saw it was necessary to get this Colony within the grip of the Crown Agents, and so he began to borrow money from time to time until it reached three millions. Then the monster showed its fangs, and so you had created conditions under which Lord Irwin said you can raise the question of the Constitution. That was done in 1927. It took five years to bring it about. It could hardly be a coincidence because we find every year that the Government, in spite of its experience of the previous year, came into the Combined Court year after year with inflated estimates of revenue. The estimated revenue in 1926 was \$5,560,071 and in 1927 \$6,830,787, an increase of \$1,270,716 when the actual revenue in 1929 was about \$500,000 less than the estimate. What was the object of Government in inflating that revenue? It was to get votes in the House. When Government said there was extravagance by the Electives, Government forgot that no money vote could have been introduced except by the Government. But the Government's object was to obtain votes for their estimates. Who is in a position to make those estimates—not the Elected Members but Government. It was Government who made the circumstances under which they could claim the change of the Constitution.

The Council adjourned for the luncheon recess.

Mr. CRANE (resuming): I was just about to conclude my remarks upon the design which evidently was prepared by some person who was behind this Constitution ramp carried out in 1928. It has

always been striking to those of us who have expended some little time on a subject of the Constitution that while the Commissioners were sent out to this Colony ostensibly on an economic mission they contrived to convert that term of reference into one exclusively of a political nature. They were appointed as a Commission to British Guiana "to consider and report on the economic condition of the Colony, the causes which have hitherto retarded the measures which can be taken to promote development, and any facts which they may consider to have a bearing on the above matter." I am at a loss to discover any step which has been taken to improve the economic condition of the Colony either as the result of the visit of the Constitution Commissioners, their report or otherwise. There is one thing which certainly they have done and it is this: having entered the country under the guise of an Economic Commission, they thereby lulled the people into false security as regards the Constitution and then proceeded to deal with the Political Constitution of the country as the sole object of their mission. In so doing they could not achieve the best results, because, first of all, they were misinformed on the one hand by the enemies of the Constitution and, on the other, they were ignorant of local conditions which they could not have assimilated within their brief stay in the Colony. They were unable to grasp the real situation. They dealt with the entire question of the Political Constitution as the sole thing which required amendment to bring about improvement in the economic condition of the Colony. We have not had as the result of the change of that Constitution a single additional industry added to the number of those we carried on before. No industry has improved in the slightest way as the result of the change in the Constitution. The change has resulted merely in vesting Government with power that a Government ought to possess I agree. But the change has resulted in vesting in the wrong hands the real power which I agree was needed in the government of any country. I had the pleasure of reading—with disgust on the one hand and pleasure on the other hand to see our critics confuse themselves—the speech of one of the Commissioners—Mr. Snell—in the House of Commons in which that gentleman said that he never intended a change such as

was carried out by the British Government. He never intended that the Government should have a majority as well as the reserve power in the Governor which is contained in the end of the British Guiana Order-in-Council.

The most heartrending part of the bargain is yet to be considered. It is an unwritten rule that the British Government never alters or interferes with the Constitution of a country except by the consent of the people of that country. The British Government admitted that in regard to Jamaica and since then it has been an unwritten rule never to force upon the people of any Colony a change of their political institutions except with their own consent. Did they obtain the consent of the people of British Guiana for this particular change? I believe the British Government will plead not guilty of doing so. But may I ask how that consent was given? It was given by a packed Commission appointed in this country by the enemies of the Constitution, and the report sent forward was not representative of the views of the people of the Colony. Who were the members of that Commission: local people, settlers, persons who were of the class of the great Empire builders, pioneers who had left their Motherland and done such excellent work in other countries? The answer is "No." Not that class of Englishman sat on the Commission, the sort of Englishman who resided in the Colony as great Empire settlers. On that Commission there were at least four officials of very temporary residence in the country, whose interest in it ceased the moment they retired and left these shores. How can you say such officials expressed the consent of the people of the country? I am not charging those officials with not acting honestly and not doing their best from the point of view they saw it, but their point of view cannot be accepted as that of the people of the country. Yet we are told the change was made with the consent of the local people. I would say that it was a trick, and a very scurvy trick, to have appointed four officials who come to this country and do their best from their point of view on that Commission but whose viewpoint was not the local point of view.

