

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 5th December, 1928.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR GORDON GUGGISBERG, K.C.M.G., D.S.O., President, in the Chair.

ABSENT:—

Hon. R. V. Evan Wong, B.Sc., (Elected Unofficial Senior Member for South-East Essequibo).

Hon. E. G. Woolford, K.C., (Elected Unofficial Senior Member for New Amsterdam).

Hon. A. R. F. Webber, (Elected Unofficial Junior Member for Berbice).

Hon. J. Gonsalves, (Elected Unofficial Member for Georgetown).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the 4th December, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

The PRESIDENT: The following telegram has been received from the Secretary of State:—

Bulletin issued this afternoon (Tuesday) as follows:—

His Majesty the King passed a quiet morning. Though the temperature is now 100.2, the slight improvement in general condition noted in the last bulletin is maintained.

PAPERS LAID.

Reports by the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board on the examinations of Forms V. and IVa., Queen's College, and on the examination for Higher Certificates,—(*Major Gray, Director of Education.*)

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Mr. DIAS: I beg to move the first reading of "A Bill to amend the British Guiana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company's Ordinance, 1923."

Mr. AUSTIN: I beg to second it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Notice given that at the next meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be proceeded with,—(*Mr. Dias*).

MOTIONS.

REPORT ON PETITIONS.

The Council resumed consideration of the motion of Major Gray (Director of Education) with reference to the Governor's Message No. 7 of 1928 adopting the report of the Committee of the Combined Court appointed to consider petitions.

Item 36.—Beryl B. Houston, for a compassionate allowance or pension in respect of two illegitimate children of the late Corporal Mitchell.

Mr. CRANE: The note to this petition indicates that as a member of the Committee I was not entirely at one with the majority of the Committee on this question and I desire to bring my opinion to the arbitrament of this Council. The petitioner is the mother of two illegitimate children of Corporal W. A. Mitchell, who was killed whilst in the execution of his duty as a member of the Police Force. While he was alive he maintained these two children, as he was morally and legally bound to do. I notice that a motion has been tabled for the award to the widow of this non-commissioned officer of the sum of \$5 per month as a compassionate allowance. It was proved beyond any dispute that Corporal Mitchell and his wife were not living together long before and up to the time of his death,

If these children were bound to be supported under the law it seems that any compassionate allowance given ought to make provision for meeting the obligation which, had he been alive, he would have met himself. These children, whose ages are 5 and 3, respectively, ought to be given something, and I suggest that they be given an allowance of \$5 per month between them until the elder attains the age of 14. The majority feared that it might be giving countenance to illegitimacy, but, unless we are introducing some moral code, their only means of support being removed I think they should be given \$5 per month.

Major GRAY (Director of Education): This question was very carefully considered by the Committee. It is obviously a matter in which a great deal might be said on either side. The point of view of the majority was whether Government should, through the machinery of the Petitions Committee, assume this liability in respect of illegitimate children, and had we embarked on the policy of supporting children of that kind the number of children to be supported would be considerably increased.

Colonel BRADBURN (Inspector General of Police): This is a case in which I think special consideration ought to be given. The father of these two unfortunate children was brutally and foully murdered on the night of 26th November, 1927, his body being found next morning riddled with shots. Whilst stationed on the Corentyne Coast he had put down the serious crime of cattle-stealing, and there can be no doubt that some of the cattle-thieves were implicated in the foul murder. Corporal Mitchell was a credit to the Police Force, and I should like to make a personal appeal to each individual member of the Council to make a compassionate allowance to the children. One point has been forgotten, and that is that the mother of the unfortunate children is also now deceased and they are entirely destitute.

Mr. ELEAZAR: This incident occurred in Berbice and it is peculiarly within the knowledge of some of us. I think the Council should know that if Mitchell was alive he would be the last person to have the widow benefit at all. If anybody is to be left out it is certainly Mrs. Mitchell, who, from what I know, only considered herself Mitchell's wife because there was no legal dissolution of the marriage, and he considered himself her husband for the same reason.

The PRESIDENT: I am very much moved by the appeals both by the hon. the Inspector General of Police and by the unofficial members. It is a very sad case, but I cannot see how Government could possibly sanction the giving of grants to these children. It is altogether against principle, and I believe principles are very strong things to hon. members who have spoken. I daresay we shall be able to do something to try and get people interested in the education and bringing-up of children to lend some assistance in this case, but I do not see how I can accept on behalf of Government a responsibility of this nature. I will make it a personal matter to bring this case to the notice of any Society or person who would be able to assist them.

