

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Wednesday, 4th September, 1940.*

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

## PRESENT.

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

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

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

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. M. B. Laing, O.B.E., Commissioner of Labour and Local Government.

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. I. De Aguiar (Central Demerara).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

## MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, the 3rd day of September, 1940, were amended by the deletion from page 4 thereof of the following:—

“C.—OTHER FEES.”

The figures “\$50” were substituted for the figures “\$20” opposite the words “for dealers’ general licence” in the sixteenth line thereof.

The minutes as amended were confirmed.

## ANGLO—AMERICAN AGREEMENT.

## AIR AND NAVAL BASES.

The President addressed the Council as follows:—

Hon. Members will have seen the announcement in the Press of the arrangements made between His Majesty’s Government in Great Britain and the Government of the United States for the lease of areas in the West Indian Colonies and British Guiana to the United States Government as air and naval bases, and the supply of destroyers to Great Britain. I can add little or nothing to the information published, but Hon. Members will no doubt wish to have this information confirmed from official sources, and I think it is right that a historic agreement of this kind should be placed on record in the proceedings of this Council. The substance of the Communications passed between the representative of His Majesty’s Government and the Government of the United States was as follows:—

Leases for the establishment immediately on the East Coast and Great Bay, Bermuda, and in parts of Newfoundland, of naval and air bases, with the necessary facilities for their operation and protection, will be granted to the United States Government freely and without consideration.

Besides this, as the United States wish also to establish such bases in British Guiana and the Caribbean, bases will be

made available in certain places in exchange for material and equipment, both military and naval, which will be transferred to the British Government by the United States.

The places are as follows :—

- British Guiana within 50 miles of the capital;
- The Gulf of Paria on the Western Coast of Trinidad;
- In Antigua;
- The Western Coast of St. Lucia;
- The Southern Coast of Jamaica; and
- On the eastern side of the Bahamas.

It is not the intention that any monetary or commercial value should be placed upon the many tangible and intangible rights and properties involved in connection with these bases.

The United States will be granted leases of the facilities mentioned for a period of 99 years without rent or charge, except that where owners of private property suffer loss by damage or expropriation they will be compensated. The necessary provision for the United States control of the bases, together with the necessary provision for access to and defence of them (*i.e.*, complete rights and powers and authority within the leased areas and the adjacent or neighbouring territorial waters and air spaces) will be granted to the United States for the period of the leases. Without prejudice to these rights and the United States Jurisdiction within the areas which are leased, the jurisdictions of the United States Authorities in the leased areas and of the Authorities of the territories within which such areas lie shall be adjusted and reconciled by Common Agreement.

The exact situation and boundaries of the bases, the location of garrisons, stores, crews and details of defence, will be matters for determination by Common Agreement, for the discussion of which His Majesty's Government will appoint representative experts. If in any particular situation the experts are unable to reach an agreement, the United States Secretary of State and His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will settle the matter.

I think hon. Members will agree that the conclusion of this Agreement between the Governments of the two great demo-

cracies for the defence of their common interests is an event of far-reaching and historic significance. The Agreement covers a measure of co-operation between two great nations for purposes of mutual defence such as perhaps has never before been known except as a purely temporary measure during the progress of a war. This Agreement, however, though concluded during war is of a permanent character and holds within itself the strongest possible guarantee for the future of the security of our common interests.

At the same time I may take the opportunity of recalling to hon. Members the assurances of His Majesty's Government that these agreements simply cover an ordinary contractual arrangement between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States. They involve no question of transfer of sovereignty and do not in any way affect the constitutional position of the Colonies concerned as units in the British Empire, or the rights of their inhabitants as British subjects.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY.

##### RE-ORGANIZATION OF P.W.D.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. G. D. Owen): I beg to move :—

THAT, this Council approves of the immediate adoption of the proposals in connection with the re-organization of the Public Works Department contained in Governor's Message No 25 of the 23rd of August, 1940, and undertakes to provide the necessary funds to give effect to them.

During the last fortnight this Council has heard several criticisms with regard to the working of the Public Works Department. I think, therefore, that Government may expect the support of unofficial Members of this motion because its object is to enable better control to be carried out within the Department. His Excellency the Governor appointed a small Committee of the Executive Council to investigate the working of the Department, and although the Committee's final report has not yet been received they have gone sufficiently far into the matter to be satisfied that some immediate change should be made. About four years ago it was decided that Mr. Case should be appointed Director of Public Works as a

temporary measure. If Members refer to the debate at the time they will see that it was to be tried out; that Mr. Case should be appointed Director of Public Works and be in charge of irrigation, drainage and sea defence works, and that No. 2 in the Department should assume the duties of Deputy Director and be responsible for all other works in connection with public works in the Colony. At that time there was no such office as Assistant or Deputy Director of Public Works. That office was abolished in 1932. Therefore, since 1936 there has been this rather difficult situation of the Head of the Department being responsible for certain portions of the work and the Deputy responsible for the remainder, quite apart from the fact that the staff has been considerably reduced during the last few years, as I will show from figures which I have here.

The proposal which has been put up by the Committee, and which Government has now submitted to the Council, is that the services of Mr. Case should be retained. The Colony is particularly lucky in having an irrigation and drainage engineer of Mr. Case's qualifications and experience, and it is proposed to retain his services as Consulting Engineer. He would be responsible for all drainage and irrigation works, harbour improvements and river defences, and the Director of Public Works would carry out the necessary works which are recommended by him, and also be responsible for all other public works such as buildings, roads and so forth. To enable this to be done it has been recommended that those officers chiefly responsible for carrying out work which has been allocated to them by Mr. Case should be transferred to a separate building together with Mr. Case who would move into that building also and take with him the officers set out in the Governor's Message, viz, 1 Executive Engineer, 1 Engineer-Surveyor, 4 Surveyors, 1 Hydrographic Surveyor, 1 Assistant Hydrographer, 1 Engineering Draughtsman, 1 Drawing Office Assistant, 1 Typist-clerk, and 1 Messenger. All those officers are available with two exceptions—the Engineering Draughtsman and the messenger. It is considered that an Engineering Draughtsman can be obtained at a salary of between £500 and £600 a year, and there will be no difficulty in obtaining a messenger. With regard to the Surveyors

it might from time to time be found necessary to employ an additional one, but four would be permanent. With regard to the staff which would remain with the new Director of Public Works to be appointed, the Committee has not yet finished its investigations, therefore, I do not this morning wish to refer to the staff which it is proposed to allocate to the new appointee. What is necessary is to get the Head of the Department appointed with the least possible delay.

I should like to show how the strength of the Public Works Department has decreased during the last 9 or 10 years. In 1930 the staff consisted, apart from the Head of the Department, of an Assistant Director, 2 Executive Engineers, 2 District Engineers, and one Assistant Engineer. All those officers had had five years' experience or more in public works. In 1932 the post of Assistant Director was abolished, and the Department was left with 2 Executive Engineers, 2 District and 1 Assistant Engineer. In 1934 there were still 2 Executive Engineers and 2 District Engineers, and in the place of one Assistant Engineer who had had over five years' experience and whose appointment was terminated, 2 Assistants were appointed who had not had three years' experience. In 1936 the 2 Executive Engineers were still there, but instead of 2 District Engineers there was only one. The 2 Assistant Engineers remained. In 1938 one of the 2 Assistant Engineers retired. The other one is still in the Department and has been performing the duties of Deputy Director of Public Works. One District Engineer and 2 Assistant Engineers remain, and one 1st class Overseer was appointed. In 1939 this was the position: Apart from the Executive Engineer performing the duties of Deputy Director there were 2 District Engineers with five years' service or more, and 3 Assistant Engineers, all with less than three years' experience in public works.

The expenditure on public works in 1930 was over \$794,000. The expenditure in 1939 was \$1,131,000. If hon. Members care to turn to the Estimates they will find that the total vote under personal emoluments is \$96,000, which means that 8½ per cent. of the expenditure on public works is spent on personnel, and I do

not think hon. Members will consider that a large percentage. You, sir, referred a few days ago to the capital invested in public buildings, roads, bridges, etc., and pointed out that the total amounted to something like \$20,000,000. I think I can add to that the fact that the Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of something like 450 miles of road exclusive of the cattle trail and other trails, covering a distance of 270 miles along the coast, and from 150 to 200 miles inland. I do not think I have anything more to add to what I have already said, but if there are any questions which hon. Members desire to ask I will endeavour to answer them.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The Colonial Secretary has invited questions but perhaps in the alternative hon. Members would like to say quite a lot on the motion. I have quite a lot to say but I do not propose to say all this morning. The position is that I do not think this motion should be considered at the present moment; I think it should be postponed. The present Director of Public Works can be characterized as a charming gentleman socially, a very good mixer, a very capable officer and a very good sportsman. We have had quite a lot of examples of those qualities in this Colony, but the suggestion in the Message is an indictment against the Department. The suggestion I refer to is that someone should be appointed as Director of Public Works at a salary of £1,200, and appointed from outside the Colony. Where is the Deputy Director, the Assistant Deputy and the Assistant Assistant Deputy? If there is urgency in appointing someone in the place of the present Director of Public Works so as to allow him to assume his new post, why not appoint one of the members of the present staff? If the present personnel of the Department is not adequate, why not appoint junior officers? Why start from the top? Why burden the already overburdened Department? There are no doubt questions which have to be decided. It is the system that is wrong, a system which needs immediate revision by the officers of the Department. There are rumours of overseers receiving small salaries doing work which officers drawing \$300 and \$400 per month are unable to do. Those are things which need eradicating

in the Department. It is true that an investigation is going on, but while the Committee is very competent to go into those matters one might find that some people are rather afraid to approach certain members of the Committee, perhaps because they are on the Executive Council. Why that is so one can never gather.