In another place any device set up by anyone to deceive another is described as

fraud. I refer to the Law Courts. There is legal fraud and political fraud, and the latter was practised in this particular case and it is our duty to unmask that fraud and to expose it. We know we are assuming a herculean task. We know that officials have set themselves up in this Colony and it will be a very hard thing for them to relinquish the position they have made for themselves, but we have to dislodge that class, to root them out as a class which prevents proper representation being made in the proper quarter. It is with that intrigue we have to deal. We have only to read the debate which took place in the House of Common when that Bill was passed to understand what great misstatements of facts took place. Great misstatements of facts were made by Ministers of the Crown, not purposely but they were misinformed as to the true position in the Colony.

The Secretary of State holds his office as long as his Party is in power. Permanent officials of the Colonial Office keep him in touch with what had gone before and what is going on at the present moment. We appreciate that it is a difficult thing to break through the barrier which prevents a Minister from getting the real facts of a case, and many of us are accustomed to the atmosphere of the Colonial Office. If you go there to make representation, while doing so a clerk comes in and you are cut short. Some of us have had that experience, but with the aid of those liberal and broadminded Englishmen, numbers of whom you find in England—Englishmen who claim that the Native governs himself as well as the Englishman has done—we hope to surmount this great barrier which prevents our representations from being heard in the proper place as they ought to be heard. The Colonial Office tends to lose its job the greater freedom is given to the Colonies of self-government, and when a man tends to lose his job he counter-moves to preserve his job. But we are going to do it constitutionally. We are going to respect the authority which for the time being holds the field. We are going to put it down as soon as we can, to resist it as long as it legally holds the field. Have no fear, however, that you will not get our co-operation in the future as you have got it in the past. You will admit we have a right to claim to govern ourselves,

Supposing the official class was removed from its position in this Council which it now holds, what would be the result? As I said before, when we want experience we can get officials from England, but we need not get these experts which the Heads of Departments now are and carry them along as members of the local parliament. At the present time you look for a man who has been properly trained in his department, you pay him for that experience, but when he comes here he is no longer an expert but is a politician. You will be able to get experience for one-half the salaries now paid to Heads of Departments; it will effect substantial economies in the Service. The present system stands in the way of retrenchment at the top. I have seen retrenchment which falls on the poor man at the bottom of the ladder—Customs-watchers, petty Civil Servants, Policemen and others, who draw \$20 per month and spend that \$20 per month in the Colony. What the local man wants to see is retrenchment at the top, retrenchment which means a saving of the huge salaries of \$600, \$700, \$800 per month. Let us cast our minds over the Service. Do not mention any names nor even their offices lest invidious distinctions be made. We find appointments carrying £100, £150 per month which can be as efficiently filled for £50 or £75 per month. That is the retrenchment we want. We are not, however, going to get it as long as this system exists. That is our present woe, but the present woe always carries an ultimate one.

The ultimate one is what we had in the answers to questions this morning with reference to the Treasury, which state that the total pensions paid for 1932 were \$102,746 to retired public servants residing in the United Kingdom, \$18,382 to those resident in Barbados, and \$6,924 to others resident elsewhere. You cannot expect a Colony to progress and develop when every cent it can earn is taken out and spent in another community. Pensions may be the just reward for faithful Public Service, none of us deny. Some of us may not believe it but when you take money from one Colony and have it expended in another country whose economy is in no way connected with the economy of this Colony, you put out of circulation in that Colony annually so many hundred thousand dollars. If that money were paid to pension-

ers resident in this community it would yet be filtering through the finances of British Guiana. If three-fourths of it is expended in necessities you will have that spent in British Guiana. But every year you send away \$102,746 to the United Kingdom that can afford to do without it. We are poorer every year by that sum. No honest man, be he Civil Servant or otherwise, can say that is the best system to run a country on. The very system is causing ruin to the country, and it is a system that should be put an end to as early as it is possible to do so.

