

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 6th November, 1935.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR GEOFFREY A. S. NORTHCOTE, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, (Mr. F. J. Waddington, C.M.G., O.B.E.)

The Hon. the Attorney-General, (Mr. Hector Josephs, K.C.)

The Hon. T. T. Smellie, O.B.F. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

Major the Hon. W. Bain Gray, C.B.E., Director of Education.

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Mullin, O.B.E. Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Hon. F. J. Seaford (Georgetown North).

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

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

The Hon. M. B. Laing, District Commissioner, East Coast Demerara District.

The Hon. Q. B. De Freitas, Surgeon-General (Acting).

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

The Hon. A. R. Crum Ewing (Essequibo River).

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

The Hon. A. G. King (Demerara River).

The Hon. S. H. Seymour (Western Essequibo).

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 5th November, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS.

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT.

THE PRESIDENT: Before proceeding with the business of the Council I am happy to be able to announce to the Council that yesterday I received a telegram from the Secretary of State informing me that a free grant of £22,000 for the further geological survey of this Colony has been approved. This free grant comes from the Colonial Development Fund. Twenty-two thousand pounds should be sufficient to enable a party of the present strength to carry on the geological survey for the next four years, and should cover all the promising areas of the Colony. Members are aware that the previous assistance given to the Colony from the Colonial Development Fund for this purpose was in the form of a loan of £10,000. This is a free grant of £22,000. I have no doubt that the Council will view this

act of generosity in enabling the investigation of our mineral resources with high appreciation and deep gratitude.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

Mr. GONSALVES gave notice of the following questions :—

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF WORKS.

1. Has the Director of Public Works completed all unemployment relief works scheduled to be done by his Department in the City of Georgetown during 1935? If not, will such remaining works to be done be proceeded with before the end of the year?

2. What unemployment relief works will be carried out in the City of Georgetown during 1936 and when will the said works be commenced?

INDUSTRIAL HOME FOR GIRLS.

1. Has Government yet considered the Report of the Committee appointed to consider the establishment of an Industrial Home for girls?

2. Is it proposed to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee, or to any of them? If so, when?

3. Having regard to the amount of vagrancy among young girls in the City is Government not satisfied that the necessity exists for the establishment of such a Home or some such similar Institution?

4. What is the date of the Report and when was it laid on the Table?

PETITION.

Mr. ELEAZAR laid on the table a petition from Mrs. R. Baird praying for a pension or gratuity in respect of the service of her late husband in the Police Force.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1936.

AGRICULTURE.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): Sir, when the Council adjourned yesterday I was relating what took place last year in connection with the Plant Breeder and what his qualifications were. I explained the facts leading up to his original appointment, and I also mentioned

that I had exhibited a number of new varieties which were undergoing tests at the time and were due to the work of that officer. I would refer to Hansard of 9th January, 1935, pages 555 and 556, where it is clearly stated how it was possible to get along in the first two or three years without this officer, and that when the whole position of the rice industry was reviewed and the facts put before the Secretary of State certain grants were given which included the salary of the Plant Breeder for a period of three years. There was not a word stated at the time that the officer would not be required at the end of the three years. It was merely stated that the Secretary of State, instead of calling on the local Government to foot the bill, had generously provided funds for this officer's salary along with certain other grants for various things in order to put the industry on a proper footing.

The hon. Member for Berbice River stated yesterday that in the past the rice industry thrived without this officer. I do not know if he meant thriving downwards because that is the only conclusion I can come to. If one referred to the export figures one would see what happened in the years from 1910 to 1926. I mention those years because we are in possession of the facts for those years. The exports were always low and fluctuated downwards until in 1926 the export trade had practically disappeared.

Mr. ELEAZAR: To a point of correction. In 1910 there was nothing like a rice industry; it only began in 1912 when Sir Alexander Swettenham came here.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no necessity for the hon. Member to interrupt on that point: he can take it later.

Professor DASH: At any rate in 1926 the export trade of rice had practically disappeared altogether. Some hon. Members who know anything about the subject will recall the fact that little of the rice which was being produced at that time was acceptable in the outside markets, and on going over the plots in the Gardens I could find no two plants alike. There were short grain, long grain, red grain and everything conceivable being mixed together and passed out as selected seed. In fact, chaos reigned. The whole of the

rice area on the East Coast, with hardly an exception, had nothing but red rice. That rice when milled would be alright for local consumption, but it could not compete in the export markets with our competitors. The whole position has changed by steady uphill work, and we have reached a stage now when new varieties ideal to our requirements are beginning to appear. What we are anxious to get is a long grain variety of high milling quality, low breakage and will out-yield the Demerara Creole variety, which, although of good quality, is not giving the yields of the medium length varieties of rice, such as No. 79. This long grain is in demand at the moment and can compete against certain classes of Indian rice, and it looks as if we are in a fair way of getting it, but if we are to succeed it is important that breeding must continue. I may mention that unquestionably the best yielding variety we have bred to date is No. 79. Wherever it meets any other variety it out-yields it by a large margin and the quality is excellent. More recently the Department has put on special trial tests in the unirrigated districts in Berbice and the results show clearly that No. 79 gives an increased yield of 27 per cent. over Demerara Creole and 48 per cent. over Blue Stick pure-line. Those are facts which cannot be denied, and the position is that while in some districts Demerara Creole is giving good results and is favoured, farmers have taken on to No. 79 and it is going to be a very difficult thing to dislodge it unless a high yielding variety of longer grain is made available. This takes time and even when it has been carried through it will need careful selection, study and working up if it is to be continued. I appreciate that some of those who know something about the rice business in the field—for example, the hon. Member for Western Essequibo—have recognised the absolute necessity for this officer, and I appeal to him to take a more permanent view of the officer's engagement in view of what I have said.

When the position was reviewed after three years' working, the Secretary of State without any hesitation came to the conclusion that unless this officer is permanently retained the same chaotic condition which had previously prevailed as regards varieties was highly likely to recur. The progress made was fully examined by

those qualified to judge and instructions were received that this officer should be placed on the Fixed Establishment. Last year objections were made by hon. Members and Government accepted the decision and placed the officer below the line for one year with the understanding that it would come up for reconsideration this year. I wish to repeat that work of this kind once started cannot be suddenly dropped without detriment to the industry, and so long as there is a rice industry of the importance it has reached a Plant Breeder is absolutely essential. Moreover, market conditions, as far as varieties demand, are subject to constant changes. Sometimes the long grain captures the imagination and sometimes the short grain. We must be in a position to meet those demands and those market changes, and to get the best value a specialised officer must be given security of tenure, or he is always looking for an opportunity elsewhere for such security of tenure, and such opportunities are not lacking. Research is not like business where stocks in hand to-day are sold out to-morrow, but is of a much more permanent and exacting nature.

We have been hearing a great deal of the staff of the Department being top-heavy. Let us take, for example, the neighbouring Colony of Trinidad. They have just put on their Estimates several new posts for specialised officers and have increased the salary of their Deputy Director, while I believe other changes are also in contemplation for strengthening the Department of Agriculture. While all this is being done they also have the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture to give them advice and assistance, and they spend twice as much on their Department as we are spending here. According to the hon. Member for Berbice River everything grows here without the Department's help. But can improvement take place if these crops are left to themselves? That is not the experience in other parts of the world. Those are ideas which have been expressed long before the time of Darwin, and if such ideas were to be accepted to-day the path of progress must always be retarded. A point has been made that the Department has not created any new industries; but I do not admit that at all. I also wish to emphasise with all the force I can command that increased yields in our main industries are of much

greater value than new industries of doubtful commercial utility. I therefore make a special plea to hon. Members to drop their opposition to the officer, and I also appeal most strongly that they take a reasonable and far-sighted view of the work the Department is doing on behalf of the industries of the Colony.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If an academic discussion on the research of any particular industry were required I certainly would not interfere with the hon. Member: he is a master in that art and I do not consider myself his equal to enter into a contest with him. But the hon. Member began by drawing the attention of the House to the position of the rice industry between 1910 and 1926. I say without fear of any contradiction that in 1910 the rice industry was almost unknown. It was not until 1912 when Sir Alexander Swettenham came here and advised the people to plant coconut and rice that the rice industry was started. The Director of Agriculture ended up with 1926. Now 1926 was the year that the Colony experienced the worse drought, and to take that year as a basis for consideration and calculation, if it is not intended to draw a red-herring across the trail, is intended to mislead the whole community. Whether Trinidad is extending its Agricultural Department or not is not the question: Trinidad is a far more prosperous Colony than British Guiana. I contend that we have in our Agricultural Department a staff in size sufficient, if not more than sufficient, for a Colony four times the size of this Colony in so far as agricultural products are concerned. We grow only two products here for export—rice and sugar. Rice was far in advance before the Director of Agriculture came here, and he cannot take credit for what the rice industry is to-day. The increased area under cultivation in rice is due to the cessation of other products. Several sugar estates have gone out of cultivation: the result is that some of them have reduced their area. At one time the sugar industry did not think it to their interest to assist the rice industry. They now give labourers facilities to grow rice, and the output is larger, not through the activities of the Department of Agriculture but through the generosity of the present sugar planter as compared with his predecessor. When the Financial Commissioners came to the Colony one of

their recommendations was that Government should embark on finding new crops. The expenditure of this Department has increased by \$35,000 in ten years and it has not produced one single new crop. How does the Director know that new crops are doubtful if he does not try them?