The PRESIDENT: My attention has been drawn by the hon. Attorney General to the last paragraph of the report, which must be dealt with separately.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That any relief by way of monthly payments, granted on petitions received on or before the 31st December, 1927, should be made payable as from the 1st January, 1928, and that similar relief on petitions received on or after the 1st January, 1928, should be payable as from the date of the adoption of this report by this Council." (*Major Gray*).

Question put, and agreed to.

AWARD OF FELLOWSHIPS.

Major GRAY: I beg, sir, to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 8 of 1928, this Council approves of this Colony taking part in the scheme which has been established by the Director of the Commonwealth Fund for the award of Fellowships of British Graduate Students for study at American Universities.

As hon. members are aware, for some time this Colony and other Colonies have been from time to time affording opportunities to Public Officers, chiefly Medical Officers, to undergo a post-graduate course at a University in the United Kingdom and occasionally elsewhere. The importance of such study has been recognised by the Colonial Office, and with the assistance of a philanthropic fund, called the Commonwealth Fund, it is proposed each year to award Fellowships to Public Officers in the various Colonies. The conditions are very stringent and the number of Fellowships very small, so it is not likely that from any particular Colony any large number of Public Officers will be allowed to go to the Universities. In this instance hon. members will see that we are doing something which is of advantage to the individual and to the Colony, because in the medical and scientific services there is no doubt that a refresher course is very necessary and desirable in the case of an officer who is cut off from research and advanced technical work in his own branch.

There is very little financial liability involved to the Colony by this scheme. The only liability contemplated is that should an officer from this Colony be selected whose salary is more than \$150 per month, which is the allowance by the Commonwealth Fund for living expenses, this Colony will be expected to bear the difference. In any year the number of Fellowships will probably never exceed one, and in view of the importance of the scheme to the Public Service and to Medical, Forestry and Agricultural Officers—in fact any officer whose work requires refreshing and furbishing up—I recommend that it should be adopted and that the Colony should, wherever possible, take advantage of the Fund.

Mr. DIAS: I second this motion,

Mr. ELEAZAR: I beg to oppose this proposition. I do not see why we should be called upon in these days when finances mean so much to the public to contribute to anyone taking a post-graduate course. I have known of at least one case of a doctor who went on his own. In these strenuous times Government should not be asked to provide means for any person to qualify himself for his own benefit. No officer is bound to serve British Guiana alone and I cannot conceive why Government is continually being asked to provide means for this purpose. It is a luxury in which we might indulge if we were financially strong, but for the benefit we are going to get, which is very remote indeed, I do not think we ought to be asked at all and more particularly at this time to incur a liability of this sort.

Motion put, and agreed to, Mr. Eleazar dissenting.

COLONIAL AGRICULTURAL SERVICE.

Major GRAY: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 9 of 1928, this Council approves of the Government co-operating in a scheme which the Secretary of State for the Colonies proposes to introduce for the organisation of a unified Colonial Agricultural Service, and agrees to the proposed percentage cess on the revenues of the Colony for financing the organisation, and that the sum of £160, which is the Colony's proportion of the sum required for the establishment and maintenance of the Headquarters Council during its initial stages be placed on the Estimates for 1929.

This is a matter of very great importance to the future of the Colony, especially with regard to its agricultural development. For some years past there has been considerable difficulty throughout the Empire in finding skilled agriculturists who would enter the Colonial Service in one or other of the Colonies. This applied particularly to people of scientific training who were capable of filling research positions. From that point of view efforts were made to organise and recruit such a Service and it is proposed that a special Agricultural Research Service should be organised for

the whole Empire. These proposals were carried a certain length when it was discovered that it would meet only one part of the difficulty. The great problem was to provide agricultural workers of all classes and not merely people who were capable of carrying on research work in one of the research institutions. Various Committees sat at the Colonial Office and from them was developed a scheme which, if carried out in its entirety, will solve the problem in this and other Colonies.

The scheme is one for the organisation of a unified Colonial Agricultural Service for the Colonies which will include not only specialised workers but administrative and general agricultural workers. It can easily be seen that in various Colonies the work of the general agricultural or administrative workers is of greater importance than the work of the specialist may be at the immediate moment, but the work of the specialist is going to benefit everyone all round. The problem of financing such a scheme was obviously an important one. The proposal is that a fixed percentage of the revenue of each Colony which takes part in the scheme should be paid into a common pool. That is fixed at a very low percentage— $\frac{1}{400}$ th part of the revenue of the Colony for the time being—and I think members of this Council will recognise that this is a very small fraction of the revenue of any Colony which depends so much as this one upon agriculture for its revenues of every description.

