

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 7th September, 1932.

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

PRESENT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. N. Cannon (Georgetown North).

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

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

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

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

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

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

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 6th September, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

THE SEWERAGE SCHEME.

The Council resumed the debate on the motion of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Cannon) which is as follows:—

Whereas the cost of the Georgetown Sewerage Scheme is greatly in excess of the original estimate of expenditure; and

Whereas the Georgetown Town Council and the ratepayers of Georgetown never contemplated that the sewerage scheme would cost practically five million dollars when they accepted liability for eighty per cent. of the expenditure, the Government to bear the remaining twenty per cent.; and

Whereas the imposition of excessive sewerage rates in Georgetown has created disastrous economic conditions in the City, which have re-acted adversely on the Colony as a whole; and

Whereas representations for a re-allocation of the cost of the scheme have been made by the Georgetown Town Council to Government and the Secretary of State for the Colonies continuously since 1927; and

Whereas in the opinion of this Council it is imperative in the interests of all classes in the community to arrive at an immediate, satisfactory settlement of this question of liability as between Government and the Georgetown Town Council; and

Whereas the Government's proposition of re-allocation of costs on a fifty-fifty basis will probably lead to further disputes and delay and will not afford the necessary measure of relief to property-owners in Georgetown; and

Whereas it is desirable in the opinion of this Council to deal with the cost of the scheme as a "Colonial Question" that is, to make the whole cost a charge on the general revenue of the Colony:

Be it Resolved,—That Government be requested to introduce legislation without delay for the purpose of making the whole cost of the Georgetown Sewerage Scheme a charge on the general revenues of the Colony as from January 1, 1933; and

Be it further Resolved,—That a separate and special landing or bill of entry tax be imposed as from January 1, 1933, at a rate calculated annually to provide the sum required for the Government's annual commitments in respect of the scheme: and

Be it further Resolved,—That for the purpose of a settlement in respect of the year 1932 the Georgetown Town Council be requested to pay to Government the difference between the amount collected by the existing three per cent. bill of entry tax and the total sum required to defray interest charges for this year: and

Be it further Resolved,—That a copy of this resolution be telegraphed forthwith to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Mr. CRANE: I have spoken so frequently on the subject of the Georgetown Sewerage Scheme in this House and elsewhere that I confess I have developed a surfeit of the subject. Were it not for the fact that I consider a final settlement of the matter absolutely necessary for the economic prosperity of the town at least I would not occupy the time which I propose to do in further discussion of the subject. I do not propose to go back to much of what happened prior to the completion of the scheme. We had the period of preparation, the period of construction in which there was a great deal of recrimination on both sides, the period during which it is claimed by the ratepayers that a very large sum of the taxpayers' money was thrown away on the construction of the scheme, which, although a valuable scheme to the community, might have been constructed at a cost far smaller than the actual sum of \$5,000,000. I pass over reference even of the fact that the ratepayers were allowed to believe that their part of the scheme would not have exceeded 2½ million dollars, which included road re-construction, re-construction of the water scheme and also the supply of certain surface drainage pumps. That sum was broken up into these various details at a conference held in this hall between the Members of the Town Council and Sir Wilfred Collet. The report of that conference tends to show that the entire cost of these schemes would not have exceeded 2½ million dollars. To support that Government actually passed an Ordinance in 1923 providing for the reconstruction scheme under contract and authorising the Town Council to raise 2½ million dollars by the issue of their own bonds. It is well at times to refresh one's memory of history, but for the purpose for which this motion is brought I do not

think it would be of any advantage to go any further into the history of this very regrettable transaction. I come then to the final period of financial settlement.

The scheme has been completed for at least three years. An adjustment of the position ought to have been made long before this, and I have both from my place in the Georgetown Town Council and at various interviews with the Governor intimated to him, for what it is worth, my considered opinion based upon my intimacy with affairs in Georgetown that the quicker Government settled this matter the quicker the town at least is likely to recover its financial equilibrium. I pointed out that the property market is dead, and that no persons were purchasing or selling or building properties. I also pointed out that a multiplicity of transactions result from the sale and purchase of properties in Georgetown, that a great deal of money is circulated by reason of these transactions, that Government obtain a large amount of revenue from these dealings, and that the whole machinery was at a standstill due to the unsatisfactory state of the property market, and the fact that no person would venture to invest his money on immovable property in Georgetown whilst this sewerage matter remains unsettled. There are three or four types of workers who participate in the profits by the sale and purchase of properties. You can hardly think of any direction of trade or commerce that does not benefit from the money flowing from the sale or purchase of property. The method or the means by which that money filters through one person to another acts like a current of electricity to a mass of wire, and Government gets its share of that money from the amount of individual wealth which goes into the hands of the various parties taking part in those transactions. Then there is the direct benefit which Government gets from those transactions by means of transports, mortgages, cancellments and agreements. The figures supplied to the mover of the motion in reply to his questions show that Government is losing quite a large sum of money in respect of fees and duties payable on transports and mortgages of immovable property. In 1927 Government got \$6,550 in fees and \$8,000 in duty from the exchange of property. In 1931 Government got only