THE CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member please keep himself to the subject of the discussion: whether the Plant Breeder should be kept above the line.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I quite appreciate Your Excellency's point, but you will not restrict me, sir, when the Director has had his way running all over the show.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member will restrict himself to the subject of the Plant Breeder.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Very well, sir. When was discovery made that we could not do without a Plant Breeder? That discovery was made several years after the Director had been here; and the officer was only engaged three years ago for three years. We have been growing rice since 1912. What does the Director mean by saying that without the Plant Breeder we cannot produce rice for export? We have been exporting rice before the Plant Breeder came here. What we are contending is that the Department is unnecessarily burdening itself with officers who can very well be done without. If the Plant Breeder had been doing his work during the three years engagement, as the Director would have us believe, in the best possible manner, I cannot understand how a Department with highly specialised technical officers cannot carry on the work without this officer. If after three years we cannot do without him then the Department is in a very hopeless state. It means that we must keep the Plant Breeder for all time. If this officer is a necessity get the Secretary of State, as in the first instance, to give us the amount of his salary. The taxpayers of British Guiana cannot afford it for the return we get. I do not say that the Department is absolutely useless, or that we should not have an Agricultural Department, but I do say that we have a top-heavy Department.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I agree with most

of the remarks that have fallen from the lips of my hon. friend. I do not think the Director of Agriculture has replied to the criticisms levelled against the appointment of the Plant Breeder. The main point has been missed. What hon. Members are complaining about is that year after year the estimates of this Department are increasing by the appointment of specialist officers. A similar discussion to this took place in connection with the Chemist Ecologist. That officer came out on a contract for three years. When his time was up he was placed below the line and in 1931 he found his way above the line. The Plant Breeder also came out on a three years' contract, and last year he was put below the line and now above the line. That is our complaint. I am no expert and I do not claim to be one, but I claim to have some knowledge of the rice industry. Capital is being made of the fact that at a certain time certain markets prefer the long grain rice and at other times the short grain. Can the Director of Agriculture say that we never had the long grain or short grain rice before the Plant Breeder came? We also had the Demerara Creole rice before the officer arrived in the Colony.

Reference has been made to the amount of money spent by the Department of Agriculture in Trinidad. I venture to say the comparison is wrong. Trinidad, apart from being more prosperous than we are, has more agricultural resources. Apart from sugar, Trinidad has cocoa, copra, citrus fruits, and quite recently bananas. Only now is Trinidad appointing specialist officers to deal with these industries. In other words, the people there have developed these industries themselves, and having got them up to a certain stage they are bringing in specialist officers to control pests or any special form of disease. I understood the Director of Agriculture to say at the meeting of the Select Committee that these experiments that are being conducted by the Plant Breeder might take 20 or 30 years. Can we afford to do things that would eventually land us in financial difficulties? The time is not ripe for an officer of this type to be put on the Estimates either above or below the line.

Mr. LUCKHO: I have no desire to hamper the efforts of the Agricultural Department in so far as the rice industry

is concerned or in their laudable desire to create other industries. I said yesterday, and I still maintain, that the Department has created no new industry. With respect to the expansion of the rice industry, that has been due to no particular effort on the part of the Department but to the magnificent efforts of the East Indians, with the invaluable aid of the sugar planters and estates proprietors. The Department has, however, done something by way of improving the quality of the rice produced. In view of the efforts of the Rice Marketing Board to capture markets for our produce, we should do everything possible to improve the quality of the commodity, and for that purpose I think the services of the officer should be retained for a definite period of three years. My objection is to the item being placed above the line and increasing our pension commitments. I think the Agricultural Department can be of great use to farmers in educating them along proper lines. Many of the industries are carried on at the present time under most primitive conditions, and I should like to see the Department introduce mechanical tillage on a community basis in order to assist the expansion of these industries.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think there has been a good deal of beating about the bush. The general opinion of those who actually grow rice and of those who have interests in rice is that this officer should be retained. The only point is whether he should be placed above the line. I think the unanimous feeling is that he should be placed below the line? Is there any amendment that the item be placed below the line?

THE CHAIRMAN: The rule is that any amendment which is a direct negative of the original motion cannot be accepted as an amendment. The substantive motion is that the item be placed above the line and it would be sufficient for Members to vote against it. If it is deleted from its place on the Estimates it would be competent for Government to move it elsewhere.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I am against the motion. I feel very strongly that for a further period of three years the status of this officer should not be raised. A great deal has been said about security of tenure of officers holding posts of this

kind. Security of tenure can be secured by retaining him for three years. If an officer finds that it suits him in any way to be appointed to a post in any Colony on a contractual basis he has no complaint if he is kept on that basis for a period of six or seven years, as in the case of this officer, and I would like to remind Members that there is an officer who occupies a very high post in the Civil Service and is under contract at the present time. The Director of Public Works was appointed to this Colony under contract. He has had that contract renewed on more than one occasion, yet he is in a position to claim pension on his retirement, and no one can gainsay the fact that an officer of that importance is of a higher status than this officer.

I have risen to point out that in my judgment the whole policy with regard to appointments of this kind is wrong. I recall quite well an officer who was Government Entomologist. During the whole period of his stay here the Agricultural Department and the planting community got the benefit of his expert knowledge. That officer had an understudy who now fills the post which he formerly filled. I am not aware that there is anyone in the Agricultural Department who is getting the benefit of the experience of this officer. It is true that he is increasing varieties of rice, but we expect to find the benefit of his experience being transmitted to others. Is there anyone in this Department who, if the Plant Breeder goes on leave, can continue his work? What are we to do when this officer applies for leave? What practical experience is being gained by having the officer in this Department except to improve the varieties of rice? As a matter of fact it can be accomplished by a man being seconded from another Colony or drawn from the Imperial Government.

This officer has not graduated for any length of time. He has served his period of apprenticeship in the Department of Agriculture, and this Colony subsidises him by giving him experience which will serve him very largely. I think he might wait for a further period before anything is done to appoint him to a pensionable post. Whether this officer is retained above or below the line I do urge that he be given an understudy. Some mathema-

tical student can be found for the purpose and I believe there are many who would undertake it. I should like to see something voted that someone should understudy the work of this officer. Just as we have been able to fill Mr. Bodkin's appointment in that way, we might be able to find someone to take this officer's place. I think the officer's services should be retained, but he ought to have one or more men under him in order that these men may be able to go out into the districts and disseminate the knowledge.

Professor DASH: I think the hon. Member for New Amsterdam has not quite got the point of an understudy. There are unquestionably certain divisions of Science, and Entomology perhaps is the best example, where a certain amount of understudy work can be developed in an officer very usefully, and afterwards he may further equip himself by taking a University course which will, in the end, result in his appointment to a substantive post. The study of Genetics, however, is entirely different altogether. You might have an understudy who would never be able to grip the work or to grapple with the specific job of getting out the strains and studying them. It involves a very advanced study of Higher Mathematics. It is a new branch of Science and in Genetics it is extremely difficult to say you are going to train a man from the bottom up unless he has that preliminary education which is so essential if he is to make a success of it. It is possible that we could have a man who may be able to carry on just the ordinary work of purifying the commercial strains, but even then he would not be able to get far with it because it means studying the variety characteristics after a period of careful test and examination has been carried out in the field. I repeat that the Science of Genetics is a highly technical one and it is impossible to train an understudy unless he has an educational qualification in the beginning. The Plant Breeder has never been on leave, but if he had to go on leave he would have to do so at a time when there is no rice growing.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I gather from the Director's remarks that when this officer disappears the work will cease because no one will be found to carry on. That is