The sum involved is about \$12,000 a year to this Colony, and we stand to benefit to the extent of about \$20,000 per annum. We will have an opportunity of recruiting officers of the highest standing in respect of previous training, and we will be in the stream of agricultural development in respect of the services of these officers, while we stand to benefit very considerably from the general results of agricultural research. The benefit is from the fact that throughout the Empire there will be a continuous and well thought out policy, and, secondly, that

we shall benefit by the class of officer who will be available for our Service. Apart from the contribution of the Colonies a contribution from the Empire Market Board will be made, which will give the Colonies an opportunity to get rather more benefit than they put in. It is necessary that the central organisation should be set up, which requires an immediate contribution from the Colony of £160, and when the organisation is set up the scheme will be worked out in greater details than at present.

Mr. AUSTIN : I second the motion.

Mr. CRANE : I intended not to oppose this proposal because anything which has for its object the furtherance of study, whether in agriculture or in any other department, will have my whole-hearted support; but I confess that the effort made by the Director of Education to convince hon. members that they ought to support this proposal is the very reason which cause me to rise. I was alarmed to hear that although our initial expenditure would be something in the nature of £160 it would eventually represent $\frac{1}{400}$ th part of our revenue. Your Excellency has a very difficult task—I am not going to be so rude to say how great it is—in repairing the finances of this Colony, and a contribution of \$12,000 would be a very difficult matter for a Colony that is struggling to rehabilitate itself financially.

We are told that we will get about \$20,000 worth of service for this contribution, but that is a mere statement. What is going to become of the officers who hold the field at the present moment? Are we going to get rid of them and instal these new officers? It is only the question of money that brought me to my legs. At present we are contributing £1,000 per annum to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad, and we would be paying that sum for the technical and the \$12,000 for the agricultural side of the scheme. I fail to see that the Colony can afford to pay a fixed proportion of its revenue to this scheme

when we are fighting to restore its finances.

The PRESIDENT: I think I can make some remarks that will banish the hon. member's alarm. I was more or less concerned with the conference that brought about this arrangement and I can point out some rather wholesale misunderstandings that seem to have been used as the basis for the hon. member's remarks. I won't talk about the value of agriculture; we all recognise that the whole future of this country depends on agriculture. But there are three points I want to make. First of all, the expenditure of this so-called 1/400th part of our revenue is not to get the benefit of \$20,000. We are not going to get the benefit of that, but we are going to save an expenditure of \$20,000, roughly calculated and very much on the conservative side. Secondly, we are not going to get rid of our present officers. The scheme is merely one of unifying the Service and bringing the Agricultural Services on the general roll of Agricultural Officers. Thirdly, the 1/400th part of revenue is a rough basis of calculation. I know perfectly well that we shall not be called on to pay any thing like 1/400th part of the revenue. The motion before us for this £160 is merely a part of the preliminary expenditure, and it is all we will be called on to spend this year.

I do not foresee the work of this proposed unified Service progressing at such a pace that we shall be called upon for several years—unfortunately we shall not be called upon for several years—to make our full contribution, and I am sure that contribution will not be demanded of us in a lump sum to begin with. It will be a gradually growing contribution and it will at its maximum amount to 1/400th part of our revenue. I do not think in the first two years of the scheme it will be anything like that, and possibly £1,000 would be very large. This movement is one that is going to be very much to the advantage of this Colony to participate in. If we do not we shall be the pariahs of the Empire

and be dependent upon our own resources for training our own people in research work and providing ourselves with an agricultural staff. I am just as anxious as the hon. member to save money, but I can confidently recommend this vote to the Council and hope that the hon. member's fears are dissipated.

Mr. CANNON: I regret that I cannot see my way to give this motion my support. My experience in this Assembly for many years has been that when a proposition comes up for consideration the bait is thrown out "Oh it is only going to cost £160," but as soon as a year or two pass by we are faced with excess expenditure from time to time. I submit that we cannot afford the £160, but assuming that it can be provided it does not end there. If that were all we were committed to I would support it, but we are going to tie ourselves up to this moral obligation to provide \$12,000 per annum on a useless scheme.

The PRESIDENT: I might remark that the Constitution is an entirely new one and whatever has happened in the past has nothing to do with the present.

Mr. CANNON: I thank you for the remark, sir, but time will prove it.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I simply meant to vote against this motion without discussing it. Recommending it as you have done, I have sufficient confidence that Your Excellency means well and will vote for it. If the worse comes we shall have to abide by it.