I do not think this is the time to appoint a Consulting Engineer to Government with regard to drainage, irrigation and sea defences, and also have a Director of Public Works. Perhaps some time later we may be told that the Colonial Treasurer who is the financial adviser to the Government, and who does not draw anything like £1,200 a year, requires a financial adviser. He may want to do the work of the Treasurer, as suggested by the Colonial Secretary, as done in another Island, sitting at the receipt of Customs, and would then ask Government to relieve him of the duties of financial adviser. Is it suggested that the Director of Public Works has more responsibility than that placed on the shoulders of the Colonial Treasurer as financial adviser to the Government? I appreciate his difficulty in endeavouring to balance the budget of the Colony. I can visualize the mental effort he will have to exert in trying to find revenue. There are other Heads of Departments drawing very small salaries, much less than £1,000 a year. They may be local men or not. Can Government not find somebody here to fill the post of Director of Public Works? Is there not a Deputy who can be appointed at a smaller salary? I do earnestly suggest to the Council that this is not the time to increase the overhead expenditure of the Department by appointing an officer from outside at such a high salary. We have to consider economy in all its phases. There is quite a lot more that can be said, but the annual estimates will probably be before the Council in a short time and we will have all these things brought up over again. I suggest that we should have one song and postpone the matter until the estimates are being discussed. I appeal to all Elected Members to support the suggestion that this proposal be either abandoned or postponed for the duration of the war.

Mr. JACOB: I welcome the proposals for the re-organization of the Public Works Department. I have criticized that

Department very severely during the last five years and I have no doubt in my mind that the Department needed reorganization some years ago. What I am concerned with particularly is not so much the re-organization but the work in the Department. Starting from the Head of the Department, the work should be efficiently and conscientiously carried out. I am not so much concerned about proposals or schemes. Any scheme properly carried out with the intention of benefiting the Colony ought to work. The details can always be worked out. I think it is well that the Public Works Department be separated from the agricultural, drainage and other schemes which are going to be brought forward, and I have no hesitation in stating that I think the present Director of Public Works is quite capable of carrying on that part of the work. As regards the proposals to appoint a Director of Public Works, the Message states that he should be

an officer of experience capable of effecting the re-organization of, and assuming full responsibility for, the administration of the department in all its functions; and that the Secretary of State should be requested to select and appoint such an officer at a salary of \$5,760 (£1,200) per annum, provided on the Civil List.

At the present time, and for some time past, the officer performing both duties receives £1,200. Now it is proposed to give the Director of Public Works alone £1,200. I think that salary is far too high, and while it may not be possible for us to get an experienced officer for less than £1,200 I suggest that if the new officer gives efficient and satisfactory service he may be given £1,200. I do not think he should be appointed at £1,200 right away. It is going to cause a certain amount of heart burning among other Heads of Departments who are better qualified in some respects and are not getting £1,200 a year. With the finances of the Colony as they are, this is not the time to appoint senior officers at such high salaries, officers whose ability has not been proved. The experience in the Public Works Department has been that officers have come here with first-class experience, but the majority of them have failed. I do not propose to refer to the names of those who have failed, but the greater number have failed. I suggest that the salary of the new officer should not be

more than £1,000. It may be raised to £1,100 or £1,200 after a year or two. We must have a responsible officer, and it is well that he should be appointed by the Secretary of State. We want that officer to be the Head of the Department.

During the past 4 or 5 years it was known that the present Director was under contract. It is known, too, that sea defences require special knowledge, and I understand that one of the officers of the Department went to Europe and studied sea defence problems in a broad way. I do not know whether that officer is directly engaged on sea defence problems here now. If so he may be able to replace Mr. Case. Mr. Case is getting old (laughter); I think he has passed the retiring age, and it is desirable that someone should be fully qualified to take his place. My point is that the officer who was sent to do that special duty should be doing sea defence work in conjunction with Mr. Case. If that system had been going on in the Public Works Department it would not have been possible at this stage to suggest that a qualified officer should be appointed. I think there is something wrong in the system. What has happened with regard to public works will probably happen with regard to sea defence and other works, and I think there should be a competent deputy with Mr. Case in the carrying out of the other duties that will be assigned to him. I think Government should take a long-range view of these matters and not leave them to crop up when we find ourselves in a corner.

The Public Works Department has been criticized very severely during the last few weeks. I do not want to add to that burden, but I cannot help referring to something that happened a few days ago. I had a conversation with the Director of Public Works this morning and I am glad to say he has taken the matter in hand at once. It is not the duty of any Member of this Council to be a private detective, listening to complaints and putting them forward. It should be the duty of the officers of the Department to see what wrong things are being done and to remedy them. I am sorry to say that it would appear that certain people prefer to have wrong things done so that more work would be created. I was asked to go

on the East Bank yesterday afternoon and I went there. I saw a trench being dug 8ft. wide by 1ft. deep, and the stuff was being thrown up in such a way that with the first rainfall the trench would be filled up again. I was told by the Director this morning that the person in charge of that work was a responsible officer with great experience. My only reply to that is that he is either not doing his work or is doing it wrong purposely. I have no hesitation in saying that what I have stated here will be confirmed by those responsible. It is painful to have to make such remarks, but they have to be made if the situation is to be remedied. I have given notice of a motion that a competent Select Committee be appointed to supervise continuously the work of the Public Works Department, and the more I think about it the more I feel that that would be a step in the right direction. It might not remedy the whole situation, but if the officers of the Department realize that people will come at any time and see that they perform their duties properly I think that would make them do their work properly. There is a feeling throughout the Colony that Government has a lot of money to spend.

It has been recommended by the Royal Commission in paragraph 28 (b) of their recommendations:—

That consideration should be given to the adoption of a Committee System on an advisory basis to give elected representatives an insight into the practical details of government;

Apart from remedying the wrongs that are being done now and the wasteful expenditure that is being carried on it would give Members of this Council an opportunity to make constructive suggestions and help in a constructive way to make the Colony a better place for us all. I urge with all the vigour I can command that that system be adopted in spite of the fact that all the recommendations of the Royal Commission are not to be put into force immediately. Some, I think, are being put into force. Now that the Public Works Department has come in for such criticisms and is to be reorganized I think it is time that that be done in conjunction with the re-organization.

There is another matter to which I want to refer. When works are carried out in

the villages, such as the work at Craig village to which I have referred, they are handed over to the District Administration, but I regret to say there is not close collaboration between the Public Works Department, the District Administration and the village councils, with the result that works that may appear to be in the interest of village administration are not carried out in a way that would be acceptable to the village communities. Unless schemes are laid before the village councils and the District Administration and gone into I do not think they should be put into operation. What I mean is that those people who have to pay or to benefit by such schemes should be consulted in every detail, not necessarily to instruct or advise Government, although I do not see why their advice should not be taken, but may be that is going a step too far at the moment. I urge that the people concerned should be consulted before any scheme is put into effect, and even if it means a certain amount of delay, let them be thoroughly satisfied that the scheme is being undertaken for their benefit. I do not think it can be disputed that the people are hardly ever consulted, and at times they go the other way; they decide that they would get as much as they can out of the work. I suggest that in every case when works are being undertaken by the Public Works Department the local authorities should be consulted in the first instance as to the practicability and usefulness of the works to be done before they are undertaken, and the co-operation of the people should be solicited in every possible way.

There is a good deal of indignation in some places. Perhaps it is known to Government. I do not want to emphasize it, but in certain places people who ought to co-operate deliberately do not. That is not a satisfactory state of affairs. The Pure Water Scheme is under the Public Works Department. A pipe was damaged with all its connections and it has not been possible to place the responsibility on any particular individual. I endeavoured to investigate the matter and wrote the District Commissioner on August 12. I pointed out to him that while there was a system that certain people must pay for any damage that may be done it was unfair to saddle the whole community with the wrongs of one or two persons

when responsibility for the damage could not be placed. While the damage was small, amounting to only \$3, a large section of the community was made to suffer. There was a cock missing from a pure water supply pipe on the East Bank where people had to travel miles to get water. The District Commissioner promised to have it looked after but up to this moment it has not been replaced. I saw that myself yesterday afternoon. Is the village council so poor that it cannot afford \$3 to repair a pipe which has been out of commission for over six months? It is a small matter, but those are the things which make the people in the villages feel that they are not getting the facilities they should get. I do urge that there should be better supervision of all public works.