hardly a good ground for the retention of this officer. What are we going to do when he dies or goes to another Colony? I hope the Director will try to find this impossible person. There are a large number of students who are very clever at Mathematics, and until the Director can tell us that is impossible I regret I shall have to oppose the item.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Waddington): There are two points in this debate, first of all whether it is necessary to have a Plant Breeder, and secondly whether that person should be placed above or below the line. In regard to the first point I did not think it would be necessary for me to say much, because it seemed to me that the majority of hon. Members were in agreement that the post should be retained on the Estimates, but I find that that agreement is coupled with a reservation that it should be taken off the Estimates as soon as possible. That being the case, it seems to me that I should attempt to put the question in what appears to me to be the proper light. The first objection that was raised to the post was from the hon. Member for Central Demerara on the ground that the post had originally been paid for from the Colonial Development Fund. He seemed to regard that fact of itself as sufficient argument for the deletion of the item, on the grounds that the amount had slipped into the Estimates from the Colonial Development Fund. What we are asked to decide is whether, in fact, this post is necessary for the present and future development of the rice industry in British Guiana. If, as I argue, it is necessary, then our obvious duty is to place it on the Estimates and, parathetically, we may be grateful to the Colonial Development Fund for having supplied the wherewithal in the initial stages. It has been very noticeable in this debate that one of the few Members of the Council with an intimate knowledge of scientific rice cultivation—I refer to the hon. Member for Western Essequibo—has not only stated that he considers the post absolutely essential but he has also said that it is most undesirable that any change in personnel should take place, because he regards the continuity of the work as being the most important feature of it. I may say, sir, I entirely agree with that view, for even to a layman it seems clear that spasmodic efforts by different individuals

can only lead to most uneven and most unsatisfactory results. Indeed, to me it seems axiomatic in these days of severe economic competition that any organisation which desires to place rice on the world's markets should have within its organisation a scientific officer who is devoting his whole time to the improvement of strains, for it is only by that method that we can hope to remain on the world's markets.

The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice said it was entirely due to the growers themselves that the rice production had increased. He added to that, however, that the Department was responsible for the improvement in the quality. I suggest that it is improvement in the quality which is essential; and unless we have that improvement in the quality and unless that improvement is maintained and increased we will not get on to the markets and remain on. I would just like to refer to the rice export statistics as the hon. Member for Berbice River took the Director of Agriculture up on the point that he had quoted for 1926. He said the Director had selected a drought year. I have complete records here and in only two years prior to 1927 did the export exceed 8,000 tons. Since the year 1929 it has never been below 20,000 tons and for 1932 and 1933 it is above 28,000 tons.

There was one other remark by the hon. Member for Central Demerara which seemed to me a curious one. He said that specialist officers were never required for breeding economic strains but are only used for plant disease work, and he asked: "Can we afford to pay such an officer who is coming to do plant breeding work?" I will answer that by asking another question. Can we afford not to have such an officer when it is essential for our export trade that we should have the best quality rice? It seems to me that we cannot afford to do without him. So much in regard to the necessity for the post. Now in regard to the question of pension. The hon. the Director of Agriculture has already stated the case from the officer's point of view, and I entirely agree with him that it is only fair to the officer, if we decide that a post of this sort is a necessity, that he should be given pension rights. But there is another side to the question which was also referred to by

the Director of Agriculture, and I am going to refer back to what I have already quoted, the remarks of the hon. Member for Western Essequibo in which he stressed the necessity for continuity in work of this nature. If it is essential that we should keep an officer as long as we can, I do suggest to hon. Members that far and away the best method of doing so is by giving him some security of tenure, as otherwise we can hardly expect him to continue to remain with us if any other opportunity offers. It seems to me desirable that this post should be pensionable and I hope the Council will agree to leave the post above the line.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am not aware and would like to be enlightened, if the quantity of rice has risen, why up to now we have not captured the markets of the West Indies. I have always understood that we have not captured those markets because they cannot rely upon our giving them supplies when required, and therefore they have to get rice from India to provide against their getting none from us. The quality of the rice is not the question, and on that score alone I do not think the retention of the officer is justified.

Mr. WALCOTT: What I cannot understand is that we have heard so much about Government doing nothing for the rice industry and now that Government is trying to do something for the industry a good many people, especially those who are not particularly interested in rice and probably know little about it, are objecting to it being done. I am entirely in favour of the appointment and I am going to vote for it, and I think in fairness to the officer he should be left above the line. We are going to want this officer and I hope we shall have more of his kind and one in each district. I think the Department of Agriculture should have more money put aside for experimental work. We have a lot of officers but they have no means of doing experimental work they should do, and I consider that a larger amount should be put aside for that purpose. Experiments should be on larger plots so far as rice is concerned so as to make it possible to have a sufficient quantity of seed for distribution over the rice area.

The Committee divided on the question

that the item stand in the Estimates as printed, and voted:—

Ayes—Mr. Walcott, Dr. De Freitas, Mr. Laing, Major Craig, Messrs. D'Andrade, Mullin, McDavid, Professor Dash, Major Bain Gray, Mr. Dias, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—12.

Noes—Messrs. Jackson, Seymour, King, Jacob, Crum Ewing, Humphrys, Peer Bacchus, Austin, Dr. Singh, De Aguiar, Gonsalves, Eleazar, Wight, Seaford, Woolford, Luckhoo and Smellie—17.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the insertion below the line as sub-head (16) "Plant Breeder (\$2,160 to \$2,880 by \$120)—\$2,880."

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. SEYMOUR: In connection with "Other Charges" I desire to call the attention of Government to the importance of the local Tuskegee movement. It is a movement that appeals to me and must appeal to everyone in this Colony. Young men now have a real chance of being trained in agriculture, both in its practical and scientific sides, with success. I think every encouragement should be given to the movement and to boys to go there and inculcate a love of agriculture, and I urge that Government give assistance to the movement by granting it a subsidy.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I was waiting until we reached "Education" to express the views which the hon. Member has just done. Last year money was collected to provide a Bursary and Government gave a grant-in-aid to make up the amount. It appears to me that that sum might be voted by way of a subvention and I intended to ask Government to give at least \$480 to the movement so as to assist in giving boys a thorough grounding in agriculture in all its phases. It would be a very good way for Government to assist in the development of agriculture generally and would show Government's willingness to assist the people of the country.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that the hon. Member had better wait until "Education" is reached to discuss the question. If any such vote is to be inserted it would be better under that head.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I observe that item

21 (Plant Pests Preventive Measures) has been reduced by \$1,000 to \$300, and the explanatory note is that the scheme for the eradication of *Antidesma* will not continue. I have discussed the matter with people who know something about it and they assert that something ought to be done. Perhaps the Director of Agriculture will tell us what is the reason for discontinuing it.

Professor DASH: The campaign for the eradication of *Antidesma* was in the neighbourhood of the Botanic Gardens and D'Urban Park. It seems that wherever cultivation takes place it is not a difficult weed to get rid of, but it is likely to flourish in waste places and eventually to overrun pastures and areas of that kind. There was a considerable amount of it last year at the back of the D'Urban Park area up to the Experiment Station and back of the Gardens and \$1,000 was added to the vote to take measures to eradicate it. Having experimented for some time we were in a position to start the campaign very promptly by the importation of certain chemicals and taking certain measures to keep it under control. We have fairly well cleaned up the whole of the infected area and there is little left, which I think we can do without asking for any money during the coming year. We shall watch it and if it is necessary to come back to the Council for funds to control any fresh outbreak that will be done.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I should like to know how item 15 (Apiary, maintenance and upkeep of, \$400) is spent.

Professor DASH: I thought the hon. Member had some knowledge of this question, about which a good deal has been printed in our annual report and in the Press since 1932. The money is used for breeding pure bred Italian Queens, purchasing equipment and paying a young man to look after them.

Mr. ELEAZAR: One feels doubtful whether there is any seriousness in these ventures. In 1931 the Director of Agriculture was kind enough to supply me, after waiting for three years, with 100 plants of citrus fruit. I told him I wanted the plants to establish citrus fruit in the neighbourhood of New Amsterdam and to get honey from those plants.

He gave me the plants but never enquired afterwards how they are getting on; he never even asked me for payment for the plants and never got it.

Professor DASH: The Apiary in Georgetown is the centre of Queen breeding activities and these Queens are sent all over the country. We cannot breed Queens in all districts. It is useful to people who take an interest in bee-keeping. In regard to the citrus plants it is so long ago that I forgot the circumstances. I know I warned the hon. Member that I was not distributing any more seedling plants, and that if he hoped to get results from the trees they must be planted on a selected site, well drained and protected from the inroads of thieves. The hon. Member planted them along a public walk, and, although the agricultural officer in Berbice keeps a watch on them, he reports nearly every month that some of the trees have borne but people would not leave the fruit alone. The only way to plant them is in some definite area where there will be supervision.