Mr. LUCKHOO: In view of the remarks of Government I shall certainly support this motion. I was not inclined in the first instance to give Government an open cheque, but Your Excellency correctly observed that this is an agricultural country, and I think it would be shortsighted of us to turn down the proposal.

Mr. SEERAM: I am going to support the motion because I feel, like Your Excellency, that the future of

this country depends on agriculture, and we have your assurance that our commitment will not be an exorbitant one for the next two years.

Motion put, and agreed to.

COMPASSIONATE ALLOWANCE.

Colonel BRADBURN: I beg, sir, to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 10 of 1928, this Council hereby approves of the grant of a compassionate allowance of \$60 per annum to Mrs. Deborah Magdalene Mitchell, widow of the late Corpl. Mitchell, British Guiana Police Force.

This matter has been already discussed and I do not propose to offer any further remarks.

Mr. WOOD seconded and the motion was agreed to.

POLICE CYCLE LICENCE.

Colonel BRADBURN: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 11 of 1928, this Council approves of the remission of the licence duty imposed by section 30 of the Tax Ordinance, 1928, on bicycles kept and used on official duty (with the Colonial Secretary's sanction) by members of the Police Force, where a maintenance allowance for such bicycles is granted by the Government.

There are 100 men of the Police Force who are granted an allowance of \$1 per month for the upkeep of bicycles. It has been customary in the past to grant them a free licence but last year the Combined Court omitted that and this motion is to put the matter right.

Mr. WOOD seconded and the motion was agreed to.

LOCAL FORCES OFFICERS.

Colonel BRADBURN: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 12 of 1928, this Council approves of the recommendation of the Army Council that, in order to avoid delay in appointing officers to vacancies on the staff of Local Forces in the Colonies as they occur, the Army Council be informed of impending vacancies six months ahead, and that the officer be appointed and sent out to fill the impending vacancy before the departure of the officer holding the appointment.

This is a very important question, sir, with regard to the training and efficiency of the Local Forces. In the past when the Staff Officer has terminated his contract we have had to wait for a period of three months, or even longer, before his successor is appointed. In the meantime the training of the Local Forces has invariably deteriorated. We have recently terminated the appointment of the Staff Officer and are now waiting for a new one to come out, so that there will be no extra expenditure this year and it will be three years before this question comes up again.

The PRESIDENT: May I ask a question to clear up a point there? It is not contemplated that a new officer should be sent out six months ahead but probably two or three weeks?

Colonel BRADBURN: Yes, sir.

Mr. ELEAZAR: As I understand it a new officer will have been engaged six months ahead.

The PRESIDENT: No; he will be selected.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Not paid, sir?

The PRESIDENT: No, not paid.

Mr. WOOD seconded the motion.

Motion put, and agreed to.

COMPASSIONATE ALLOWANCE.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences): I beg to move:

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 13 of 1928, this Council authorises the payment to W. F. Elcock, 1st Class Overseer, Public Works Department, of a compassionate allowance at the rate of \$460.80 per annum as from the date of his retirement, *i. e.* 1st January 1929.

I may state that Elcock is 74 years of age and has been serving the Government for 50 years. Although he seems a very old man he comes to the Public Works yard every morning on a push bicycle, which shows that he has

a certain amount of energy to carry out the duties he performed.

Mr. MULLIN seconded and the motion was agreed to.

SEA ACTION ON STRUCTURES.

Major CRAIG: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 14 of 1928, this Council approves of the Colony contributing £10 a year for five years to the funds of the Committee of the Institution of Civil Engineers on the deterioration of structures exposed to sea-action.

This £10 will be very well expended. The report which we will receive from the Institute will be of considerable value in view of the probability of our harbour being constructed at some future date. The sum we are asked to contribute is 1 per cent. of the minimum of the estimate that would be required, which is a very low proportion for the Colony to bear.

Mr. MULLIN seconded the motion.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): I should like to say, Your Excellency, that this Colony produces some of the world's finest timber, and this Committee have furnished me with valuable ammunition to push this timber. If we make this small contribution it gives us a chance to suggest directions in which their researches should be carried out, and under these circumstances it would be most helpful to me if elected members will see their way to vote this amount.

Motion put, and agreed to.

WELL-BORING PLANT.

Major CRAIG: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 15 of 1928, this Council approves of the additional amount of \$3,831.36 expended on the purchase of a well-boring plant being met from the unallocated balance of \$94,000 of the loan to be raised for defraying the cost of the Drainage, Irrigation, and Pure Drinking Water Supply Schemes for the more populous districts of the Coastlands of the Colony.