I have taken a good deal of trouble and gone out of my way to investigate two or three things, and when I tried to emphasize my point here I was accused of wanting some monetary reward. Perhaps I will be accused again by responsible officers of this Government, or to be precise, by a responsible officer of Government, and told that the interest I am taking in public works now may be for some reward. Some Members of this Council take absolutely no interest in these things, but perhaps that is what is required in some quarters. When other Members take some interest they are accused of having some ulterior motive. I keep Government informed by letters of what I am doing, and if I can establish my points in three or four instances I do not care what certain responsible officers of Government say. I shall continue to do my duty as I see it, and continue to bring to the notice of Government irregularities, incompetence and inefficiency of certain officers of Government, particularly certain Heads of Departments. If the Heads of Departments would show an example I think the subordinates would do their work in a better way. I want to urge that the Public Works Department be carefully watched and properly supervised, otherwise we are going to continue to get very little benefit from the expenditure this Council is asked to vote year after year. I welcome the proposals for the re-organization of the Department, and I wish to emphasize that if it is carefully scrutinized, at least for a few years, it might revert to what it was 10 or 15 years ago.

Mr. DE. AGUIAR: I wish I could start off by congratulating Government on the proposals before the Council this morning, but I regret that I shall have to begin in a tone of criticism even if I wind up my remarks by paying tribute to the attempt which is being made to re-organize this Department. The criticisms which have been levelled at the activities of the Department over a number of years are so well known that they can hardly stand repetition, but quite recently, and within the last four or five years, it can be truthfully said that the criticisms have been more severe and have been more pronounced year after year, especially when this Council was invited to consider the estimates of expenditure of the Department. I will begin by taking the minds of hon. Members back to what happened in 1936 when an attempt was made, as a result of the position in which the Colony was placed at the time, to amalgamate public works and sea defences. I have a copy of Hansard before me, and with your permission, sir, I shall read what was stated by the Colonial Secretary, now Sir. John Waddington, Governor of Barbados, when he invited the Council to consider certain proposals. The Colonial Secretary then said:—

Sir, in order that hon. Members may see clearly the alterations that are proposed the estimates of the Public Works Department, as now proposed, have been reprinted and circulated. Members will find from those reprinted estimates that it is proposed to appoint Mr. Case as Director of Public Works and Sea Defences, and that in addition to the amount provided in the Civil List £300 a year should be paid to him as a personal allowance, making the total £1,500. It is also proposed to pay to the Executive Engineer, who is Mr. Allen, an amount of £150 a year duty allowance while carrying out special duties, those special duties being duties at headquarters to assist the Director in the control of public works generally as apart from sea defences.

Hon. Members will have observed that I raised my voice in emphasis of the last few words. The proposal was to remove the officer who was then Executive Engineer, bring him to headquarters and appoint him to act as Deputy Director. His duties were then defined, and for those special services he was to receive an extra remuneration of £150 per annum. At the time the Council welcomed that proposal. The Council felt that our sea defences were in bad order and needed the services of a capable officer such as Mr. Case. The

Council also felt that as Mr. Case would be required to perform special duties in connection with sea defences it was wholly desirable that there should be an officer of some experience at headquarters to look after public works generally. What is the position to-day? To-day we are faced with the frank admission by Government, to use the words contained in Your Excellency's Message, "that the present arrangement under which Mr. Case is Director of Public Works and Sea Defences with personal responsibility for matters affecting sea defences, drainage and irrigation, but only nominal responsibility for all the other matters within the purview of the Department, has not proved satisfactory in practice." It is not surprising that during the three years that have passed Members have criticized the Department in nearly all of its activities. Now Government is trying to make another attempt to re-organize the Department.

Before I pass on to deal with that I would like to admit what Your Excellency stated a few days ago, that it is true that a very small percentage of the capital cost of Government buildings and so on is spent annually on maintenance, but it is also true that the little money we spend is being wasted. That is the criticism that has been levelled at this Department all these years, and yet it seems impossible for Government to arrive at a solution that would remedy that state of affairs. My own view of the matter is that a separation of the Department in the manner proposed will not solve the problem. More drastic steps must be taken, and it is the duty of the Council to indicate to Government the steps they think should be taken. We do not at this moment want a glorified Director of Public Works or a Deputy Director in order to carry on the services that are required of this Department with a gentleman like Mr. Case there as Consulting Engineer. What we want is somebody who would be able to control and properly administer the works after the various schemes have been propounded by our Consulting Engineer. We cannot afford at this time to spend £1,200 per annum for a Director of Public Works, and I shall have to rise two or three times to oppose the proposal, at least on that score, or I shall beseech Government not to make the appointment but to try some other remedy. We cannot afford £1,200 to create another

post. What we want is the appointment of more watchmen, to use a commonplace term, in order to protect the few paltry dollars we can afford to spend on public works. There is only one way to do that. Government is too busy, with other matters especially at the present time. The officers of the Colonial Secretariat are too busy to act as watchmen, and it seems to me that there is only one course remaining open, and that is that this Department should be put under the control of a Board. Let the members of the Board be the watchmen of the money to be spent by the Department. I warn Government that until such a step is taken criticisms will always be levelled at this Department for the wilful waste of public funds.

There has never been a time in this Council when this Department has presented an estimate and application has not been made soon after for an increase of that estimate. I have never known of an instance where an estimate has been more than the amount actually spent. Instead of that "Mr. Contingencies" has appeared on all the estimates submitted by the Department. One might admit for the sake of argument that the Department was starved of officers of technical ability. I refer to the time when, on the ground of economy, the number of engineers was reduced, the time when Government called engineers by all sorts of names. At one time they were called Executive Engineers, at another time for the sake of economy they were called District Engineers, and I believe they are now called Assistant Engineers. It might well be argued that perhaps the Department was starved of officers of technical skill, but whose fault is that? Is it the fault of the Head of the Department who advised Government? One is tempted to ask whether all those things were not done purposely. I am afraid that when the Committee makes its final report on the re-organization of the Department Government might find itself in the position of having to provide large sums of money on the annual estimate in order to carry out the functions of the two Departments.

I will pause at this stage to mention that I am opposed to the proposal to separate the two Departments, that is to say, to create a Sea Defence Department and a Public Works Department. I am



opposed to it on these grounds: that our sea defences are on the coastlands where the Public Works Department has its staff of overseers, engineers and other personnel, and I am desperately afraid that by the creation of a separate department to deal with sea defences the time will come when there will be overlapping of work. We will probably find the staff of the Sea Defence Department at one time twiddling their thumbs and the staff of the Public Works Department half starved. I think the present arrangement whereby the Head of the Sea Defence Department is also the Head of the Public Works Department, is undoubtedly the best arrangement that can be made. While it may be true that the present Director of Sea Defences is not prepared to assume executive work in the office I think it should be possible to find within the various Departments of Government an officer who would be able to perform the duties of the executive side of the Department. I agree with the Director that in attending to minute jackets, letters, and the administrative side of the Department is a waste of time for an officer of his ability. If that is so we want him to be relieved of that, but to relieve him by appointing another officer at £1,200 a year is nothing short of a further waste of public funds.

I regret that it has become necessary for me to make these observations. I had hoped in 1936, when the proposal was put forward, that the scheme would work. I was always under the impression that it would work, although I had on many occasions to criticize certain activities of the Department, but it seems to me now, as a result of the investigation which is being made, that it did not work at all. A commercial man would say that somebody has slept on his job. I do not know who it is. I was not favoured with an appointment on the Committee, but it seems quite clear to me that somebody slept on his job. Whether that person was the Colonial Secretary himself or the Head of the Department or his immediate assistant, I am perfectly satisfied, reading between the lines of Your Excellency's Message, that somebody has slept on his job, with the result that there has been this wholesale condemnation of the Department.

This is not the remedy. I consider it

would be a retrograde step for Government to set about the creation of another department for the reasons I have stated. In order to have my grounds placed on record I shall refer at this stage to the point made in Your Excellency's Message with regard to the initial cost of these proposals. It seems to me that it is going to reach four times the figure of £1,880 per annum, because it includes £1,200 for the Director, presumably £500 for the Engineering Draughtsman, and perhaps £180 as the Director's travelling allowance. Government proposes to remove from the Department an Executive Engineer, and I suppose we will have to appoint one in his place, otherwise technical skill would be removed from the Department. I know I am going to be told that the Executive Engineer is engaged on sea defences. I see the Chairman of the Board smiling, but I think it can be said that in addition to sea defence work that officer performs other duties.