AUDIT DEPARTMENT.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am going to take the opportunity to make some general remarks in regard to this Department. I see only one item that anybody can successfully attack. This is a Department in which an attempt is made to increase the personnel. If there is one thing more than another that I deprecate it is to see officials running over one another in the country doing the same thing. We have the Auditor running over the country doing audits himself. Very often in a Post Office you will find the Postmaster General, the Auditor and other officials duplicating work. The District Commissioner is entitled to go in and check, so is the Commissary, and so on and so forth, as the Attorney-General would say. There seems to be no system, or we have a system which admits of duplication in the way indicated, and on top of that we are asked to increase the personnel of the Department. Here I observe an attempt is made to keep the same amount on the Estimates but to change the title of an officer and provide for the passage of an individual. I cannot conceive that it is fair to this country for Government to dispense with an officer who might not have reached the pension-

able age, give him a pension and lump sum, and then appoint another at the same salary with pension rights and a passage to bring him out. This savours of an attempt to oust local men from certain offices. I cannot conceive that Government cannot find some other person in the Service to do this work without the necessity of bringing a man from abroad. I view the matter with grave apprehension, and as an indication that a creole will never reach this salary again. Your predecessor, sir, assured me that, with the exception of the Director of Education and the Inspector-General of Police, he was able to find a local man to fill every position here. Why, then, bring a man from abroad? A thing of this kind could not take place in Barbados. An officer came out to this Department and it was found that all his qualification was a second-class College of Preceptors certificate. We sent him back. The Department does not need any more officers for the reasons I have given, and for the special reason that a local officer can be found I regard it as a deliberate attempt to keep every creole out of this office henceforth.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It is not often that I find myself in disagreement with my hon. friend. I agree with his general remarks in relation to the appointment of officers, but I venture to suggest that had my friend attended the meeting of the Select Committee and heard the reasons given for the appointment of this officer, he would probably not have made the general remarks he did. It is for that reason I rise to inform him of what actually took place. This is a particular Department of the Service. After hearing the views of the Head of the Department I, who was in the same position as my hon. friend when the matter came up, had to agree with the wisdom of Government in creating this particular post. I do not propose to deal with the merits of the officer who has retired. I think that officer is capable enough to fight his own battle, but I must say I am entirely in agreement with the view expressed to the Members of the Select Committee when the question came up.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The reason why I did not attend the meetings of the Select Committee is that I do not want to hear some-

thing that I cannot hear here. I would withdraw any opposition when I am convinced here, but private information does not move me.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I agree with the remarks of the hon. Member for Central Demerara that the hon. Member for Berbice River would have had more information if he had had sufficient interest to attend the meetings of the Select Committee. I do not say that the hon. Member might not have opposed the item, but he would have spoken with more knowledge. There have been many debates on the subject of the Audit Department for three or four years, and I find the view expressed that the top of the Department should be strengthened. That is also the view of Government and the accepted Government policy, and this post has been created in furtherance of that policy of Government and the expressed view of this Council. The Assistant Auditor will be a man who has been trained in the Colonial Audit Department, and he will be capable of carrying out duties as assistant to the Auditor which cannot be carried out by a subordinate clerk. All that was clearly explained by the Auditor to the Select Committee and was accepted by every Member. I do not think I need add anything further.

THE CHAIRMAN: I need only to add that whenever a post is vacant and I can find what the hon. Member has described as "a creole" who is capable of filling that post, if it is in my gift, I shall give it to that gentleman, or if in the gift of the Secretary of State recommend that gentleman. Only where there is no suitable candidate would an officer be brought from outside, and I may say that will be my policy during my Governorship here.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: beg to move the insertion as sub-head 7 of "Passages of Assistant Auditor and family, \$346."

Question put, and agreed to.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The votes under this head were approved by the Select Committee but I wish to get some information. The approved estimate for 1935 is \$34,000 while the revised estimate is

\$28,000. For 1936 the approved estimate is again \$34,000. It seems to me that there is something wrong or something requiring explanation from the point of view of \$28,000 compared with \$34,000.

Mr. SEAFORD: I, unfortunately, was not present at the meeting of the Select Committee when this estimate was discussed, but I think I pointed out afterwards that the revised estimate was less than the estimate for last year by about \$5,000. Last year and the year before there was considerable discussion as to whether new clerks were required or extra staff, and the majority of Members of the Council were against it but it went through. If one looks at the comparative statement of expenditure for the last ten years he would find that the estimate for next year is as high as it has ever been. When the District Administration Scheme was introduced it was represented that this was one of the Departments the expenditure of which was going to be considerably decreased. I have nothing against District Administration—in fact, I am very strongly in favour of it—but, with the exception of 1928, the expenditure is higher than it has ever been. I think some explanation is due to the Council.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am afraid that I may not be able to give the full explanation the hon. Member is asking for, but there are two items which would cause a considerable difference between the figures as approved and the revised figures. One is as regards my own post. It was vacant for some time and the salary lapsed during that period, and that was taken into account in making up the revised estimate. The second item relates to a Class I. clerk which was approved in the 1935 Estimates. That post was not filled until the 1st September and the salary was taken off in arriving at the figures. There is possibly some other change of which I am unaware, but I shall go into the matter and give hon. Members the figures, if they so desire.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It is very gratifying to hear what the Colonial Secretary has said about the appointment of the Class I. clerk. I remember moving the deletion of that item and a lengthy discussion followed, Government making out

a strong case as to the necessity for that additional clerk. Yet we find the necessity for that clerk did not arise until September.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Until the Secretary of State's approval was obtained the appointment of the clerk could not be made.

THE CHAIRMAN: It will be remembered that I referred in my Speech to the delay in forwarding the Estimates to the Secretary of State. No new appointment can be made without the approval of the Secretary of State and that was the reason for the delay in appointing that clerk.

Mr. DIAS: I should like to mention that the increase in the vote of this Department was due to the fact, which I think was made clear to the Council at the time, that quite a number of junior officers were running the Department, and it became necessary and was obvious to everyone that the Department had to be strengthened by the transfer of senior clerks to undertake responsible duties. I know of one particular instance of a clerk to the Attorney-General being transferred at a higher salary, which naturally increased the expenditure, but it is also correct that there was a corresponding reduction in the office which he left. Transfers were made resulting in higher expenditure, but that was necessary.

Mr. SEAFORD: Am I to understand that an officer was engaged in the Colonial Secretary's Office although not paid from the votes of this office? If that is the case I would like to know from which Department he was paid. The hon. Member's argument does not hold water. If there were too many juniors and the Department had to be strengthened, obviously there were too many juniors and they ought to have been got rid of or sent to another Department. I see the expenditure of the Attorney-General's Office has gone up and not reduced. The point about the Colonial Secretary's Office has not been answered, because it is costing more to-day than it cost before with the exception of one year.

THE CHAIRMAN: If hon. Members wish to pursue the question I think that in fairness to the Colonial Secretary, who has not been long in the Colony and to

whom the question was not raised in the Select Committee, this head should be deferred in order to give him an opportunity to go into the matter.

Mr. SEAFORD: My object was to give the Colonial Secretary an opportunity. I appreciate that he has been here a very short time and could not be familiar with the facts. It was not brought up in Committee because I was not there.

Mr. AUSTIN: One of the reasons why it was not brought up in Committee is that Government admitted that a miscalculation had occurred and they had to put right the wrong done. The Select Committee, I think, knew all about it. It is not a new matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for Georgetown North wish the items to be deferred? The estimates are on the same basis as before.

Mr. SEAFORD: What struck me was that the revised estimate had been considerably reduced, and I was wondering whether it was not possible to carry on at the reduced figure. If I am assured by Government that it is not possible I have no desire to press the point. If Government finds it possible to reduce it so much the better.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If any assurance is required that the staff of the Department is fully employed I can give that assurance. As to the exact working details of the officers I am not in a position to give them, nor am I aware of the exact revised figures for 1935 which have been referred to, but, unless hon. Members wish to query any of the items shown on the Estimates, I suggest that the estimates as printed be approved because there is no difference between them for this and next year. If it is only a question of the officers being fully employed, even with the short time I have been here I am quite able to give that assurance.

Item 5—Travelling Expenses and Subsistence Allowance, Colonial Secretary, \$50.