The original sum of \$18,000 voted under Resolution No. XXVI of the 29th

June, 1926, has been exceeded by the amount of \$3,831, largely by additional plant necessitated by difficulties which have arisen in the sinking of the wells. It also includes extra foundations to accelerate the sinking of the wells, and the money in my opinion has been well expended.

Mr. MULLIN seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

SINKING OF WELLS.

Major CRAIG: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 16 of 1928, this Council approves of a further sum of \$30,000 being allocated from the unallocated balance of \$90,168 of the loan of \$2,426,000 to be raised for defraying the cost of the Drainage and Irrigation, and Pure Drinking Water Supply Schemes for the more populous district of the Coastlands of the Colony.

With reference to this \$30,000 which is being asked for a year ago I submitted to what was then the Combined Court a request for \$100,000 to carry out the work for this year. Only \$50,000 was granted. That \$50,000 has, fortunately, been able to see us practically up to the end of August, and I am now asking for only \$30,000, which means that the work is being carried out for \$80,000 instead of \$100,000. I think the answers that will be given to the questions which the hon. Member for West Demerara gave notice of yesterday will be quite satisfactory to all members. I also think that the Governor's Message gives a satisfactory explanation of the amount asked for and I ask for its favourable consideration.

Mr. MULLIN seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

REGULATIONS.

CINEMA MACHINES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. C. Douglas-Jones): I move that "Regulations revoking the Regulations relating to Cinematograph Machines made by the Governor and Court

of Policy on the 30th day of October, 1911" be approved. Under the Electric Lighting Order, 1890, the Governor and Court of Policy were empowered to make rules and regulations with respect to electrical installations. In 1911 regulations relating to cinematograph machines were made by the Governor and Court of Policy. Under the Ordinance of 1911, section 2, this power was transferred to the Governor-in-Council. It is now proposed to issue new regulations governing cinemas, but that cannot be done until the regulations made by the Governor and Court of Policy in October, 1911, have been revoked. It is proposed that they should be revoked by this Council to enable new regulations to be made by the Governor-in-Council to be promulgated.

Mr. SMELLIE seconded.

Question "That these Regulations be adopted" put, and agreed to.

WAR SERVICE DISABILITIES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that "Regulations as to the terms and conditions upon which patients may be treated as out or in-patients in any Public Hospital for medical or surgical disabilities directly due to war service" be adopted. This question has been raised by the British Guiana ex-Service Men's Association, who have asked for free treatment of their members suffering from medical or surgical disabilities which are certified to be due to war services. These amended regulations make provision to give effect to the request.

Mr. SMELLIE seconded.

Question "That these Regulations be adopted" put, and agreed to.

CASH ON DELIVERY SERVICE.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that "Regulations amending the Regulations for Cash on Delivery Service within the Colony" be adopted. The position is that the Postmaster General has tried to popularise the system of cash on delivery through

the post. It has met with a certain measure of success but it is found that the present rates are too high on parcels of small value. The whole object is to enable parcels of small value to be sent through the post and paid for on delivery, but the present high charges are having the effect of defeating that object as they add considerably to the cost of the articles. It is therefore proposed that the minimum rates under the 1914 regulations should be reduced and placed on the following basis: Where the trade charge does not exceed \$5, 2 cents; exceeds \$5 but not \$10, 4 cents; exceeds \$10 but not \$25, 6 cents; exceeds \$25 but not \$50, 8 cents. These fees will be charged in addition to a special fee of 2 cents on every cash on delivery parcel posted in the Colony. This I think will have the effect of encouraging a very useful service which is much appreciated by the public generally.

Mr. SMELLIE seconded.

Question "That these Regulations be adopted" put, and agreed to.

RIVER NAVIGATION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that "Regulations amending the River Navigation Regulations, 1924" be adopted. The position in regard to these regulations is, as hon. members are no doubt aware, that every captain of a boat is bound to convey a sick person up or down the Mazaruni River and is entitled to a fee of ten shillings for doing so and the cost of any food or nourishment supplied. Last year, or early this year, a case arose in which a captain was fined \$50 for not complying with these regulations. The result is that captains are now accepting men on any pretence and charging ten shillings, and it is costing Government a great deal of money. I do not think that the regulations intended this, but the particular regulation is so worded that it results in abuses, and Government is being put to very heavy expense in this respect. It is therefore proposed that the payment of the fee of

ten shillings should be omitted but that the captain should receive payment for food or nourishment not exceeding fifty cents per person per day. We must safeguard Government in the case of people who are demanding this facility but are not really entitled to it.