Before resuming my seat I desire to refer, with your permission, sir, to the despatch of the Governor's Deputy to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated July 3, 1931, which has been laid on the table. I take it I am at liberty to comment on its contents. I have not studied this despatch closely and therefore I am unable to comment on the whole of it and to say whether or not it put the situation fairly and whether it represented everything that occurred regarding the debate which took place on May 29 last. But what I do say is that the Governor who is on the spot is expected to report to the Secretary of State conditions precisely as they exist, and correctly, and I submit it was not fair that the statement should be made in that despatch:—

“It is not a difficult matter for the politicians at public meetings, convened *ad hoc* and otherwise, to obtain enthusiastic support in favour of resolutions advocating a change of a Constitution, but opinions thus expressed only represent those held by a small and perhaps irresponsible section of the community, amongst whom it is possible that the majority do not possess the necessary qualification to enable them to be registered as voters at elections of members of the Legislative Council. In matters of this kind the most responsible section are notably silent, especially when the manner adopted to elicit public opinion is by public meeting. In this particular instance the absence of public interest in the debate was clearly evidenced—there were never more than fifteen persons present in the public gallery in the Council Chamber during the course of the debate, and it is very easy in this colony to fill these benches on any occasion when the public is interested or when a keen or interesting debate is expected. It was also significant that only six out of fourteen Elected Members were present, although Mr. Webber had given long notice of his motion and Council had been informed on the previous day when it would be taken.”

This paragraph, I respectfully submit, contains misrepresentation, unwittingly I

believe, of what the position really was. I deny the correctness of the statement that notice was given that the debate would be taken at any particular time. The debate came on when there was nothing else on the Paper to do, as I remember it, and many Members did not know the debate was to come on, far less members of the public. That statement, therefore, is misleading. It was calculated, as it did, to mislead because it was intended to show that those politicians had staged their debate on the Constitution and that no responsible person in the community wants any change, and that an irresponsible minority of the Legislature wanted the change and this was the result of their efforts. If you look at the local Hansard which shows the debate of May 29, 1931, there you will find that Mr. Webber in his speech, says:—

“Generally speaking, this motion was entitled to be taken on Wednesday, which was Private Members’ Day, when all the Members were present. I go further and say I telegraphed the Clerk of the Council on Wednesday and asked that the text of the motion be put on the Order Paper for yesterday—all the same Government told me it could not be taken yesterday. I told the Clerk of the Council to put it on the Order Paper so that Members could see the nature of the motion. The Clerk told me he would consult the Colonial Secretary, and a message came later that the Colonial Secretary said he saw no necessity for putting it on the Order Paper.”

In view of that statement made, not after the result of the debate but prior to the discussion which took place on the motion, how misleading is a statement of this sort. This is one of the barriers which prevents us from getting the facts as they are on the spot to those who are in authority to grant relief. That despatch assumes to make a statement which is absolutely incorrect. Those are facts which we hope will be made known in Downing Street. We expect that whatever is the result of this motion this debate will be presented to the Secretary of State. It does not matter what comments are made within the privacy of Government’s Chamber, but the paragraph contains this inconsistency: “In matters of this kind the most responsible section are notably silent, especially when the manner adopted to elicit public opinion is by public meeting.” Do I understand Government to charge the most responsible section of the community? By responsible section of the community, I take it, they

mean the planting and commercial section of this community, not only those who send representatives here but those who have additional interest. Government accused them of remaining silent and inarticulate. That is a challenge to this section of the community, which self-respecting men cannot leave unanswered and which can only be answered by saying “We shall no longer remain silent but shall join with the other responsible members of this community and rout the forces that have kept this Colony back all these years.” As regards those in the public gallery I did not know that any notice was taken of them. On this occasion Government took such notice that it counted the number of persons there so as to use it as an argument; but I am certain that any right-thinking person who reads that statement will agree that it is very poor argument. It is the argument of a man or a body who has a very weak case and who feels he is losing his hold and is prepared to hold on to anything to bolster it up.

I do not know what interest the Government section of this House has in this motion. To my mind this is a matter which affects the people of this Colony alone. I have seen Government Members voting against motions in which they were not peculiarly interested. I do not know what attitude will be adopted on this occasion, but this I know: it would not strengthen the position of Government Members if they use their votes in order to negative a motion expressive of the just aspirations of the people of this Colony. It is tantamount to saying “We who are here only temporary will thwart you in your endeavours.” It is merely the exhibition of a struggle to maintain power. I hope the criticisms I have made on this occasion will not be taken as against any of the men who operate the system but of the system only. I will not tread harshly on the corns of anyone. As I said before, I respect all individual Members of Government, but I have my self-respect still and the interest of the country at heart. I know there is no man so dead as he who has no interest in the shaping of the destiny of his country. I want this approach to be made to those in authority in England. We all would welcome a statement from Great Britain as to whether she intends to treat communities which are generally coloured different from communities which are

generally European in sentiment. Those in authority in England, those higher up, I know, will make no such distinction. There is a class, however, that attempts to base their system of Government on considerations of that kind. It will die hard but it will die nevertheless, and I am going to ask you, sir, to convey our representations made in this manner, representations made from our hearts, representations made because we believe that what we ask to be done is in the interest of the community.