Mr. AUSTIN: In view of the remarks of Your Excellency to the hon. Member for Berbice River yesterday, I am diffident to ask that this vote be increased, but I

want to point out that we do not desire to have history repeating itself. The question was brought up at the meeting of the Select Committee and I think every Member was in favour of the vote being increased. I do not think it is a right thing that the Colonial Secretary of the Colony should wander around the country as the guest of any individual unless he has been specially asked to be there. I would prefer to see this vote deleted rather than leave it at \$50. This sum will only take the Colonial Secretary from Georgetown to the Corentyne Coast and back. It will not cover visits to the North West, Essequibo and other districts. Your Excellency cannot always spare the time to be away from headquarters and your deputy will be the Colonial Secretary, and he should be able to pay visits throughout the country when you are unable to do so. For that purpose \$50 is inadequate. With your permission, sir, I suggest that the amount be carried out at \$500, and be used as a token vote and accounted for in the usual way to the Treasury.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I am in entire agreement with the views of the hon. Member, but I do not know whether \$500 would not be too much. I certainly think that the chief Executive Officer should be given every opportunity to visit the outlying districts. I suggest that the vote be increased to \$250, but if other Members consider that it should be \$500 I will agree to it. I regard \$50 as an absurd amount.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am inclined to agree with the two Members and I think ten times the amount would do very well. Is Government not supposed to know its own business and what amount for travelling is necessary for its chief Executive Officer? If he wants to go on pleasure trips why shouldn't he go at his own expense. We are voting amounts commensurate to the officer, and who can know better than Government whether \$50 is not sufficient. I have never known Government yet, except where it comes to luncheon for Elected Members, to put down too small an amount: it is always something over and above what is required. The suggestion shows that Members of this Council do not appreciate their responsibility to the taxpayers.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I

appreciate the reasons why this matter has been brought forward. It is because hon. Members naturally think that the Colonial Secretary should go about the country and learn by seeing things for himself. I can assure Members that is my earnest desire also, and Your Excellency has permitted me to say that you will instruct me to do so in any case; but I am afraid Government is unable to agree to increase this vote at the present time. I propose as Colonial Secretary to go about the country as much as I possibly can, and I hope as soon as the Estimates are over to make a start in that direction and to carry it on in so far as work allows.

THE CHAIRMAN: I may just explain on the first point that the hon. Nominated Member raised that when speaking to the hon. Member for Berbice River yesterday I had in view Article 59 of the Order in Council, by which no vote can be put to the Council which tends to alter or to raise the expenditure. That was the only point. I think the Council would be well advised to leave the matter as the Colonial Secretary has suggested. I will undertake to see that the Colonial Secretary does travel and see something of the country. If necessary I will come back to the Council for further provision.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the insertion of a new item: "7. Passages of family of Colonial Secretary, \$135."

Question put, and agreed to.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon recess.

CUSTOMS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the deletion of item 12 (Expert valuation of precious stones, \$75) and the addition of a new item "12. Furniture, \$50."

Question put, and agreed to.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

MR. ELEAZAR: I propose to deal with the whole of this head, sir, because I know you are *au fait* with all the customs and practices of District Administration in other Colonies. The thing we have here

which has been denominated District Administration I consider to be nothing short of subversive despotism, bolstered up by either chicanery or a lack of information on the subject. We were told when this system was inaugurated that it would be very much cheaper than the system which it was intended to replace, but if you look at the Estimates you will see that every year the expenditure has been going up. That is only a part. What purports to be District Administration is really a French system of administration dovetailed with a system which is purely English. This form of administration is known on the Continent, where French customs prevail, and in the East—India and Africa. To point out the anomaly which is being foisted on this community, as Your Excellency knows, there are three paramount sub-institutions of District Administration. First of all, you have the Paramount Chief. What institution, or body or person, here answers to that institution? I submit there is nothing at all in this Colony that can be said to be taking the place of the Paramount Chief. Then you have the Native Treasury. What have you got here that answers to that institution? In Colonies where this system is in vogue half of the money collected in respect of every kind of licence and Customs in that particular district is paid into the Native Treasury for the personal use of the Paramount Chief. In British Guiana there is nothing corresponding to that. Here the District Commissioner collects all the revenue he can and puts it into the Treasury. The District Commissioners are only collectors of Government revenue and superceding them. This form of government cannot be grafted on the system of Local Administration. You have not got the Paramount Chief nor the Native Treasury. And where is your Native Court? You have not got it either, yet you have District Administration as it is known in places where it is prevailing.

I cannot conceive the reason for forcing this system on the community in spite of all the adulations heaped on it. Your Excellency might not know that such adulations are for the officers because of the way they try to carry on and not for the system. When Sir Harry Moorhouse came here his was the first voice that

spoke of Local Government. It was rejected by this Council. Sir Gordon Guggisberg came later and forced it on the Council, but very shortly after he propounded the scheme he recognised that it could not work in this country and intended on his return to propound another that would work. When his successor came he adumbrated a scheme, and here we are to-day. I think this country is very unfortunate in that there is a tendency with everybody who comes here to bring something alien to the Colony. This is a wild-cat scheme and an attempt to bring something that is intended for people who are just entering into western civilisation and a proper form of government. But the people of this Colony have passed that stage. We have had 100 years of administration on the British model. The absurdity of the scheme is seen in the promise to introduce County Councils in conjunction with it. County Councils are based entirely on the English principle and cannot be run with a scheme built entirely on a French system. Government will not listen to the formation of County Councils because it is found impossible to amalgamate them with the scheme.

This is an alien system which the people do not understand despite what some people would like to make the public believe. Whereabout in the English system will you find a Government officer made the head of a scheme of this nature? And how on earth do you expect to carry on this system in the way you are foisting it on the community. With all deference to your advisers, sir, the thing is not the same. The District Commissioners are called upon to do a certain job and they are succeeding in a measure to keep things going. Up to now they have not run counter to the opinion of the Village Councils, and the people seem to tolerate them, but as soon as they attempt to put down anything they would soon be told "Take your hands off." Overseers of the premier village have not obtained their salaries for three or four months because the village owed Government. Can Your Excellency conceive of a district in West Africa owing Government so that the District Commissioner would not be able to carry on the work of the District and the Paramount Chief not getting what is due to him? That could not be. I invite

Your Excellency's personal consideration of this question. You have asked for co-operation, and if you are to have co-operation you must give fairplay even to the cabin boy. Sir Gordon Guggisberg when he inaugurated the system said he expected every District Commissioner to be a King in his own district. I would like to see a District Commissioner attempting to be a King in his own district. Very seldom could he give an opinion which could not be altered by the people themselves, and in most things he has to apply either to Your Excellency, the Colonial Secretary or the Local Government Board for confirmation of what should be done. The District Commissioners have nothing to do with the Police or Magistrate here, but in West Africa he is Police and Magistrate himself.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the hon. Member that he confine himself to things which he knows something about in this Colony.

Mr. ELEAZAR: What I know is that District Administration is a foreign institution, and there is an attempt to foist it on a community which conditions do not suit. I am speaking on the authority of Sir Donald Cameron and Sir Gordon Guggisberg. The reason for the system was that the Local Government Board, which then administered the districts, was centred in Georgetown and it was thought that decentralisation would be an improvement, the idea being that the officers of the Board would be decentralised in different parts of the Colony and there see and get first-hand information to supply the Board in Georgetown for guidance in their decisions. Instead of doing that the officers of the Board have been made Commissaries of Taxation, Customs Officers, and everything else except District Commissioners. Where is the necessity for that? A man can travel from Georgetown to Skeldon in the morning and return in the evening for dinner, and there is no need for District Commissioners. I appeal to Government not to feel that all is well in this matter. Those are the points I wished to urge, and I urge them at this stage because I desire Your Excellency to address your own mind to the working of this system and not to be content that everything is well.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I have discussed

with my hon. friend on more than one occasion the merits of this scheme and I am quite conversant with his views. The complaint of Members of the Council is not that it is not a good scheme, but it has turned out to be too expensive. When the scheme was introduced the House was told definitely that there would be a saving. It is true that after the first or second year's experience Government had to admit that an error had been made in the first instance. Now we are finding that the scheme is going to cost much more than was anticipated. The second objection is that there is a considerable amount of overlapping, which one cannot emphasise too strongly, and it seems to me that if a careful examination is made of that complaint a remedy will be found and some reduction in expenditure might accrue. There is another complaint that the District Commissioner is supposed to be in charge of the district. I understand that if there are matters concerning anything at all in a district those matters must go through the Commissioner. That is where the overlapping comes in. The District Commissioner in the first instance deals with every question, after which it is sent to be dealt with by the main Department concerned and from there goes through the various channels until it gets back to the District Commissioner. If that is the case our complaint that there is too much overlapping is justified, and such overlapping no doubt accounts for increased expenditure.