Mr. SMELLIE seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I oppose this proposal because two wrongs do not make a right. If a captain is compelled to bring a sick man down he should be paid commensurately with the responsibility. A sick man is unable to do any work in pulling the boat, and besides engaging other men to bring him down the captain has to keep him alive. I do not see any reason why a captain should be deprived of the payment of ten shillings when he is faced with a fine or imprisonment for refusal to bring a sick man down. There might be a medium course. I suggest that the ten shillings should be allowed to remain but that the man should be taken to the Government Medical Officer at Bartica, and if then he is found to be malingering the captain should not be paid and *vice versa*.

Mr. SEERAM: The cost of living in the interior is higher than on the coastlands, and I therefore suggest that the fee be increased from fifty cents to eighty cents.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: What has been the average paid for bringing down sick people? It may be a small sum when we consider the convenience of the miners.

Mr. MULLIN (Commissioner of Lands and Mines): There is one point that has been overlooked, namely, that the boats which bring these men down are not the property of the steersman. It is the universal wish of the owners that these men should be conveyed free of charge since they are not put to unnecessary expense in the matter of rations. I am very glad to say it is only in a very small minority of cases that there has been any trouble or any attempt to collect the ten shillings on

the part of the steersmen. They have done their duty nobly, and the regulation was introduced to meet the few extreme cases where they refuse to take in men and allow them to die along the river banks. The trouble which also arose after the regulation was brought in was that the first vote was \$160. A few steersmen found that they could benefit by the ten shillings, and, while employers were sending down twenty or thirty sick men of their own and giving them food, these steersmen were calling at the Government Station and collecting the ten shillings, disguising the fact that the owners of the boats had been providing for the men.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In reply to the inquiry by the hon. Member for North-West Essequibo, the sum voted for 1927 was \$400, but on the 6th June a sum of \$300.42 had been already expended and a special warrant was asked for another \$360 for the balance of the year. I do not know how much has been expended this year.

Mr. MULLIN: The whole amount will be expended.

Question "That these Regulations be adopted" put, and agreed to.

PRIVATE LETTER BOXES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the adoption of "Additional Regulations relating to the renting of private letter boxes at Post Offices." These regulations are to give power to the Postmaster General to refuse to rent a box to an applicant and to determine the tenancy of a box. The Chamber of Commerce has drawn Government's attention to the fact that people known as fraudulent importers are in the habit of giving Post Office boxes as their address as evidence of their *bona fides*. The Postmaster General has no power to refuse to rent Post Office boxes to anybody whom he knows will abuse the privilege or use the boxes for fraudulent purposes. The powers asked for by these regulations are similar to instructions given to Postmasters in

England, and I think they are powers that the Postmaster General should have to safeguard the interests of the trade of the Colony.

Mr. SMELLIE seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have to protest against these regulations for the reason that I do not see why the Postmaster General or anybody should have the right to encroach on the right of any member of the public. Fraudulent importation has been going on with certain members of the community, but it is a matter of contract and it is the business of exporters to make proper enquiries before sending out their goods to men who turn out to be fraudulent. I think it is the thin end of the wedge and the Postmaster General is being made the catspaw.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Mr. Hector Josephs): I think I can calm the fears of the hon. member. I venture to think that we can credit the Postmaster General with a certain amount of discretion, and if that is so it is not likely that he is going to pre-judge individuals who apply for letter boxes by his opinion of what their morals are. The position really is that the Post Office renders certain service to individuals for which it is paid. It is a question of freedom of contract so far as letter boxes are concerned. There is a limited number of letter boxes to be disposed of and all that is being done is that the Postmaster General should have the right, which any business man should have, of saying with whom he would have a contract and not assign any reason. It is just to give him the right of selection, and it is a mistake to assume that he would sit in judgment on people and tell them that on account of their bad financial morals or other tendencies he declines to rent them a box.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. junior Member for New Amsterdam will notice that in Regulation 2 (2) the Postmaster General has power to determine the tenancy of a box, and

if we find that a box is used dishonestly that is where we want these regulations to operate. As the hon. the Attorney General has pointed out, it also gives the Postmaster General power to enter into a contract with anyone to whom he wishes to rent a box. I think the hon. member's fears are unfounded and that he need not anticipate that the regulations will be used in an arbitrary manner or that any honest person will be affected by them.