I believe that if a change is effected and if the Government were entrusted to local people who have their children to live in this Colony long after they have departed, there will be greater motive for making this country the magnificent province which we all hope it will be. The fear to entrust power to those who are called irresponsible is an unfounded fear. I see before me a country which will flourish because those who are guiding its destinies are to be affected by its wails or all its woes. Its whole resources will be employed mainly in the upkeep of its sons. I am not saying its sons in any parochial sense but in the sense of all those of this country who have lived here for generations and are known as people of the soil. I am making no invidious distinction of colour or race. We resent the rule of those who are here temporarily. I leave the motion there. I have offered my contribution to it in the honest and sincere belief that I have performed my duty not merely as a representative of several thousand people, not merely as representing a large and important district in this community, but as one of the sons of the soil who has been born here and who will die here (Applause).

Mr. CANNON: I rise to give my support to the motion which has been so ably moved by the hon. Member for Berbice River, Mr. Eleazar, and supported by the hon. Member for Demerara River. I do so because I feel the time is overdue when the wishes of the people should be respected. It may be that I am looked upon as one of the irresponsible people in this Colony, and it may be that when I attend a public meeting I have the power to get people to do just what I want and so bring forth the difference of opinion which seems to have arisen. I

refer to the Memorial which was sent in to Your Excellency, and which has been submitted to the Colonial Office. I happened on my recent visit to England to have come into contact with several Members of Parliament and in speaking to them about conditions generally in this Colony the question of the Constitution cropped up. It was with very great surprise to certain of those Members of Parliament that further or more careful consideration had not been given to the Memorial from the people of British Guiana. It has been said in the document which was laid on the table this morning that it did not meet with the support of the majority of the Members of the Council. My hon. friend has, I think, covered the ground sufficiently on that point, and I need only add that the information supplied to the Secretary of State is not true. I desire to take this opportunity of asking Your Excellency to make a correction or to make it so explicit that there can be no misunderstanding as to what is meant by a unanimous vote of the Electives in the Council. It is true we were only six in number, of whom I happened to have been one, but we were certainly unanimous.

My respect for the Nominated Members has always been of the poorest possible character (Laughter). I respect the men individually, and some of them are very dear friends of mine and I hate to lose their friendship, but their usefulness in the Council passes all comprehension. I have supplied the full and correct details in connection with the matter of my friends on the other side who are in possession of them, but the questions I have tabled and the answers I have received merely confirm what I have given them privately. Your Excellency must be aware that the object of my questions was merely to put the official answer on record. I am not prepared to go into details at this stage but will confine my remarks to the motion, which asks that a certain number of Elected and Official Members be appointed to see in what way the Order-in-Council may be modified to give satisfaction. I am bound to stand by the people whom I represent, and although they may be irresponsible their views have been set out in the Memorial. With possible modifications the suggestions made in the Memorial if given effect to may improve what has been asked for in the motion.

I especially laid stress on the ability of the late Mr. Webber and forwarded a copy of the Hansard in which he so ably moved his motion on May 29. It will be observed that I do not quite agree with all that Mr. Webber said, but it is merely a matter of detail whether we will have another Commission coming to the Colony and making a similar mess of things or whether it will be better for us to put up our own case. Apart from that detail I am in absolute agreement with what Mr. Webber said. I have great pleasure in supporting the motion and hope that Government will rise to the occasion and accept it, thereby showing their willingness to co-operate with the people of the country.

Mr. FARRAR: I rise, as one of the Nominated Members for whom the hon. Member for Georgetown North has such contempt, to say that I yield to no Member of the Council in my desire to see the Colony progress (Hear, hear). I have listened to a very eloquent speech by the hon. Member for Demerara River and it is very clear that only self-government will satisfy the movers of the motion. I regret that I cannot agree that that is feasible for many years to come.