There is a further grievance, but it may not be applicable to all the districts. It is common knowledge that the officers under the scheme are engaged in special work and are not looking after the collection of revenue in the way it should be done. They have not got the time and I do not think there can be any doubt that Government is losing a lot of revenue. These officers are engaged in auditing village books or, worse still, giving instructions to Village Councils not to pay their officers because sufficient rates were not collected during a particular week. In some districts the village overseers had to wait for their salaries. That is a minor grievance and I only mention it in passing. I am particularly concerned—and Government must enquire into it—with whether Government has got the right type of officers. The office in Georgetown is very

important so far as revenue recollection is concerned. I think I am correct in saying that this office collects between 60 and 70 per cent. of the total revenue under the scheme. This office is filled with Class III. officers. On one occasion the complaint was that the staff was not sufficient to cope with the work, but I believe a half-hearted attempt is now being made to remedy that complaint. I want to urge that the whole cost of the scheme should be examined and the officers put in their proper position and the right type in certain posts. If you want a man to look after distilleries or revenue see that you get the proper officer, or I am afraid that the scheme, which promises to be good in time, will run itself to death. Unless we begin now to go into the whole question, and see that the right type of officers are doing the right class of work under the scheme, I fear we shall not obtain the success we desire. We must remember that the question of revenue is a very important feature of the scheme.

Mr. LUCKHOO: Speaking for the Berbice district, I think the scheme has worked admirably. I speak from personal knowledge. For the success of the scheme you must have as District Commissioner a person who is sympathetic and can exercise his commonsense in the right direction. The point that has been made with respect to the loss of revenue by non-collection can be met by the strengthening of certain staffs. The District Commissioner in Berbice has been considerably handicapped in certain districts owing to poor travelling facilities, but steps have been taken which will go a long way in easing that situation and getting the revenue collected. The presence of the Commissioners in the districts enables complaints to be dealt with expeditiously. Complaints are frequently made in the districts, and, in my own case, when they are brought to me I go direct to the District Commissioner and the matter is at once investigated. People who have a grievance and know that they can get it immediately attended to and set right in that way feel that they have in the Commissioner one who is befriending them. The District Commissioner is not merely a tax-gatherer but also an administrator in his district. It is not correct to describe the scheme as a useless one. The people on the Corentyne Coast have

derived immense benefit from the scheme. Complaints are readily enquired into and representations are at once made to Government. Some people came to me with respect to the opening of a district middle walk trench, and the District Commissioner accompanied me to the spot where we met the people and secured for them the assistance they sought within a week. I am always impressed with the readiness of the Commissioner in Berbice to attend to any representations I make and I speak from personal knowledge of the scheme as I find it. I do not think we should jeopardise the scheme simply on account of the non-payment of a few dollars to an overseer, or that certain representations to a District Commissioner did not receive immediate attention.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I did not say that the scheme should be scrapped and I should not like that idea to go forth as emanating from me.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I did not intend to create that impression. I recognised from the hon. Member's remarks that he is in favour of the scheme and the merits of it. This discussion is a recurring decimal. Every year the scheme is attacked, but I feel it is working well. The scheme deserves the support of those Elected Members who have studied the working of it. It is true that there was some promise that the scheme would result in a reduction of expenditure. Unfortunately it has not done so, but it has resulted in better control of the districts.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I was dealing with measures and not men at all. If the hon. Member would tell the truth he would tell the Council that the Commissioner has caused \$87,000 to be buried on the Corentyne.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I do not think the Commissioner was responsible at all. I am intimately connected with the working of that scheme—if it is the Kildonan scheme—and the Commissioner was not responsible for it.

Mr. MULLIN (Commissioner of Lands and Mines): I would like to correct some misapprehension which appears to exist with regard to overlapping between the District Administration and the Department of Lands and Mines. First of all,

the statement has been made that there has been no saving by the introduction of District Administration, but, on the contrary, there has been an increase of cost. As the result of the introduction of the District Administration Scheme and the transfer of duties of officers from the Department of Lands and Mines to that scheme and the reduction of staff which was made possible, there was an immediate saving of \$29,000 a year. That has risen in 1934 to \$44,000. Taking the figures of all the Departments affected in the same way—the Customs, Lands and Mines, Commissaries, Immigration and others—and adding them up, there is a saving of \$87,000 in 1932 as against an expenditure on District Administration of \$70,000—an immediate saving of \$17,000—and in 1934 a total saving of \$114,000 as against \$93,000 on District Administration. I do not think that is very bad showing.

So far as my Department is concerned there has been a charge of duplication. The District Commissioner acts as the Deputy of the Commissioner of Lands and Mines and he can act in many cases where a junior officer of the Department or an ordinary officer could not act without the authority of the Head of the Department, therefore correspondence is greatly reduced. It is a little bit peculiar and difficult in this Colony to delegate duties of the Commissioner of Lands and Mines fully to a district officer for the reason that there has to be a central record of plans, therefore if applications are filed in a district for lands, in the last resort they are sent in by the District Commissioner to the Lands and Mines Department to be marked on our plans so that they cannot be given out to anybody else. Final issue of title is done by the Department of Lands and Mines and the District Commissioner delivers it to the people. After that the District Commissioner collects the rent and sends a notification to the Department of Lands and Mines where it is entered in the central register. I believe in larger Colonies it is possible to make each district self-contained. It would not be possible in this Colony because the expense would be too great, and it would be very inconvenient and probably the records might get destroyed or lost. So far as the Lands and Mines Department is concerned I can assure hon. Members that the

work has been facilitated and the collection of rents has improved. We could not afford to station officers in every district, and an officer visiting a district periodically could not get at the people in the same way as an officer residing in the district. It was very difficult and very expensive to collect rents in districts where there was no resident officer, and for a District Administration officer to combine the collection of rates and inspections with his ordinary duties when travelling is much less expensive to Government and much more effective.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: When Sir Edward Denham introduced the District Administration Scheme it was stated that the work to be done under it was then costing the Colony \$113,000 and that with the introduction of the scheme the cost to the Colony would be \$85,000. The saving on paper was shown to be \$25,000 for that year. The following year Government admitted that certain things had been overlooked the previous year with the result that the saving was reduced. In 1934 the saving went down to \$22,000 and on Government's own showing a further sum of \$8,000 was taken out of that \$22,000. The saving boiled itself down to approximately \$13,000 on the 1931 figures. What we are complaining about is that year after year what we were told would be a saving has resulted in expenditure on the wrong side.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think I can put the question of cost straight. The memorandum the hon. Member is referring to is one which was laid on the table in January this year, in which it was shown that on an approximate cost of \$110,000 in respect of District Administration Headquarters, District Administration and Immigration there was a saving of approximately \$14,000.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think the District Commissioners have done a considerable amount of good, as has been explained by the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice. If we have advanced at all and helped the Colony by doing so there is a certain amount of gain, but I don't want that it should be the idea that this District Commissionership is going to save money at the cost of efficiency. We

know that one of the tasks undertaken by the Commissioners is the work of the Immigration Department. I can assure Government that the work which was done by the Immigration Department is not being done by the Commissioners. They have not got the time to do it and they are not in several cases capable of doing it. We have as Immigration Agent General the Government Medical Officer of Health. That, I think it will be agreed, is rather a farce. The District Commissioners are, I take it, Immigration Agents in their districts. Immigration Agents visited various parts of the Colony and went into various matters, but that work cannot or is not done thoroughly under the present scheme. I mention that one case because it happened to come under my notice a short time ago. I do not know the facts with regard to the collection of revenue, but I am sure that just as much is being collected and very much more easily than in the past. The only point I wish to make is that whatever we do we require efficiency, and if it is going to cost us a little bit extra to put the scheme on an efficient basis I am prepared to agree with it. It is no good our saving sixpence or a shilling here and there and sacrificing dollars.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I should like to make a few remarks about revenue collection generally. The charge has been made before that revenue collection has suffered as a result of the District Administration Scheme. I am not prepared to accept that. Nevertheless, Government has admitted that on account of various new functions being thrown on District Administration within the last two or three years the staff has been somewhat inadequate to cope with the work. By those new functions I refer to items like the Sugar (Temporary) Excise Duty, the Copra Ordinance, Sea Defences, and so on. All these Ordinances throw a burden on District Administration. Memories are very short but only last year, in this Council, those facts were brought out, and the Council agreed on that account to increase the revenue collecting staff by no less than seven Class III. officers. Four of these officers were specially to improve the standard of revenue collection when that was done. I believe that revenue collection now is quite as good, if not better

than it has ever been under the old system. One feature of revenue collection which pleases me as Treasurer is the collection of revenue in respect of liabilities by the Local Authorities to Government. I am very much afraid that in the past the Local Authorities were rather inclined to view these liabilities as debts which might or might not be met as necessity arose. Now, of course, the District Commissioner, who is the watch-dog of Government so far as the collection of revenue is concerned, sees that these liabilities are met as far as possible. The collection of village rates has considerably improved and therefore the collection of Government revenue of interest and debts has also improved.