Question "That these Regulations be adopted" put, and agreed to.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the "Regulations amending the Post Office Telegraph Regulations, 1924." There is considerable doubt as regards the amount that should be charged for wireless messages. As I understand the position there is a fixed charge for a wireless message in Georgetown, but if the message is addressed to Mackenzie there is no knowledge as to what should be charged for the land transfer or transfer by another form from Georgetown to a Post Office or Wireless Station in the interior. The charges fall under two heads. At present the Post Office is collecting the ordinary land rate of eighteen cents for the first twelve words, but this rate does not agree with the international rates or with the British Postal Guide, and it is to get over these difficulties that the Postmaster General has suggested that rates should be charged as set out in the schedule to these regulations. I move that these regulations and the charges set out in the schedule be adopted.

Mr. SMELLIE seconded.

Question "That these Regulations and the charges set out in schedule" put, and agreed to.

X-RAY, &c., TREATMENT.

Dr. BOASE (Acting Surgeon General): I move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to consider "Regulations as to the terms and condi-

tions upon which patients may undergo X-Ray and Electrical treatment and examinations at Public Hospitals.”

Mr. MULLIN seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

Regulation 2.—Fees payable by \$1.50 per day and private out-patients.

Mr. CRANE : This regulation deals with in-patients who pay hospital fees of \$1.50 per diem and over and with patients sent by medical practitioners other than those attached to the hospital staff. Provision is also made for the treatment of pauper patients. Between patients of the pauper class and those paying \$1.50 there is an intermediate class who would not wish to have free service but are unable to pay the \$1.50. It seems to me that these regulations are drawn without consideration for that intermediate class, and I am suggesting that there should be a lower scale for patients sent to the hospital by medical practitioners. Another point is that all fees are payable in advance. That is, I think, a hardship. If a person owns a property or can furnish security he can get attendance ordinarily at the hospital and I urge that the same practice should be allowed to apply to X-Ray treatment. I therefore suggest that the words “All fees are payable in advance” should be eliminated.

Dr. BOASE : I move that the words “Governor on the recommendation of the” in the proviso of Regulation 2 be deleted. It does not seem necessary to write to the Governor in respect of such a small matter as the reduction of fees.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : It is very much better that the Surgeon General should have a discretion to sanction a reduction of fees, and if the words “or scale of fees” and “Governor on the recommendation of the” are struck out the case would be met.

The CHAIRMAN : Let us deal with these points one by one. First of all is the question of fees payable in advance. I should like to ask the Surgeon General if that is the practice.

Dr. BOASE : It is down on paper, sir, but we always exercise our discretion.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : We know that the losses are heavy, because many people go into the hospital and do not pay. Very often it is difficult to get it out of sureties. Several actions have been brought in the Magistrate’s Court to recover fees with little success insomuch that attention has been called to the question of giving general credit.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : It is not usual, I think, to pay for medical attendance in advance. In London where a patient goes to a specialist you pay consulting fees, and fees for the use of the X-Ray Department should not fall in the same category as treatment in hospital. These are the maximum fees but they can be reduced in certain circumstances with the approval of the Governor. It is not proposed to weary the Governor with small matters of this kind, and it is proposed to delete those words and give power to the Surgeon General to exercise his discretion. If the hon. member would leave it in the hands of the Surgeon General to reduce the fees as he thinks they should be, each case being dealt with on its merits, I think the position would be met.

Mr. CRANE : I suggest that the proviso should read “Provided where circumstances warrant it, a reduced scale of fees may be sanctioned” and the words “that in special instances where prolonged treatment is required or” be deleted. The Surgeon General would then be free in considering any case to reduce the fees.

The CHAIRMAN : We prefer to take out the words “or scale of fees” and “Governor on the recommendation of the” as suggested by the hon. Attorney

General. The question is that the regulation be amended by the deletion of those words.

Question put, and agreed to.

Regulation as amended passed.

Regulation 4.—Non-paying in-patients and poverty and pauper out-patients to be treated free.

Dr. BCASE: I move that this regulation be deleted and the following substituted therefor:—

4. Free X-Ray and electrical treatment will be available for all non-paying in-patients in hospital and for out-patients if approved by the Surgeon General on presentation of a pauper or poverty certificate signed by any duly registered medical practitioner.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I suggest that pauper and poverty certificates ought to be given by other than medical practitioners. A person might not be able to pay the fee of a doctor and some recognised persons in the community should be permitted to grant certificates.

Mr. CRANE: There are people who under the 1912 Regulations are permitted to give pauper certificates, and I think if it is left to medical practitioners alone we might not get these pauper certificates, which would defeat the object aimed at.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What the hon. member is referring to is a declaration by authorised people. It is for a medical man to say whether a pauper requires X-Ray treatment, and if he finds that it is required then he would issue a certificate. I think that is the difference.