\$7,000. There was a very sensible drop year by year in the amount collected from this source. In the case of mortgages there has also been a drop. For the first half of this year the amount paid in respect of duty on mortgages is \$88.30, and if that is doubled the amount which will be collected on mortgages will be \$170 for this year as compared with \$800 in 1927.

Those figures show that Government is suffering a substantial loss of revenue, due to the condition of the property market, therefore from Government's own point of view it ought to be a matter of very great concern that the sewerage question should be settled. I suggest that at the bottom of this civic economic stagnation is the fact that no person with money to invest will buy property in Georgetown. Property values have collapsed and the whole state of things requires re-organisation, the first step towards which must be a permanent settlement of this sewerage question which will enable people to feel some security in their investment. The result of this uncertainty has not only resulted in loss in business and revenue to Government but also in a number of persons quitting the town, in rents collapsing, and in the number of vacant houses throughout the city. While on the one hand you have heavy and perhaps excessive taxation, on the other you have practically the loss of the means by which that taxation ought to be met. Not only do you not find that a man gets no income on his property as a return on his investment but you find him incurring debt to pay off his rates, and when you look at the root cause it is the insecurity which has existed for the last four or five years in respect of the ownership of property in Georgetown. I am aware that any financial settlement on so gigantic a proposition requires a great deal of consideration; but I submit that we have expended more time over it than even is warranted by the size of the property. Questions have to be considered here by the Executive, by Joint Committees of Government and the Town Council, by the Town Council itself, referred to England to the Secretary of State and by the Secretary of State to the Treasury, and then with all our ideas of how these matters can best be settled in the interest of the people of the Colony you have an official at the Treasury who, in the present state of our finances, has the last word and can veto proposals for

the amicable and equitable settlement of this question. Such a state of affairs is unsatisfactory and only leaves us at the point where we left off yesterday when the Constitution Question was discussed.

The hon. Member who moved the motion has conferred a very great benefit, in my opinion, on the community by his persistence in bringing the matter up for discussion and for settlement, and by his sacrifice in travelling to Great Britain to interview the powers that be. I understand that on the other side he was not even able to see the financial authority on the Treasury staff. The matter probably was discussed at an interview between the Colonial Office and the Treasury. The Colony's position has been compared with that of a man who carries on business and is heavily indebted to his bankers. He desires to settle one of his problems in a particular way and discloses to his bankers the method of settlement, but he is told by his bankers that he must not adopt that method but another. The time has come when, debtors as we are, we should try to set our house in order to avoid this cramping situation that exists in what is called financial control of the Colony at the present moment. Had it not been for that control I could not see what reason could be assigned, even by the Secretary of State, against the proposition of the hon. Member for settling this question that has been so long outstanding. The hon. Member proposes that the whole cost of the Sewerage Scheme, both in respect of the main drainage and house connections, should be made a Colonial Question. I am a citizen of Georgetown, a Town Councillor and one of the general taxpayers of the Colony, and I represent a large section of the people in the country in this House. I therefore have not got a very easy path to tread on my journey to the settlement of this matter. I have considered it from all angles, both from the point of view of the Municipal taxpayer and from the point of view of the general taxpayer, and I have brought into play of the study of the matter those cardinal principles of public finance which require that the person who receives the benefit should pay at least the greater share of the debt incurred. I have also borne in mind the fact that a large number of schemes have been provided for the more populous parts of the coastal belt of the

Colony—drainage, water supply and sea defences. I have not been unmindful of the fact that \$6,000,000 have been expended on the construction of sea defences to protect the sugar estates and the villages and that the entire sum is a charge upon the Colony's revenue. The villages and sugar estates are not called upon to pay directly their share of the cost of the sea defences. I have seen on my examination of the subject that certain river districts which pay equal taxation with other parts of the Colony have had neither river defences, drainage schemes nor even a water supply.