Mr. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs): Upon the inauguration of the District Administration Scheme the expenditure in connection with the sub-ports of New Amsterdam and Springlands, which was previously under the Customs Vote, was transferred and the direct supervision of the staff placed under the District Commissioner of Berbice. That is, I consider, a move in the right direction and a considerable improvement. Although it is absolutely necessary to have Customs Officers in those two places the work they have to perform in that capacity is insufficient, and it is therefore a distinct advantage to have them doing some additional work under the District Administration Scheme. In regard to New Amsterdam, some years ago we had as many as five officers there. In course of time ships stopped going there and eventually there was only one officer. I was very much concerned that there should be only one officer stationed at those ports, especially as a considerable amount of revenue is collected, and I did not think that one man should be entrusted with all the work of the Department as well as the collection of revenue. For some time prior to the inauguration of the scheme I had to get the assistance of the Post Office to collect money for us. Taking everything into consideration I do not think anything better could have been done than by placing the officers of the Customs Department in Berbice under the scheme.

Mr. WIGHT: On the last occasion I described the District Commissioners as "glorified rent collectors." At the meet-

ing of the Select Committee I felt that if it was the view of other Members that the scheme should be given a trial to run for another year I would give way on the point, but if I have anything to say when the Estimates are being considered next year I shall be very strong on the question. The scheme has been four years running and I am not satisfied that it is a success in the least. When Government have a weak case they bring a lot of witnesses. I think that some of the brains at the head of this scheme can be better utilised than it is at the present moment. If we go into the scheme a little more minutely during the next twelve months we will then either throw it out or have a new scheme.

Mr. LAING (District Commissioner, East Coast Demerara): The system of District Administration in this Colony and in the West Indies is not new. The District Government Ordinance is dated 7th January, 1911, and we have had a Commissioner in the North West District and a Commissioner on the Corentyne Coast for many years. Each Governor when he came to this Colony felt the need of having the various district activities co-ordinated under one officer who would be called Government Agent or District Commissioner. Sir Gordon Guggisberg, when he was here, wrote a memorandum on the whole subject. I remember, as Clerk of this Council and as His Excellency's Private Secretary, attending a meeting at Government House shortly before the Governor went on sick leave at which he set out in outline the whole scheme for District Administration. I am not aware that Sir Gordon ever withdrew the remarks he made on that occasion. He left the Colony, I think, on the following day. However, the District Administration Scheme was introduced in this Colony so as to co-ordinate all the district activities under one head—District Commissioners.

Prior to the introduction of this scheme each Department was represented in the district by an officer: for example, the Commissaries, Immigration Department, Local Government Board and the Lands and Mines. I myself, prior to my transfer to the Colonial Secretariat, had twelve years' experience in districts as a Commissary Officer and Immigration Agent. I can therefore speak with some authority as to

the work that was done by officers before the introduction of District Administration. A case in point occurred a fortnight ago. I sent one of my officers to Mahaica to collect Crown land rents. That date was also set apart for the revision of the voters register of the village, and having performed those duties he checked the Post Office before he returned to Head Office to write up his day's work and to deal with correspondence in connection with his other duties. Prior to 1932, when the District Administration Scheme was introduced, those duties would have been performed by three separate officers. A Commissary would have gone to check the Post Office, a Lands and Mines officer to collect the land rents, and a Local Government officer to perform the village duties. Each of those officers would have received a separate travelling allowance and a separate salary, and none of them would have had a full day's work to do. I was one of those officers and I can speak with authority. Those days are past. The Colony cannot afford to pay three officers to do the work of one, and that is what District Administration represents. All those activities are co-ordinated under District Administration. District Administration was also expected to reduce expenditure and also to show better results than had been shown by the previous system of administration. All these results I make bold to say District Administration has achieved. The Colonial Secretary has told us that there is a saving of \$14,000 on the Establishment.

With regard to the duties of the District Commissioner, one of his most important functions is to advise the Local Authorities in his district. I say without any fear of contradiction that the villages in the districts today are far better off as the result of District Administration. The rate collection, as the Colonial Treasurer has said, has increased considerably. In my own district, for example, when I took over in 1932 the collection was 66 per cent. of the current rate; it is now 82.6 per cent. As the result of this better collection the Local Authorities have been able to reduce their village debts and consequently to reduce their rates. This increase in the rate collection has not been due to any "snatch and grab" system but has been

due to the fact that the District Commissioners have been able to consult the people through their Local Authorities, and they have been able to formulate schemes with the assistance of the Public Works and Agricultural Departments and to submit those schemes to Government so that the villages might be benefited. The late Governor laid down that before any such scheme would be approved, or any grant given, it must be shown to the satisfaction of himself and his technical officers that those schemes would produce tangible results. I claim that the schemes that have been submitted by District Commissioners have produced tangible results to the benefit of the districts generally and to the villages in particular.

I would like here to refer to the work carried out in my own district in order to assist and develop the cane-farming industry, which provides profitable and congenial employment for a large number of villagers. In 1932, with the assistance of the Director of Agriculture and the Member for Central Demerara, I was able to negotiate with the Sugar Producers' Association an arrangement by which cane-farmers are paid by weight of cane with a guaranteed minimum of \$2.20 per ton of cane. The results were seen in the following year, 1933, when the farmers were able to sell to the estates' authorities 16,224 tons of canes for which they received \$36,181. In 1934, when there was a flood and the farmers lost a considerable amount of their cultivation, they sold 13,237 tons for which they received \$29,797. For the first six months of this year the farmers have sold 14,618 tons of canes and received \$32,825. In other words, the farmers have produced during six months of this year as much cane as they produced for the whole of 1933 and far more than they produced in 1934. Those results have been achieved as a result of the schemes put up by District Commissioners for the improvement of drainage and irrigation in the villages where cane farming is established. If any further recommendation is required of District Administration as far as it affects the villages, I would refer to the addresses presented to Your Excellency by the Local Authorities in which they admitted in no uncertain terms the benefits they have received as the result of the District Ordinance and expressed the hope that it will be extended.

Reference has been made to the non-payment of an overseer's salary. I feel sure that the hon. Member for Berbice River and the hon. Member for Central Demerara, when they got that information, were not very careful in verifying the facts. The Local Authority concerned was notified by the District Commissioner that their account was overdrawn by \$25 and that he had on hand bills certified by the Chairman for payment amounting to \$300, in addition to which there were sinking fund and interest charges on loans very little of which had been paid by the Authority concerned. The District Commissioner can not be expected to make payments when the village account is overdrawn.

The statement was also made that the \$87,000 spent on the Corentyne Coast was the result of recommendations made by the District Commissioners. That is wholly incorrect. It has been said by the hon. Member for Central Demerara that as the result of District Administration the Colony has lost revenue. I have here figures prepared for me by the District Commissioner for Georgetown who is in charge of the statistical data. I do not refer to the total revenue collection in the districts for the reason that those revenue receipts include such items as excise duty on sugar which was not collected prior to the introduction of District Administration. If we take the actual licences issued by the old Commissaries Department we find that the total collected under the head "Licences Various" was \$220,297.21 for the year 1931. That amount has increased year by year and in 1934 we find the total receipts \$229,280.09—an increase of \$8,982.88. There were short collections in the County of Essequibo of \$4,229 and in the County of Berbice. I do not think hon. Members would expect the revenue from Essequibo to have increased owing to economic conditions in that County. As regards the County of Berbice, that District has had the misfortune of never having a permanent Commissioner until the recent appointment of Mr. Macnie. I have a telegram here from his second in command in which he informs me that at the end of October his receipts under the head "Licences Various" show an increase of \$602. The revenue receipts for 1935 are in excess of the amount collected for 1934. In my district alone under the head "Licences

Various" there is an increase of over \$8,000. The total cost of the Department on the East Coast is \$18,232, therefore the increase under one head of revenue only represents to-day two-thirds of the total cost of running that Department for the year. I claim that there has been no reduction in the revenue receipts and that, on the contrary, the collection from "Licences Various" far exceed the amount collected by the old Commissaries Department for the reason that the collection is carried out more systematically and payment is more rigidly enforced.