THE PRESIDENT: A good deal of what the hon. Member is saying appears to be based on a misunderstanding. It is not proposed to separate the two Departments.

MR. DE AGUIAR: A part of the proposal is that Mr. Case should occupy a separate office and be given a special staff. I know that some of those officers are peculiarly adopted to sea defence work. Unless Government's methods are changed we know that when a half-baked scheme is presented to the Council it is likely to reach four or five times its size before it is finished. We have had several instances of that which I can recall. I have only to refer to the District Administration scheme in which we have created yet another Department. I am afraid that that is what is going to happen in this case, and we will have a certain amount of overlapping. I think it is just as well that the proposal to appoint a Director of Public Works should be deferred. We cannot afford to spend this money at this stage. I think we ought to wait until the Committee has completed its investigations of the entire Department instead of attempting at this stage to reorganize it, unless it is a frank admission on the part of Government that something is so wrong that immediate action is necessary. If that is the admission then I say that the appointment of a new Director will not remedy the situation, because much time

will elapse before that appointment is made. If it is an admission that something is wrong then it seems to me that more drastic action ought to be taken instead of merely going around the issue by making a new appointment of a Director of Public Works.

What will happen to the Deputy Director of Public Works whose office is still there? We have heard nothing about that. Will the Colony be saddled with a Deputy Director of Public Works whose salary is £800 plus £100 duty allowance? Is it proposed to abandon that post if this new appointment is made? Government proposes to tighten up this Department by the appointment of an officer on a higher scale. I think Government ought to look a little further down. If the desire is to tighten up Government should appoint the watchmen I have referred to. No Director of Public Works, no executive officer of Government can put his finger on the troubles of this Department by sitting in his office in Georgetown. He may be able to spot one or two but it needs a competent man where works are being carried on to supervise those works and see that the money is being properly spent and in accordance with the estimates prepared. When that is done all that will be needed is a Chief Clerk of Works instead of a Director of Public Works. I was surprised to hear that Mr. Case feels he cannot carry on as he has been doing. Mr. Case himself must be dissatisfied with the manner in which the work is being carried on at present. That is how I interpret it. Mr. Case is dissatisfied and feels he cannot continue the responsibility. I can place no other interpretation on it.

I have said all I wanted to say at the present time. I am asking Government seriously to consider the question of mulcting this Colony in the expenditure of £1,200 per annum in the appointment of a new Director of Public Works. I agree that the investigation into the activities of the Department should be completed, and if it is discovered that the only remedy is to appoint a new Director at this salary I will then vote for the appointment. Until the Committee has finally reported I regret I shall be unable to support Government's proposal.

Mr LEE: I have very little to say in

this matter because the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) has indicated to Government the argument I proposed to submit—that Government should await the final report of the Committee before deciding on this appointment. As far as I can see the Public Works Department is in capable hands with Mr. Case at its head. Hon. Members know that he cannot assume responsibility for every branch of the Department, and are satisfied with his work in connection with sea defences and irrigation and drainage. There must be other officers who are responsible for the carrying out of the other works of the Department, and if those officers are not capable of doing their work Government should change them. Why change the Head of the Department when the Council is satisfied with the work done by him? When the final report of the Committee is available, and it is shown that certain officers of the Department are not doing their duty then Government will do the necessary, but to burden the Colony with an expenditure of £1,880 per annum at the present time is not a step in the right direction. It must be left for the Committee to find that certain officers of the Department are deliberately doing certain things in order to create work and over-expenditure, but this I can say: that certain officers are so lazy that they ask Government to give out certain works to contract in order that they would not have to supervise those works. That is not the right spirit. Those officers should cooperate with the Director and see that works are carried out within the limits of the estimates. If that is done there will be no criticism of the Department. I shall oppose the motion.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) took us back to 1936 when the change was made. I think he should have gone back a little further when we had Mr. Case as Consulting Engineer for the sea defences of the Colony. When Major Craig retired it was thought that a saving would be made if Mr. Case's services could be secured as Director of Public Works and Sea Defences. I think that under that arrangement it was stated that Mr. Case, although designated Director of Public Works and Sea Defences, would be also Consulting Engineer, and that his services would be all the time at the disposal of the Colony.

If hon. Members took the emoluments Mr. Case received as Consulting Engineer together with his travelling expenses and passage to and from the Colony, they would find that he is almost receiving the same emoluments now as Director of Public Works and Sea Defences as he received as Consulting Engineer for Sea Defences. Therefore I think the Colony has benefited by having him as a whole-time officer for practically the same emoluments. I wish hon. Members to bear in mind that for the past two years Government has planned expensive schemes of drainage and irrigation which will require a whole-time officer. I must admit that many Members of this Council have not yet seen any of the estimates for those schemes, but I can assure them that the estimates for one or two of those schemes which I have seen run into millions of dollars. I think Mr. Case should be retained by the Colony to carry on those duties, especially as regards irrigation and drainage.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is no question of the gentleman named leaving the Colony or leaving the Government service.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I take it that he is not leaving the Government service, but there is a candid admission in His Excellency's Message that Mr. Case feels that he has neither the time nor the necessary experience to undertake the responsibility for the normal functions of the Department. Therefore, reading between the lines of the Message, I conclude that if this motion is not carried we may lose Mr. Case's services. I happen to know that he is on a 2-year contract, and his contract may expire at any time during the year. If his contract expires before the annual session, what would be the position if, as the honest officer I know him to be, he refused to renew his contract with the responsibility which he says he has not the time nor the experience to shoulder?

From the arguments I heard this morning I think the most serious opposition to this motion is on account of the salary fixed for the proposed appointment of a new Director of Public Works. I do not know if it would meet hon. Members if Government would consider it advisable to

amend the motion to provide a salary of £1,000 rising by increments to £1,200. I think that ought to appeal to hon. Members in view of the fact that we have been clamouring for improvement in the Department for several years, and the cost to the Colony would not be more than it was prior to 1936. I think hon. Members are genuinely earnest in their appeal for progress in irrigation and drainage, and they should not by their action to-day retard that progress. I therefore appeal to them to withdraw their opposition and support the motion with the amendment I have suggested.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I have been here over an hour and a half and I have not heard the slightest argument which would induce me to change my intention to support the motion. I think it has been clearly set out in Your Excellency's Message what the position is. Paragraph 2 of the Message states:—

2. The Committee reports that Mr. Case feels that he has neither the time nor the necessary experience to undertake the responsibility for the normal functions of the Department with respect to roads, buildings, etc., and for its routine administration. It considers, however, that it is essential that Mr. Case's most valuable services should be retained, but that he should be placed in a position which would enable him to devote the whole of his time to problems connected with sea defences, drainage, irrigation, and harbour, and river improvements—more so in view of the prospect of considerable expenditure in this direction in the near future.

I have repeatedly had occasion to interview Mr. Case and I have seen him discussing matters over a file rather disgusted at having to be approached in connection with those matters. He never hesitated to tell us that he had one duty and that was to represent the matter to Government and get its views on the subject. He was always very candid and straightforward. We do not have now what happened in former days in the Public Works Department, such as sluices erected upside down and \$60,000 spent on the Essequibo Coast to no advantage whatever to the estates or the public. Mr. Case has done his duty to the Colony conscientiously, and the Committee have submitted to the Council what he has told them plainly. I think the motion should be supported as it will certainly tend to bring the work of the Public Works Department more closely before the eyes of the public. I do

not blame Mr. Case for the existing state of affairs. We see dilapidated buildings all over the country and no attempt made to apply a stitch in time, with the result that they have to be reconstructed at considerable expense. It is not the fault of the Director of Public Works; it is Government's fault. Mr. Case feels that he is not capable of doing certain duties allotted to him, and he has told Government so very plainly. We have wasted an hour and a half this morning with nothing to show why this motion should not be adopted. I am very much in favour of the proposal and I will support it.

Mr. SEAFORD: The motion before the Council is primarily due, I know, to the recommendation of the Committee appointed to go into the question of the Public Works Department. That Committee went very carefully into the supervision of the Department as far as we could up to a certain point, and we had Mr. Case's view which is stated in the Message. In making the recommendation we have made I wish it to be clearly understood that the Committee do not in any way suggest that Mr. Case is not fitted for his post as Director of Public Works. Mr. Case told us very clearly that he had not the time nor the experience to carry out those duties, but we felt that what was of more value to the Colony was his knowledge of sea defence, drainage and irrigation. A man with the knowledge of the Colony which Mr. Case has, and with a knowledge of drainage, irrigation and sea defence work combined, is one whom this Colony will find very difficult to get anywhere in the world. We had to be very careful that whatever we did we must do our utmost to retain Mr. Case's services to the Colony which we considered invaluable. At the same time we felt it was unfair to ask him to carry on as he is doing now—to sit in this Council as Director of Public Works and answer questions and take an interest in things he had not time to go into or study. I do not say that Mr. Case cannot handle all himself; in fact I know he could if he had the time.