On consideration of the whole matter it has been forced upon me that certain parts of the Colony are paying more heavily than others on the principle of paying for what benefits you receive. The incidence of taxation is grossly unevenly divided. But our finances are in such a peculiar state that we have to get out of this situation in the best way we can with a view to securing that equilibrium in our finances which is so necessary in the rehabilitation of our business. I am therefore prepared, if Government is prepared to sanction it, to risk the odium of certain individuals and certain sections of the country and support what is undoubtedly not a very fair means of settling this question—making it a Colonial Question—in order to put an end to this matter, because I believe that what the remaining parts of the country would lose in being called upon to pay for what others are using they are likely to gain on the economic recovery which must follow a final settlement of this matter. That is the only ground upon which I feel myself justified in supporting a settlement as a Colonial Question, but I support it because I consider it the easiest way out of the difficulty. There is a great deal in the argument put forward by the hon. Member, based on figures supplied him, that whereas a 4 per cent. Invoice Tax would have covered the entire commitment in respect of the sewerage debt on a Colonial Question basis, Government has played with the situation by adding $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to the existing $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. taxation without materially solving the question. The hon. Member claims that that method of paying for the scheme is the least obtrusive on the community, and a good many people have questioned the wisdom of Government's proposal in raising the tax

from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 per cent. just to obtain the difference to make up the 50-50 settlement. In a settlement on the Colonial Question basis the bulk of any increase of indirect taxation in the form of levies through the Customs must fall upon the City of Georgetown, the proportion of imported articles which find their way into consumption in the countryside being small as compared with the proportion consumed by the inhabitants of Georgetown.

The hon. Member went to London to have the matter discussed and the final result of that discussion was that the 50-50 basis which was agreed upon for two years was made permanent. I do not know what has impelled the hon. Member to take up the same form of proposal which was rejected on that mission. I am told by the hon. Member that it was not rejected. If the proposal was not rejected I should like some explanation when he comes to reply of what was the exact position in which it stood after the completion of the interview with the Colonial Office. As far as I am aware, and the public are aware, the Secretary of State finally said the settlement will be on a 50-50 basis, and that is what we were told in the communication by Government. My remaining remarks will be restricted to the settlement authorised by the Secretary of State. I impress on Government that if that is the basis on which the settlement is to be made it should certainly be made before the expiration of the current year, and my duty is to warn Government of the grave responsibility it will be incurring if the matter remains outstanding in January, 1933. The Town Council accepted the 50-50 basis conditional upon the cost of the scheme being made to include not only the actual constructional cost but also the interest paid on the money obtained for carrying out the work. Government occupied the position of a contractor who borrowed the money to execute the scheme and had to pay interest on that money. The total cost of the scheme, including interest, is \$6,300,604. On a 50-50 basis the Town Council's share will be \$3,150,302. The Town Council has paid \$1,013,726 as simple interest and \$33,447 as compound interest, or a total sum of \$1,047,173. What is to happen about that? Surely Government has to repay, having included it in the cost, that to the Town Council.

I happen to differ somewhat from my colleague because while as a Town Councillor and ratepayer I should like to see the Town Council the recipient of a cheque for \$1,047,173, I can easily see the futility of even issuing bonds upon which interest will have to be paid, but I can see the propriety of the Town Council saying to Government "Very well, we have been good enough to keep you, the contractor, to the extent of four-fifths in funds to pay interest. You must now return us that four-fifths in the shape of a credit against our liability of 50 per cent. of the total cost." In that case the ratepayers will find themselves in the favourable position of having already paid a great deal of their share. I counsel Government to make a statement in this matter. It will go a long way to ease the consciences and misgivings of the ratepayers of Georgetown and to enable people to commence preparations for restoring the equilibrium of the property market in Georgetown. The people have reached the point when the last juice of the orange is being squeezed out. If we are to save their property it is the bounden duty not only of the Town Council but of the Government to endeavour to maintain the system of small proprietorship, and you can only maintain that system by adjusting the whole matter during 1932. The longer Government keeps the matter outstanding the more complications will arise. I hope Government will be really anxious to close this chapter in our colonial history. Every great work undertaken has been the cause of grave misgivings on the part of the inhabitants of the Colony. I can add nothing further than urge on Government to apply the only remedy which remains to put a fitting end to the very sad chapter in the history of government in this Colony.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Even though Government has considered it advisable to re-allocate the cost on a 50-50 basis, the position to-day is no better than ever since the question arose. The question is a very sore one to property-owners, and to-day it is cheaper to rent a house than to become the owner of one. It is not at all encouraging for people to own property. The lending companies find it difficult to collect interest and instalments due on mortgages. In some instances these companies have had to take over properties to protect their