Question "That the Regulation as amended be adopted" put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed.

Motion made, and question put, "That these Regulations as amended be adopted."

Agreed to.

GOVERNMENT BILLS.

GEORGETOWN TOWN COUNCIL, &c.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move that "A Bill to amend the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance, 1918, with respect to the giving of security by officers of the Council and to the making of By-Laws by the Council" be read the third time.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

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

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS' PENSIONS.

Mr. MILLARD (Colonial Treasurer): I move that "A Bill to amend the Widows and Orphans' Pensions Ordinance, 1923, with respect to the Directors of the Fund, to contributions and to enable officers of the Harbour Board to become contributors" be read the third time.

Mr. BRASSINGTON seconded.

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

MISCELLANEOUS LICENCES.

Mr. MILLARD: I move that "A Bill to amend the Miscellaneous Licences Ordinance, 1861, with respect to the duties on transfers of Licences" be read the third time.

Mr. BRASSINGTON seconded.

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

INCREASES OF PENSIONS.

Mr. MILLARD: I move that "A Bill to amend the Pensions (Increases of Pensions) Ordinance, 1924," be read the third time.

Mr. BRASSINGTON seconded

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

GENERAL LOAN AND INSCRIBED STOCK.

Mr. MILLARD: I move that "A Bill to amend the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Ordinance, 1913, by giving power to suspend contributions to the Sinking Fund of any loan where it appears that the value of the Fund will be sufficient to redeem the loan, and also to confer similar power in the case of inscribed stock created and outstanding under the Inscribed Stock Ordinances, 1886 and 1897" be read the third time.

Mr. BRASSINGTON seconded.

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

PUBLIC FREE LIBRARY.

Major GRAY: I move that "A Bill to amend the Georgetown Public Free Library Ordinance, 1908" be read the third time.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

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

RURAL CONSTABLES.

Colonel BRADBURN: I move that "A Bill to restrict the privileges and immunities of Rural Constables" be read the third time.

Mr. WOOD seconded.

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

IDENTIFICATION OF PRISONERS.

Colonel BRADBURN: I move that "A Bill to facilitate the identification of Prisoners" be read the third time.

Mr. WOOD seconded.

Mr. CRANE: I desire to move that after the word "prisoners" in line two the words "convicted of crime" stand part of clause 2.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the hon. member is acting in accordance with the Standing Rules and Orders in moving that amendment at

this moment. We will defer the third reading of this Bill until to-morrow morning.

Question that the Bill be read the third time deferred accordingly.

TRADE MARKS.

Mr. WOOD: I move that "A Bill to amend the Trade Marks Ordinance, 1914" be read the third time.

Mr. BAYLEY seconded.

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

RETIRING ALLOWANCES TO NURSES.

Dr. BOASE: I move that "A Bill to make provision for granting retiring allowances to Nurses who have served in the Colony" be read the third time.

Mr. MULLIN seconded.

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

PHARMACY AND POISONS.

Dr. BOASE: I move that "A Bill to amend the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, 1899" be read the third time.

Mr. MULLIN seconded.

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

QUARANTINE.

Dr. BOASE: I move that "A Bill to make provision for giving effect to the recommendations of a conference made with regard to quarantine in the West Indies" be read the third time.

Mr. MULLIN seconded.

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

Motion made, and question put and agreed to, that the following Bills be read the first time:—

Bill to make provision for giving statutory effect for a limited period to Bills imposing or varying taxation.

Bill to amend the Statute Law Revision Ordinance, 1928.

*
Bill to extend until the 31st day of March 1929, the duration of licences for liquor stores, hotels, taverns and retail spirit shops issued for the year 1926 under the Wine, etc., Licences Ordinance, 1868, and to authorise the Chief Commissary to grant applications for liquor store licences and for transfers of licences.

Bill to make provision for the granting of licences for the sale of intoxicating liquor and for the regulation of such sale and the control of licensed premises. (*Attorney General.*)

Notice given that at the next meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bills be read the second time. —(*Attorney General.*)

TERMS OF ADDRESS.

The **PRESIDENT:** There is no more business before the Council to-day so there will be no afternoon session. I should just like to refer to a question which has arisen before we adjourn. I notice that one or two hon. members were a little bit uncertain as to how to refer to nominated unofficial members of the Council. The matter is quite simple. They can be referred to as "the hon. nominated member who has just sat down" or "the hon. nominated member who has proposed this Bill," but there is no objection to the name being used as "the hon. Mr. X" without any membership.

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