Hon. Members will appreciate the fact that for many years, much longer than I have been a Member of this Council, there has been practically no work done as regards development. By that I mean

survey work. Schemes have been put up and proved failures because there had been no surveys. The last survey of the rivers was made by Baron Siccama, and since then it has been purely guess work, with the result that there has been excess expenditure, under estimating and everything else. When we look ahead and consider the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and when we have been told that the necessary funds will be provided by the Imperial Government, we have to plan for development projects and we realize what lies ahead of us. It is up to this Colony, and up to the gentleman who will be appointed as Director of Public Works, to carry out those plans and schemes. There is going to be a larger amount of work thrown on this Department. Surveys will have to be made throughout the Colony. Some have been done already. There has been a survey on the West Coast of Demerara, and of the line between the Mahaica and the Berbice rivers. There is also a survey going on on the East Demerara. These surveys take a lot of time and care, and it is quite impossible for anyone who is going to undertake that work to spend any time on ordinary routine work. It is onerous work which is going to take a lot of careful study, and if we are to avoid the mistakes of the past I feel, and the Committee felt it was necessary to have a Department which would not only prepare the schemes but see that they were eventually carried out according to the recommendations.

We must not think only of irrigation and drainage. There is also the question of roads to the interior, river surveys, and even land settlement surveys to be made. Those things take time, and I do not think it is possible to find a Director of Public Works in the Colony who would be able to find the time or have the necessary qualification to carry out all that work. I think I have had closer dealings with the Public Works Department than any other Member. I have been a member of various Boards and I have had something to do with the Public Works Department two days in every week. We have heard criticisms and strictures on the Department, and we have been told that it needs watchmen, but there is one thing the Department is suffering from and that is understaffing. There is the Deputy Director in Georgetown who has to go into the

interior occasionally, and there is no other officer to take his place. His work is therefore at a standstill. There is a District Engineer on the West Coast whose duties take him from Wismar on the Demerara River along the West Coast to Leguan, Wakenaam and Bartica. Besides that he has to spend many days in paying. How can that officer carry out his duties efficiently? How can he give proper supervision? I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the cause of all the criticisms that have taken place has been lack of staff. There is at this moment no draughtsman in the Public Works Department, because the only one is away on leave. There is an assistant draughtsman but no recognized draughtsman, and I pity a Director of Public Works having to carry on under such conditions.

I was rather surprised to hear the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) say that this was not the time to embark on this re-organization. I would say that Government is rather late in starting it. One thing the hon. Member must realize is that we have been offered grants from the Imperial Government for development work. We would look rather silly if we were asked what plans we had to put up and we had nothing to put forward. Surely it is our duty to start immediately and prepare plans, and the first thing to do is to make surveys. Those surveys cannot be made in a day. They take time to do, and it is for that reason that the Committee, looking ahead at the large works that lie ahead of us, considered it essential that this Department should start on this work immediately. The sooner the better.

The hon. Member also referred to the increase in overhead expenditure and suggested that this was the time to economize. One or two other Members suggested the same thing. I would like to say that those who have gone into the question have found that the matter of economy in the Public Works Department has been overdone. What we are suffering from is economy—false economy. It is no good taking a man from an office and putting him as a watchman on an engineering problem. It requires an engineer. Hon. Members must identify themselves a little more closely with the Public Works Department. Some

hon. Members are on the Sea Defence Board, but how often do they attend the meetings?

I think it was suggested by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) that £1,200 a year is far too much to give a Director of Public Works. If we want a Director of Public Works to carry out what we desire we have to pay him. Do hon. Members think we are going to get an engineer with the qualifications we need to come here at any figure? We want a good man, and he is going to have a lot of work to carry out. Whoever is appointed, he must, in my opinion, and in the opinion of the Committee, be a man of ability, and we are not going to get a man with ability to come out here for a pittance. It was also suggested that a professional man should come out here and be paid by results. I cannot imagine any professional man accepting a post under such conditions. If he did I would rather not have him in the Service at all. It was also suggested that the Executive Engineer should be the gentleman who went to Holland to study sea defence. The gentleman referred to went to Holland with Mr. Case and myself, and I think he was there for about two or three weeks. One cannot learn much about sea defences in two or three weeks. We feel that the Executive Engineer who has worked under Mr. Case for some time and has a knowledge of sea defence engineering would be of far more value to the Colony than any other engineer we could recommend, and I think that is also Mr. Case's view of the matter.

The hon. Member for North-Western District said it was the duty of the officers of the Department to see that things were done properly. I entirely agree with him, but unless they have the time to carry out their duties they will be unable to do so. If a District Engineer has to be away from his district for a week or more it is impossible for him to know what is going on during his absence. It is again a case of under-staffing. The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) referred to the Deputy Director of Public Works and the conditions of his appointment. He also referred to the appointment of the present Director. What he said is perfectly correct. It was an attempt to amalgamate sea defence and

other works with public works, and it is now felt that it has not been a success. Surely it is much better for Government to come out in the open and admit that it has not been a success than to try to hide the matter and carry on as in the past. The hon. Member for Central Demerara said that separation of the Departments would not solve the difficulties, and suggested that an engineer to work along with Mr. Case was all that was needed. The point is that Mr. Case will not be there. He will be Consulting Engineer, preparing plans and schemes, therefore we will require a very capable engineer to carry out the work of the Public Works Department.

As regards the suggestion of the control of the Public Works Department by a Board I would be sorry for that Board and equally sorry for the Director of Public Works. We have a Drainage Board and a Sea Defence Board on which there are technical men, but those are individual issues. I cannot, however, imagine any Board which could efficiently control a Public Works Department with all its multifarious duties, supervising estimates and expenditure. I cannot see how a body of laymen can sit down and criticize estimates prepared by a Public Works Department.

The question of overlapping was also raised. There is going to be no overlapping whatever. The new Department will be under a Consulting Engineer who will have his own staff of draughtsmen and surveyors, because drawings and surveys will have to be done. When schemes have been prepared they will be handed over to the Public Works Department which will carry out the work. Hon. Members may say that there is overlapping to-day because the Sea Defence Engineer prepares schemes to be carried out by the Public Works Department. The same thing also applies to the artesian wells, but there is no overlapping whatever. In considering the matter the Committee unanimously felt that the correct thing, as is done in other parts of the world, was to have an entirely separate department for drainage and irrigation, a department with a complete staff which should have no connection with public works. We felt that although that was the ideal arrangement this Colony was quite unable to

afford it, therefore we suggested this means of overcoming the difficulty which we thought was the nearest approach to entirely separating the two Departments.

There was one point in the remarks of the hon. Member for Central Demerara which was not clear. In his criticisms about what Government had failed to do he said that certain things appeared to have been done on purpose. What could be Government's purpose in doing those things? The hon. Member also referred to the Executive Engineer. He is quite right in saying that the Executive Engineer does that work now. He is also right in saying that he does a lot of other work. He is doing work on the drainage scheme, and he is actually going to do exactly the same work in future that is done at present. The misfortune is that the District Engineers have not the time to see that the work is carried out efficiently.

It was also suggested that Government should wait until the Committee has completed its investigations before putting the motion before the Council. I can assure hon. Members that it is going to be a very long time before the Committee will be able to submit its final report to Government. Investigation into a Department like the Public Works Department is a big affair. It is impossible for us to sit very often, and we feel that it would be a great pity and Government would be losing a very good opportunity if it delayed in bringing forward what we consider, and I hope Government considers, to be essential to the Colony at the present time. We want development here and we have asked for it. Let us have a Department which can get out proposals for that development and be able to put schemes before this Government and the Imperial Government so as to make this country a jewel in the crown of the Empire.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I would like to take some part in this debate because my personal experience extends over a very long period. My first recollection goes back 46 years ago. I assisted in framing many a resolution for Members of the old Combined Court, and I can recall quite well during the whole of that period having heard the Public Works Department adversely criticized. Although the

hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) has said that if we want a Director of Public Works we must be prepared to pay him, and that we must also be prepared to pay a salary of £1,200 for a man of ability, I must be allowed to say, with very great respect for Government, that we have not yet succeeded in finding a man who either deserves that pay or possesses the requisite ability. I say so, of course, with some restraint in the sense that if they did earn the emoluments of their office and continued to display their ability, the practical results of those efforts have never been of benefit to the community. With one exception, no holder of that office has escaped criticism, and the one exception was the Director who, after a very short period, went to Jamaica. I suppose I may call his name. He was Mr. Park. But every other holder of that office, whether it was due to himself or to his officers, has let this Colony down in some form or another. Whether he had too much work to do, or whatever the contributing factors were, the fact remains that we have never had value from any officer who has filled that office, yet every officer has defended his Department. I have known them all from the time of Baron Siccama, and let me tell the Council something about that officer. He constructed the Sea Wall proper and I recall quite well Mr. Quintin Hogg giving evidence before a Royal Commission in London in and about the year 1895. I was not present. He was the owner of Bel Air and made frequent visits to this Colony. Mr. Quintin Hogg emphasized the importance of constructing permanent sea defences, and he told the Commission that he would not be prepared to dissipate his private fortune, which he had earned by producing tea in Ceylon, on facine work at Bel Air. You will find that recorded in the report of the proceedings of the Royal Commission. It was the aim of Baron Siccama to extend that wall, or at any rate to establish a permanent sea defence, but for some reason or another (I think cement was then \$2.50 per barrel) Government did not allow that expenditure. I mention that as an instance where the only Director of Public Works who was worth his salt was prevented by Government from carrying out work of an important nature.