Mr. CRANE: The hon. Member has evidently misunderstood me. I have never attempted to speak on what is known as self-government. I have not even made out a case for responsible government. The case I made out was for controlled responsible government in which the Governor will have very wide reserve powers—a limited measure of responsible government entrusted to the people of the Colony.

Mr. FARRAR: I regret that I have misunderstood the hon. Member. I do not object to the aim of self-government. It is a legitimate aspiration, but I think that even a limited form of it, such as the hon. Member proposes, is outside the bounds of practical politics in this Colony for some years to come. I say so because the hon. Member has quoted Ceylon and Malta, places that are very much more thickly populated than this Colony is and where the responsible people who will hold the positions the hon. Member has visualised are considerably more numerous and more able to spare the time for the duties of those offices. Memories are

proverbially short in this Colony and it seems only yesterday that the new Constitution was welcomed (Cries of "Oh"). It was welcomed because it was felt that the old Constitution was a block on the wheels of progress, and the control over expenditure by the Colonial Office and the additional power to Government enabling them to govern were also welcomed. There were rumours, persistently repeated at the time, which gained credence, and it was generally believed that the condition of affairs reflected credit neither on the elective system nor on the Government. I do not think that any thinking member of the community would wish to see the return, or the possibility of a return, to such a state of affairs (Hear, hear).

A great deal has been made of the lack of action by Government since the change of the Constitution, but I think in fairness to Government it must be realised that the change synchronises with the very severe economic depression which has been felt all over the world. Other Governments in other parts of the world have been blamed also, and in more than one place where they have self-government the existing Government has been turned out and a new Government formed to see if they can do any better. Personally, I do not consider that there is anything particularly wrong with the new Constitution. I am inclined to think that the Government is rather poorly served. (Hear, hear). I think that has been exemplified during the present session. Although I am an acting Nominated Member I do not feel myself obligated to vote willy-nilly with the Government, and I feel certain that my brother Nominated Members are of the same opinion. I do realize, however, as perhaps other Nominated Members do, that matters brought before this Council receive very careful consideration by the Government before they are so brought, and they have therefore to be given very great weight before they are voted against.

I was born and educated in this Colony and in due course of time expect to end my days here. I claim to speak with equal authority to that of any other Member of the Council on what the people of this Colony want. We want a sympathetic, just and firm Government, and if there have been complaints with regard to



the present Administration, I think Government must look to the Officials whom they depute to carry out the details of the Administration and be very careful to see that they have the right men in the right places. It is a legitimate aspiration for us to aim at more responsible government and eventually at self-government, but the time is not yet (Voices: "Question"). I do not think the present Constitution has been given a sufficiently fair trial and therefore regret I do not see my way to support the motion.

Mr. SEERAM: I rise to support the motion that has been so ably moved and seconded. This motion warrants Members indulging in a little bit of plain talk, and if I go a little beyond bounds I hope that what I say will be taken in that spirit. As British subjects we are loyal to His Majesty the King and we are entitled to enjoy all the rights and privileges of British citizenship. It therefore behoves His Majesty the King and his Ministers to remove all the political, financial, educational and economic impediments in the way of progress in British Guiana. We claim that equal political rights is a just aspiration. We who have been under British guardianship for 100 years claim that we are sufficiently advanced to have some measure of control in the government of the country, and if perchance it is argued that we are not advanced sufficiently politically and otherwise to participate in the government of the country, then there can be no greater indictment of Britain's tutelage. Under the old Constitution of 1891 there was some little power in the Electives to prevent extravagance on the part of Government, but with the introduction of the new Constitution in 1928 that power has been taken away and the people's representatives are impotent. Even in cases where the Electives are unanimous they do not receive sympathy from Government. As far as I can remember there are at least twenty-five cases in which the Electives were unanimous under the present Constitution, and yet our wishes were not heeded. Government has been clothed with all the power necessary to govern and yet it has proved impotent in the sense that it has not initiated any scheme calculated to develop the Colony. Everyone who has given attention to the affairs of the Colony agrees that it is retrogressing instead of progressing. The