As regards Crown lands, the Commissioner of Lands and Mines has informed the Council of the assistance he gets from the District Commissioners in the collection of revenue of that Department, and I can do no better than quote Your Excellency's own words in your Speech to the Council where you said that the Colonial Treasurer had written to you that "there are distinct indications of a steady increase in the receipts under Lands and Mines revenues and it can confidently be expected that this increase will continue at an accelerated rate in future." Even under the head of Rum, which may be considered a luxury, Members will find an increase of revenue receipts. Distillery Tax receipts have gone up, and if the sales of the spirit shops on the East Coast are examined—as I examine them from month to month—Your Excellency will find that the withdrawal of rum from bond in 1931 amounted to 11,010 proof gallons and in 1934 to 14,349 proof gallons, showing an increase over 1931 of no less than 2,338 proof gallons. That I attribute entirely to the more careful watch that is kept by the District Commissioner and his officers over the rum distilleries on the sugar estates in the district. I was amazed when I went to my district in 1932 to find some retail spirit dealers there had carried on during the previous year quite a lucrative business and yet had withdrawn practically no rum from bond. The reason for that was quite obvious and the cause of the increase in withdrawals of rum from bond is also obvious. It is due to the strict supervision over the distilleries from which in previous years there had been a very serious leakage. That is within the knowledge of Members of this Council who are connected with the sugar industry. I say District Administration

is a distinct advance on the old system of administration, and it has shown better results at a reduced expenditure.

Mr. WALCOTT: Have you made any collection on refined edible oil?

Mr. LAING: The hon. Member's knowledge of the working of the Copra Ordinance is far greater than my own, but I say it is a mistaken idea that every producer of coconut oil is a producer of edible oil as described under the Ordinance. For years past in my district there have been 50 or 60 small coconut mills operated by peasants. Those persons have produced what is called in the Ordinance "crude coconut oil." It is an edible oil, but it is not an edible oil as described in the Copra Ordinance. The hon. Member for Central Demerara will bear me out when I say that Government gave an undertaking that they would not interfere in any way with the peasant industry of producing crude coconut oil which is used by the Indians of British Guiana. This oil is still being used. I admit that on my inspection of mills the samples I took from seven persons were found by the Analyst to contain something which was introduced to eradicate the characteristic odour of the crude oil. That is an offence under the Ordinance and full particulars were placed in the hands of the Assistant Attorney-General. Collection of excise duty on edible oil, as far as the East Coast is concerned, has been negligible, but that is due to no fault of the Commissioner.

Mr. SEAFORD: The District Commissioner claims that there is higher efficiency because there is a greater collection of the distillery tax. Books have been always kept. Does he put that down to better supervision, or does he maintain that the estates have been robbing Government by not paying the distillery tax?

Mr. LAING: Of course I do not. I know as well as the hon. Member that complete books are kept, under the supervision of the District Commissioner and his officers, and the estates regularly and promptly pay their distillery tax. The increase in distillery tax, I think, was due to the destruction by fire of the rum bond in the London Docks. What I do claim is that we have got increased revenue from rum taken from the bond by retail spirit-dealers

as the result of the tightening up of supervision of the distilleries on the sugar estates. I do not wish to cast any aspersion on the licensed distiller, who is also the estate manager, but rum being what it is and human nature being what it is there is bound to be leakages.

Mr. SEAFORD: I will not and cannot agree that because more money is being collected it shows better supervision. You have to bear in mind that a very much larger amount of money is being distributed in that district. The Commissioner himself pointed out that there has been a large increase in cane-farming. He claims that that is due to District Administration. I claim that it is due to the high price paid for canes. We also have to remember that a considerable amount of money is being spent in the district on sea defences, and where you get increased money circulated in a district the revenue is bound to go up. I don't want it to be considered that I think the Commissioners are not doing their work, or are not doing it efficiently, because I know they have been; but I do not think it is right that they should claim the full benefit for the increase. I would like to ask the Commissioner if he has ever heard of bush rum.

Mr. LAING: As regards cane-farming, cane can only be grown on properly drained and irrigated lands. If the Commissioner had not seen to the drainage and irrigation of these lands the quantity of canes could not obviously have been grown, therefore it is claimed, and I think rightly claimed, that it is entirely due to the District Commissioner that these canes have been produced and sold.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that we have reached the stage when comparisons are said to be odious, and these are matters of detail. I make no apology to the charge that I have brought up a number of witnesses; I thought the new Council should hear the case fully.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am not asking Government to wipe out the Department by a stroke of the pen but I am asking Government to look into it. I am almost persuaded by the last witness, so I find the prisoner not altogether guilty and ask Your Excellency to reprimand and discharge him.

Item 1a—6 District Commissioners, \$17,400.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It has been suggested that one of these posts should be abolished on the retirement next year of the officer in Essequibo. It is felt that now that we are going to abandon the place and let it run wild we have no necessity for a District Commissioner in Essequibo.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I strongly oppose such a proposal. What is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Is there to be nobody in Essequibo at all?

Mr. JACOB: I intended to congratulate Government on the very able way they have defended this scheme, and I think it is a lesson that Elected and Nominated Members should copy. I am compelled to agree to the scheme after hearing the various witnesses, but I do suggest that the question of some amalgamation should be considered. The North West District has a District Commissioner who is in addition Magistrate, Deputy to the Inspector-General of Police, and has other offices added to his several duties. In Essequibo I think it is advisable to have two posts combined and you will have the same amount of efficiency with some economy. As regards Georgetown and the East Coast, I think some economy should be exercised there also. I do not know how we should reduce this vote, but I throw out the suggestion that at least one of the District Commissioners' post should be abolished, so that Government might consider the matter and next year make some re-arrangement. I feel that economy must be exercised. I have heard quite a lot about revenue being collected. I would like to remind the House that the number of motor and other vehicles is increasing, and although the collections of revenue are also increasing I am not sure that there is not some laxity still. The point I wish to make is that Government should seriously consider economising in this Department. I supported Government on the appointment of an Assistant Auditor for the reason of ensuring the collection of revenue. While I feel that there should be a saving in this Department, I think something should be done for the

North West District. I do not consider that it is reasonable to expect one individual to discharge all the responsible duties there. The officer there is an excellent man, and from all I have heard he is doing all he possibly could in the interest of all concerned, but I think it would be a step in the right direction if that officer is relieved of some of his duties and an Inspector of Police appointed to assist him. I hope Members will support the idea of abolishing the office of one of the Commissioners and leave it to Government to make further economies next year.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am afraid I do not quite gather what the proposal of the mover of the amendment is in regard to Essequibo. He suggested that the District Commissioners should be reduced by one because one of the District Commissioners retires from Essequibo, but whether it means that Essequibo is to go without an officer or whether it is to be amalgamated with another district I have not been able to understand. Whichever it may be it is quite impossible to leave the district without a District Commissioner, and I do not think anyone who lives in that district would suggest it should be done. I did hear it suggested in the Select Committee that some junior officer might carry out the duties. That is simply a proposal that someone should do the work without getting the pay of the post.

Mr. SEYMOUR: What I suggest is that I do not think you need have such a highly paid officer there. A Chief Clerk is quite sufficient. The duties can easily be done by a Chief Clerk with the assistance of a Second Class Clerk and another Probationer. That would effect a very large saving. I think the travelling is in excess of what it should be, and the Commissioner, whoever he may be, should be left to do the travelling alone. I do not see the necessity for a Commissioner and a Commissary travelling together. A saving of about \$2,500 can be effected if my suggestion is adopted.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: This matter was considered by the Select Committee at considerable length and the suggestion was agreed to, and I do not think it is necessary now to waste time by covering the whole ground. The District Commissioner

of Essequibo at the present time is the District Engineer. He has a number of duties to perform and we know he is retiring next year. The object of reducing the item is to afford Government an opportunity of reconsidering the whole matter and to see what arrangements can be made to effect a reduction. It is not a proposal to abandon the scheme altogether; the idea is to effect economy. It seems reasonable to remove this item from the Estimates until Government has had an opportunity to look into the matter and report to the Council.

THE CHAIRMAN: I could not accept that suggestion because Government cannot be rushed suddenly into the alteration of a scheme which is the result of a good deal of consideration in the past. There is a good deal of time before Mr. Nightingale goes and I will undertake to give this matter my consideration. I will consult

him in the first place. I should like to have his views on what would be the effect on the district, which is suffering largely from the disappearance of sugar. I ask the Council to remember that under our present organisation it is necessary for the officer in Essequibo to have the title of Commissioner, because there are certain statutory duties that he has to carry out and I would hesitate before giving that title to a First Class Clerk. If the Council would pass the item as it stands I will give an undertaking to consider the matter. I cannot do more than that.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: With that undertaking I withdraw the amendment.

Item put, and agreed to.

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