When the hon. Member says that this

Colony cannot afford to have two separate Departments he will allow me to dispute that statement. This Colony can afford and could always have afforded but neglected the opportunity to establish them. Many times I have sat here and heard the hon. Member suggest the creation of separate Departments. A gentleman named Mr. Varey came here as an irrigation expert. We were told that Mr. Varey had made surveys, but where are they? Nobody knows where they are or what advantage the Colony has had from them. It is because of experiences like that that this Department was never created, but do not let us make any more mistakes. Mr. Case will perhaps recall my very bitter criticisms when sea defences were given out to contractors of which he was one. It was not a criticism of Mr. Case himself but of the system of which I hope there will be no repetition. In my judgment Mr. Case knows this Colony as well as any inhabitant. I personally have known him for many years. He has had a very long and extensive acquaintance with this Colony. He is an enthusiast and ought not to be allowed to leave the Colony. He is a tremendous worker, and I believe that if he were given assistance and the separate Department which is proposed, and is not interfered with by the Director of Public Works in any engineering suggestions he may make, this arrangement should prove a success. I gather that whatever the Consulting Engineer plans, if his recommendations are accepted by Government they are not to be overridden by the Director of Public Works, but the fact remains that the works will have to be carried out by the Public Works Department.

At this stage the Council adjourned for the luncheon recess until 2 p.m.

2 p.m.—

Mr. WOOLFORD: I claim the indulgence of the Council if I speak at some length on this subject. During the intermission my hon. friend, the Member for Georgetown North, asked me whether I did not consider a certain Mr. A. G. Bell, who was in the Public Service of this Colony, a fully qualified officer.—

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of order! May I ask that the hon. Member speak louder if he desires the Council to hear him.

Mr. WOOLFORD: On a previous occasion I had to remind an hon. Member that he was enjoying an indulgence which, perhaps, he found very useful. I, however, do not say that of the hon. Member (laughter). During the intermission the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) asked me if I did not consider Mr. Bell, who was in the Public Works Department here, a valuable officer. I am willing to concede that he was. He was first appointed to a junior position as draughtsman—I speak purely from memory—at a salary of £300 a year, and gained his experience in this Colony. He became a very successful acting Head of that Department and eventually joined the Trinidad Service. I am, however, not reconciled to take any more risks in consenting to the appointment of anyone at any salary whatever to a post in this Colony at this moment. When I say that almost every Director of Public Works that I can recall has been adversely criticised, I say it with regret but with some support for it. I am not referring to their qualification as Civil Engineers. We knew they possessed the qualification and that in every other respect they were willing and ready to be good public servants, but for some reason or other they were adversely criticised during the régime of everyone of them.

Hon. Members referred to the absence of surveys. I refer to the absence of plans as well as surveys. There was hardly an instance of any public works performed in this Colony where the estimate was not very largely exceeded. Let me give you three or four instances. We had a Director of Public Works who told this Council once that if the Seba Quarry could be operated by the Public Works Department he would supply the Municipality of Georgetown or Government with stone in Georgetown at \$1.92 or \$2.00 per ton. He induced this Council to persuade Government to acquiesce in the proposal. Everybody believed him as they do believe every other Director of Public Works. The estimated cost of establishing the quarry was £32,250 and the actual cost was an excess of 31 per cent over the estimate. Another instance was that of the Fort Groyne estimated to cost £21,250 but erected at an actual cost of £28,500—an excess over the estimate of 34 per cent. Nobody knew where the plans were when we tried to get some in-

formation as to why the Groyne had failed or tumbled down. There might have been some reason to be seen in the plans but they could not be found. That is the way in which every Head of that Department has failed to perform his duty to the public. There can be no doubt about it. The hon. Mr. Austin knows that as members of the Harbour Board we sat down and agreed to two groynes being erected in the Berbice River to stop the silting up of the river there. We were told that these groynes could be completed for something like £5,000.

Mr. AUSTIN: Defectors!

Mr. WOOLFORD: They were both to be erected for \$22,000 or \$24,000, but the cost was £5,200—an excess on the estimate—and then only a part of one groyne had been built when that amount had been spent. The Director of Public Works never told Government anything about it, and Government did not know how it came about. If this appointment is to be advertised by the Colonial Office, I would suggest that an essential feature of the advertisement should be that applicants be warned that every other predecessor has failed to give satisfaction to this community and one of the things required of an applicant is that instead of spending most of his time in the City he should, as he is required to do, spend a certain portion of his time in travelling and supervising the works under his command. Every Director of Public Works, if you look up the history of the Department, spends on an average 200 of the 300 working days in the City. I do not agree to the appointment of a Director of Public Works merely because he possesses an engineering qualification. I would suggest that in your despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies attention be called to the experience of this Colony with regard to the holders of this appointment. I speak feelingly in this matter. I opposed Mr. Case's appointment to the post. Perhaps I was the only one who did it. I did it because I have heard Mr. Case say many years ago that although his firm had the contract for the Sea Defences Works he was not more qualified to deal with expenditure. He was a qualified man as an engineer, but when it came to the supervision of expenditure work that was an experience that very few



engineers had. You want, for some reason or other, not this appointment which seems to attract applicants all over the world for the reason that they know that when they are appointed here they will be criticised and are going to be promoted elsewhere, but men of administrative capacity. For some reason men are found willing to take this appointment. They never remained at their post very long, but were always translated elsewhere at a higher salary, though their work in this Colony did not deserve promotion. I say so unhesitatingly that this has been the Colony's experience in the past.

I am opposed to the conditions surrounding this appointment at the present moment. I regard it as transcending in importance that of a Director of Public Works for the moment. If Mr. Case is more or less useless in the Department as he is not able to devote much time to the administration of the Department for which he feels himself not qualified, this Colony would not suffer by a further postponement. This Department is a self-contained Department as in most places. I think, sir, with your experience—

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid it does not.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think it is very important that whatever recommendations are made by this Department they should not be hampered by the failure of the Public Works of this Colony to execute works within the estimates estimates and to do them properly. If you can find a man who can be told plainly what to expect in this Colony and what has been the experience of past administrators, I personally would not object to doubling his salary. You must be guided by experience. A gentleman was appointed by the Colonial Office to a position here as Irrigation Engineer; he had some experience in Ceylon, but on his own he admitted his faults. One of the reasons given was that he could not take levels in this Colony. The point was that he had to admit that he had no experience of low-lying country. I knew as a boy that water finds its own level and does not run up a hill. That is the only two formulæ the engineer's experience and knowledge respect. Irrigation engineers are those who prevent the happenings which happen.

During this time Mr. Case in the ordinary course of things cannot sit down for years waiting for this work to be done. He is probably the only man we have ever known who is capable of being a success in the control of this Department. What are you going to do? Are you going to foist on him and his executive officers someone who is incapable of carrying out his plans? I have known a Director of Public Works who always wore gloves and attended meetings in this room with gloves on.

THE PRESIDENT: Would you like to see him take his gloves off?

Mr. WOOLFORD: I have known one of them to take his gloves off. I have seen a fight between a Director of Public Works and a Member of the Legislature just behind where the hon. Colonial Treasurer is sitting. I desire to tell you that I am willing to extend to this Department whatever support is necessary in the way of funds. There is no excuse to say "We cannot afford to make this Department what it should be." That is the wrong way of looking at it, because as I can see if the coastlands had been properly drained, if they had been effectively drained and we had something approaching proper irrigation we would not have been in the position we are in. What is the use of aiming at producing more and we are going to starve this Department? We can be satisfied with some of our roads as they are, although we are bound to suffer a little bit. Suspend spending much money on things of that kind, if we can devote some of it towards organizing this Department. I am willing to say this, if you can by some means or other impress on the Home Government that we do not want a man in this Colony who is a neophyte in the Service you will be rendering this Colony a great Service. He may do for Barbados, Trinidad, and other places like that where they have no problem of irrigation or drainage to speak of. This Colony requires years of personal investigation by any engineer before he can be a success. That was why I was rather surprised that the hon. Member for Georgetown North should suggest that we advertise for a man to fill the position for £1,200.