hon. Nominated Member has stated that the Constitution of 1891 was a clog on the wheels of progress, but I will say that the present Constitution is a greater clog. We are now being told that a change cannot be countenanced by the Imperial Government because British Guiana has been receiving large grants from them. That is a reason why the people should rise and oppose any further grants being given to the Colony, since they will provide a greater excuse for not giving the people the right to participate in the government of the country. If the people's representatives are given some form of control schemes will be formulated for the progress and development of the country and inevitably benefit the people. Even the Officials who come here to govern keep their eyes open all the time for promotion and larger salaries and eventually depart before they are of much benefit to the Colony. The present Constitution has been tried for four years and we now find ourselves in a graver financial position. It is unfair for Government to say that only a few persons were present in the gallery of the Council when the change was to be made, as Government knows that thousands of persons attended the meetings held in Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice when the movement was on foot. I think the unanimity of the Electives in the Council should be an indication to Government of unanimity in the views of the people throughout the Colony.

Does the Government desire to see thousands of people coming from all parts of the Colony to oppose the Constitution? If Government want to know whether there is dissatisfaction against the present Constitution I am prepared to bring thousands of East Indians from every part of the country to prove that they, representing 40 per cent. of the population, are dissatisfied. The present Constitution is repugnant to them because under it they cannot progress educationally or industrially. Unless some change is made I am afraid it will become very difficult for Government to govern. Scores of people regard the political affairs of the Colony as being in a rotten state and they would rather shake the dust of British Guiana off their feet than take any further interest in politics. On the other hand, there are scores who are willing to participate in the

affairs of Government, some of them having an intimate knowledge of the work of many Government Departments. One of our chief complaints against Government has always been the high cost of administration and Government has always allowed itself to be ill-advised in that respect. The time has come when there should be a change in the Constitution in the direction in which it is sought. I suggest that the motion be amended to permit of the Committee being composed of six Elected Members, two Officials and two Nominated Members. The object of the amendment is to enable the Committee to have the views of the Nominated Members who represent the planting and commercial interests. I think the motion is a reasonable one and hope every Nominated Member will support it.

Mr. GONSALVES : Only fifteen months ago a motion of this kind was debated in this House and it occupied as much time as this one. Government then found it impossible to accept the motion and we were told that the Constitution had not been given a fair chance. The question is whether we are any better off now than we were fifteen months ago. I hope this motion will not share the fate of the previous one, for it would seem that it would only be by bringing it up repeatedly that we can hope to achieve the goal we are aspiring to. The reasons for the motion have been so fully and eloquently put that I can add very little to them. The policy of having a fuller share in the administration of our own affairs is justified when Government on its own motion by the District Administration Scheme declared its intention to give local communities better means of handling their own affairs. If we look at it from that standpoint I suggest it is reasonable for us to claim a greater share in the handling of the affairs of the Colony. I do not think it can be said that the request for the appointment of a Committee is in the circumstances unreasonable. I think this Committee should be as representative as possible, and I support the

suggestion that Nominated Members should be included. We were told fifteen months ago that the Constitution had been giving satisfaction. Having been given a further chance, are we not in a better position to say whether it is giving satisfaction or not? We have heard one Nominated Member say he would not support the motion. That Member overlooks the fact that the motion is not for a change of the Constitution but for the appointment of a Committee to draw up the outline of a Constitution which may be considered suitable to the needs of the Colony. I hope he will reconsider the matter and support the motion and help us to obtain the results which he indicated as a native of the Colony who hopes to die here.

Dr. SINGH : Much has been said on this question and I have risen to support the motion. During my travels abroad I have had opportunities of visiting British Possessions all over the Empire and some of those Possessions are under Crown Colony rule. From my observations and making comparisons, I am thoroughly convinced that the people of this Colony had an enjoyable time under the old Constitution and were free from many of the susceptibilities that are so prevalent in Colonies under Crown Colony rule. I along with others tried to retain the old Constitution but eventually we had to bow to the inevitable. When the new Constitution was cast upon us the opponents to the change stood up as one man and agreed to support it. Four years have passed and there is not even a scintillating ray of hope in view. The question that arises is how long are we to wait. Guiana is waning and we must remedy her condition by resuscitating and rehabilitating her.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS : I also rise to support the motion which has been moved and seconded by Members representing two rivers.

The Council at this stage adjourned until the following day at 11 o'clock.