Mr. SEAFORD: I never suggested any advertising at all.

Mr. WOOLFORD: The Message says the Secretary of State be invited to appoint a man. That will probably take the form of appointing by advertisement.

THE PRESIDENT: It is not usual to do so by advertising.

Mr. WOOLFORD: It was done on the last occasion. I am opposed to the appointment being made permanent, but I am quite willing to accede to the suggestion that a man be brought out here on contract. As a rule these appointments on contract are recognised, as in the case of Mr. J. C. Craig when it was done. In fact for some years past this appointment was not made permanent in the first instance. I certainly understand that the Colonial Office will advertise for such an appointment where it is under contract. Whether it is advertised or invited in the usual way as we know it is done, I do hope that you would emphasise that the appointee is likely to be a failure unless he measures up to certain things. This Colony requires a fairly young man who is prepared to supervise the work the Engineers are called upon to do and must be able to do it himself if the necessity arose. It is not a consultative post. The holder of this post should be a very busy man. I do hope that the Secretary of State for the Colonies would not make such a mistake as to appoint a man with ordinary administrative ability, although he enjoys the qualification of a Civil Engineer.

Mr. AUSTIN: When I was appointed to sit on the Committee, I considered it my duty to accept the appointment and I tried to approach the matter from a business point of view. All the members of the Committee desired as far as possible to forget the past and endeavoured to think of the future of the people of the Colony and the possibilities of this Colony as indicated by Your Excellency's Message. Mistakes have been made in the past and will continue to be made, but they are mistakes which are not made on purpose. It is no good reiterating the fact that the losses are occurring year in and year out and cannot be corrected. We felt that in putting this proposition before you, sir, we were endeavouring to arrive at a solution which might be helpful, and I am inclined to think it will be so. We have got quite a lot of work to be under-

taken in this Colony within a couple of years, and it is only fair to the Department concerned, which has been so severely criticised, that it should be provided with a staff of experienced and technical men to carry out this particular work in an economical and proper way. I venture to ask hon. Members to look at the matter from a futuristic point of view. I think, sir, that we have the people of this Colony to consider, and I would ask that we do really look to the future beyond the present condition of the whole world, and consider whether this Colony cannot at this particular moment endeavour to help itself and the people in it.

Mr. CASE (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences): I would like to say a few words on this matter. Personally I am in complete agreement with this motion. As stated in the Message, I felt that I had neither the time nor the experience to undertake the responsibility for the normal functions of the Department, such as roads, buildings, etc., and the routine administration of the Department. I first came to this Colony twenty-four years ago. I feel that my services to the Colony can be best utilized by spending my whole time in helping to see that the Sea Defences are economically carried out and gradually improved and in getting out schemes for the improvement of the irrigation and drainage of this Colony. I think this Colony can be made much more productive, but drainage and irrigation works are very essential. If one is to make sure that these works are designed economically and carried out well, I think it is desirable that I should spend my whole time on them.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) dealt with nearly every point which has been raised, but the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) asked one question which has not been replied to. He asked what staff the new Director of Public Works will be provided with. I thought I had stated in my opening remarks that Government has not yet taken a decision relative to the staff of that branch of the Department. Several hon. Members have referred to the need for more supervision. That is fully realized by Government, and only the other day a new post was created, that of

Paymaster of the Department. Hon. Members were told at the time that the appointment would relieve executive officers of a great deal of routine work in connection with paying. Something like ten days a month or more are spent in paying. That work has been taken over by a clerk, and executive officers will be able to supervise more efficiently the work in their districts. As the Message has pointed out the new Director of Public Works will assume full responsibility for the administration of the Department in all its branches. If the Director of Public Works is to do that, he will have to travel about the country. It is not imagined for one moment by Government that this new Director will spend most of his working days in Georgetown. The whole object of his appointment is that he will go about the country and see that the work is efficiently carried out, which is not the case at present, as has been already mentioned by the hon Member for Georgetown North. Undoubtedly it will be ideal if we can just have one Department with an officer in charge, who is not only an expert on irrigation and drainage but also a civil engineer and is capable and has the time to carry out all other works, such as buildings, roads, and everything else. It was found impossible to do that in the past. The present experiment has been tried for four years and Government has decided to revert to what has been done before and to have a Consulting Engineer and another officer responsible for the administration of the work, who will have to carry out the schemes put up by the Consulting Engineer and approved by Government.

THE PRESIDENT: There is very little I can add to the points that have been raised in the debate. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) has made it seem almost impossible to secure such a person as a Director of Public Works for British Guiana. I think he is rather maligning the Colony when he suggests that the difficulties are so great that it is humanly impossible to succeed at all. Like myself, he has never known any Public Works Department in any Colony which is not criticized, and I do not for a moment hope that will be achieved by the appointment of a Director. It is perfectly clear that the present organisation is not working satisfactorily.

There have been one or two unsatisfactory experiences and that fact has led to the enquiry, which has disclosed that the staff is inadequate and that proper supervision and organization are impossible under present conditions. Although the programme of public works, apart from Sea Defences, is not perhaps very large involving something around \$1,000,000, it is worth while to see that that million dollars is economically and properly spent. There is no worse form of economy than cutting down on the supervision of work. It is not economy at all. Whether you pay £1,200 or £1,000 to a Director of Public Works does not matter, all depends on the kind of man you get.

I am quite prepared to adopt the suggestion of the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) that the rate of salary should be £1,000 to £1,200, provided I am assured by the Secretary of State for the Colonies that he can get a man with adequate qualifications and ability on these terms, and I will undertake to make an inquiry on this point. I emphasize "ability" rather than "qualifications" for that man. But the Secretary of State has already been consulted about this, and he has intimated that he will be able to get one for £1,200, but even at that figure it will necessarily be a young man with not very long service. It is therefore not very easy to get a man with the qualifications required, if insistence is also made that quality rather than qualifications is required. I do not know there is any other way of building up an organization of this kind than by putting the best man you can get in charge of it and supporting him as best as you can. It is a fallacy to suppose that the Colonial Secretary, or the Governor, or anybody else—a Board for that matter—can administer the Public Works Department satisfactorily. I have no objection in principle to the suggestion of the appointment of a Board of Public Works. I have had some experience with Boards of Public Works. I believe that in the neighbouring Island of Barbados Boards were tried for a long period and finally abandoned as unsatisfactory. I myself sat as Chairman of a Board of Public Works for a period of five years and I would not say the arrangement was entirely unsatisfactory, but I once asked the officer corresponding to the Director of Public Works in that Colony if he did not find

that the Board interfered a great deal with efficiency and with his getting on with the work and as a matter of fact hampered his activities by delays. He said: "No, sir; on the contrary I have always liked to have a Board. A Board is an excellent thing to hide behind." I have no objection in principle to the appointment of a Board. But if it is appointed it should be as part of the general system which is proposed by the Royal Commission: but I am not prepared to adopt that system piecemeal.

I may point out that this is really an urgent matter. You will have shortly a programme of works for next year which is not likely to be less than the programme for this year. It may probably be more, but is certainly not likely to be less. It is a considerable programme and we do not want to repeat this costly experience. We want to make the best use of this money. I think it is very important that the officer who is going to be in charge of this work should be got here as quickly as possible, so that he may have time to look around and see what is required to carry out the programme for next year. I quite admit the force of a great many of the criticisms which have been made, but the conditions here, I think, are unusually difficult, that is to say the physical conditions; frankly I know no other way of dealing with these conditions than by getting the best man you can get and putting him in charge of the Department. Make him responsible and get his assistance in the reorganization of the Department. One of the points on which we agreed is that there has been something lacking in the supervision. I would be quite prepared to meet the views put forward in respect of that. This proposal is the result of very careful enquiry by responsible men, and we must make our choice—either accept this recommendation or not. I therefore put the motion.

MR. DE AGUIAR: Before you put the motion, sir, I crave your indulgence to enquire whether it is proposed in the first instance to make this appointment on contract or permanent.

THE PRESIDENT: You mean on agreement?

MR. DE AGUIAR: Yes

THE PRESIDENT: The proposal is

that it should be made in the ordinary way, but I have no objection to making enquiries as to whether it is possible to get a satisfactory appointment made on agreement.

MR. DE AGUIAR: If it is found impractical to make the appointment under agreement, I take it, the appointment will be made in any case.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely, if the motion is carried.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I was tempted at first to ask for a slight postponement in taking the division on this motion in view of the depleted ranks of the Electives.

THE PRESIDENT: That is most extraordinary. Here is a matter of first-class interest apparently to be decided, and I am being asked to postpone the vote on it because a number of hon. Members have not chosen to be here. Really I am quite unable to accept that as a reason for postponing the vote.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I am not bringing forward that as a reason, but this is one of those unfortunate circumstances which come up now and again. I happen to be aware that for pressing reasons certain hon. Members are not in their seats and they would have opposed the motion had they been here.

THE PRESIDENT: I am very sorry, I am quite unable to accept that.

MR. JACOB: I was just going to draw attention to the fact that in the Message it is stated that the officer to be appointed will be placed on the Civil List.

THE PRESIDENT: I am quite prepared to vary that and to undertake to make that enquiry. If the appointment cannot be made on your terms then it will be placed on the Civil List.

Motion put, and the Council divided, the voting being—

*For*—Messrs. Jackson, Jacob, Peer Bacchus, Percy C. Wight, Wood, Crease, Case, Laing, MacLennan, D'Andrade, Austin, Seaford, McDavid, Woolford, Dias, the Attorney General, and the Colonial Secretary—17.

*Against*—Messrs. C. V. Wight and De Aguiar—2.

**MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC BILL, 1940.**

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the following Bill—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the licensing, regulation and use of motor vehicles, the regulation of traffic on roads and otherwise with respect to roads and vehicles thereon."

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Pretheroe): I have three minor amendments to propose, and the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) has an amendment to clause 2.

Clause 2—Interpretation—recommitted.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: With regard to the definition of "hired car" and "motor bus" in clause 2, I move the following amendments for the reasons given when I was discussing clause 61:—

(a) that the words "or at separate fares" and "not more than seven" in the definition of "hired car" be deleted, and

(b) the words "not less than eight" in the definition of "motor bus" be deleted.

The object is that a person will be unable to use a "hired car" as a bus and so defeat the object of the Bill. By the proposed deletion the whole object of the Bill will be met.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I quite agree with the deletion of the words "or at separate fares." Those words were only introduced because they are in the existing Ordinance. As regards the second and third amendments their adoption will make the definition almost foolish. The definition refers to the hire of the whole vehicle and was adopted after months of consideration by all interested parties. I am not aware of the reasons which influenced them to come to that decision. I oppose the second and third amendments and support the first.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: If the hon. Attorney-General is satisfied that the retention of the words "not more than seven passengers" in the definition would not defeat the object of the Bill, I withdraw the second and third amendments and leave the first.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are leaving

in the words "not more than seven passengers"! The substance of the definition is that the contract is for the use of the vehicle as a whole. The number of passengers is secondary to the essence of the contract.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Clause 17—Rebate of licence fee paid.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Sub-clause (1) is already amended. As I had stated the intention is that anybody who pays the annual licence and surrenders it before the end of the first quarter shall get back three-quarters of the fee; before the first of July—one-half of the fee; and before the first of October—one-quarter of the fee. As I have pointed out it is very doubtful if the clause as amended will give effect to that intention. For that reason I beg to move that sub-clause (1) be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

(1) The holder of a licence for a motor vehicle for which the full annual fee has been paid may at any time before the first day of April or July or October surrender the licence to a licensing officer and, subject to the payment of a fee of one dollar, seventy-five cents or fifty cents respectively, shall be entitled to be repaid by or on the authority of the Licensing Authority by way of rebate of the fee paid for the licence seventy-five, fifty or twenty-five per centum thereof respectively.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is an amendment to give effect to what is the agreed intention.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 22—Using unlicensed motor vehicle an offence.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that clause 22 be recommitted.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause recommitted.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This clause was left without being put to the vote. I have discussed the matter with a number of hon. Members of this Council and parties outside this Council and as a result I have come to the conclusion that I will adopt the motion by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) who suggested that sub-clauses (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7) be deleted. The

Bill itself will give more power to control unlicensed vehicles than the existing Statute, but it is not certain that will give sufficient power. What is proposed is to delete this clause, increase the penalty somewhat, and give it a fear trial for twelve months to see what will be the effect. If at the end of 1941 the figures are as bad as this year's and last year's, it will be necessary to come to this Council again and say what the result of the amendment is and ask for further powers. I beg to move that sub-clause (1) be amended by substituting the words "one hundred" for the word "fifty" in the fifth line, deleting the full stop and adding the following words thereto "and in the case of a second or subsequent conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty dollars." I further move that sub-clauses (3), (4), (5), (6) and (7) be deleted.

Amendments put, and agreed.

Clause 91—Repeal Third Schedule.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that clause 91 be recommitted.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause recommitted.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There is a printed error at the end of proviso (2). I move that a semi-colon be substituted for the full stop at the end thereof. Proviso (3) says: "Nothing in this section shall affect any driver's certificate or a certificate of fitness issued under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1932, but such certificates shall not continue in force beyond the time when they would have expired if this Ordinance had not been enacted..." That is a slip. In the existing Ordinance the driver's certificate goes on forever unless revoked. I therefore move that all the words after the words "shall not continue in force" be deleted and the following words be substituted therefor: "after the twenty-first day of January, nineteen hundred and forty-one."

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: May I ask when this Bill is going to be enacted?

THE CHAIRMAN: It comes into force on the first of January, 1941.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The

date suggested is the 20th of December, 1940.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 92—Commencement.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I propose that a new clause be added. In the ordinary course of events this Bill comes into operation, as worded now, as soon as enacted. I have some doubt whether quarterly licences can be put in force after the first of October in this year. It is therefore proposed to take back the date of the Ordinance coming into operation to the 20th December of this year. The reason for that is that under the Bill before the Council now, one is required to have the new licence before the first of January, next year. It gives a few days for those who desire to take their licences out before the first of January to do so. For these reasons I beg to move that a new clause numbered 92 be inserted in the Bill to read:

92—This Ordinance shall come into operation on the twentieth day of December, nineteen hundred and forty.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: May I ask in what year the revenue is to be entered? Is it to be in 1940 or 1941?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not a financial officer in any shape or form. I had asked that question myself and was told that whatever revenue comes in will be taken and dealt with suitably.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): If the hon. Member desires to know, it will be taken in the revenue of the year in which it is received.

Mr. JACOB: Is it the intention that all who usually pay their licences any time between January and February must be prepared to take out their 1941 licences between the 20th and 31st of December of this year? Equally you are allowed up to the end of February and sometimes up to March to do so, and those persons who are paying as much as \$750 and find it extremely difficult at times to get that amount between January and March will not be able to collect that amount to pay for their licences in December.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is for that reason quarterly licences are to be issued. If they cannot take out their licences in December, then I say they are running a bus beyond their means.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed.

With the consent of the Council the Attorney-General moved that the Standing Rules and Orders be suspended to enable the Bill to be read a third time and passed.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the licensing, regulation and use of motor vehicles, the regulation of traffic on roads and otherwise with respect to roads and vehicles thereon" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. McDAVID seconded.

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

Bill read the third time.

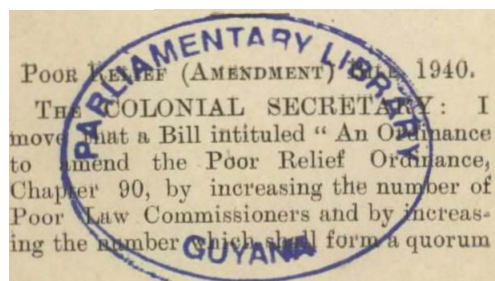
#### STOCKDALE PENSION BILL, 1940.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make special provision for the payment of a pension to Sir Frank Arthur Stockdale in respect of his service in the Colony" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

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

Bill read the third time.



#### POOR RELIEF (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1940.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Poor Relief Ordinance, Chapter 90, by increasing the number of Poor Law Commissioners and by increasing the number which shall form a quorum

at any meeting of the said Commissioners" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

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

Bill read the third time.

#### TAX (AMENDMENT) (No. 2) BILL, 1940.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Before moving the third reading of the Tax (Amendment) Bill it is necessary to take one further action. The Council has just passed the Motor Vehicles Road Traffic Bill to come into operation on the 20th December of this year. It is absolutely essential that there should be no overlapping between that Bill and this one, and therefore it is necessary to introduce in this Bill a clause making it effective as from the same date as the other one. I therefore ask that this Bill be re-committed in Committee to have a similar clause inserted.

With the consent of the Council the Bill was re-committed in Committee.

Council in Committee.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move that a new clause 6 be inserted to read as follows: "This Ordinance shall come into operation on the twentieth day of December, nineteen hundred and forty."

Question put, and agreed to.

Council resumed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Tax Ordinance, 1939, by deleting therefrom all provisions relating to licence fees in respect of motor vehicles and trailers" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. McDAVID seconded.

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

Bill read the third time.

THE PRESIDENT: That concludes the business before the Council for the time being. I desire to thank hon. Members for their attendance, and the Council will stand adjourned *sine die*.

Council adjourned *sine die*.