mortgages and also to pay one or two years' rates. What better times can come in the property market on a 50-50 allocation? I say none. Rents are being reduced considerably and with numerous unoccupied houses properties are an absolute drag on landlords. Even the Town Council are finding it difficult to collect rates and I understand that rates are outstanding from 1930. Government is a partner in this business and if the Town Council are unable to pay the other partner has to fulfil their obligation. I think it will be admitted that the amount collected by the Bill of Entry Tax will more than meet the commitments of Government. That being so strengthens the motion because it will take very little taxation to make the scheme a Colonial Question. That is a very sound reason for Government accepting the motion, and I cannot urge it too strongly because Government must be aware of the hardship the ratepayers are undergoing at the present time. Properties of widows and orphans have been sacrificed and unless relief is afforded others will share the same fate. Government should not allow the question to remain open any longer. The property market has been in an unsettled state for a very long time and it will not become normal until this question is settled.

Mr. SEAFORD: I should like to congratulate the hon. Member for Georgetown North on his wonderful pertinacity; it deserves to get anything through this House. I should also like to correct two statements made by him. The first is the statement about every insurance company in this town agreeing with this scheme being made a Colonial Question. The hon. Member did receive a letter to that effect. In the case of one company, of which I happen to be a Director, the Secretary was told to confer with the Secretaries of the other companies. He did so and sent a reply without the knowledge of the Directors. At a subsequent meeting of that company held within a few days it was unanimously decided that a settlement on a 50-50 basis be asked for.

Mr. CANNON: I rise to a point of correction and ask the Clerk of the Council to read this letter.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am aware that that

letter was sent, but it was sent by the Secretary without the knowledge of the Directors. The minutes of the meeting are there for hon. Members to see should they desire to do so. The second point made was that all the houses in the street were in favour of it. I am here to state that is not so. There are several very big houses in the street having very large interests in the city who are entirely opposed to this being made a Colonial Question. It is not surprising to know that Fire Insurance Companies desire it to be made a Colonial Question. It is quite natural for a man to desire to get as much benefit for his business as he can. I appreciate that the Members for Georgetown are anxious that it should be made a Colonial Question, but we want to take a wider view than that. I am sorry that the seconder of the motion is not in his seat to-day because he always gives us that amount of relaxation which is so necessary in these debates. Yesterday he said he had not read the motion. I would have liked to ask him the question: "Did he get a mandate from his electors?" I am told it is not necessary. I take it, then, that all the Members here know the wishes of their constituents without asking. Meetings were held in the villages throughout the Colony and those meetings were unanimously opposed to this being made a Colonial Question. We do not represent Georgetown alone but the whole Colony. If we are to have the views of the people in Georgetown we should also have those of the people in the country districts. The hon. Member for Demerara River referred to sea defences being made a Colonial Question. The sea defences have not been made in the true sense of the term a Colonial Question. The sea defences were first paid for by a tax on land. That was changed and they were paid for by an export tax directly on the producers.

Mr. CRANE: No tax levied and paid into general revenue can be claimed for sea defences or anything else. It is a tax paid into revenue and not allocated to any particular purpose.

Mr. SEAFORD: It was stated that 1 per cent. was to be raised to cover expenses of sea defences, and I claim that was money paid direct by industries and producers for

that purpose. Hon. Members may remember that a short time ago there was laid on the table a report by Mr. Case. It is no secret to say that Government finds it is unable to raise that expenditure and is going to call on the country districts to pay 50 per cent. or more. If Government cannot afford to pay that expenditure are you going to call on Government to pay more towards this scheme? We come now to artesian wells. These wells have been distributed throughout the Colony and paid for by everyone in the Colony. It must be remembered that there are two wells in Georgetown which have also been paid for by the Colony. Had there not been these two wells Georgetown would have been in a serious position during the drought. Although sugar estates had to pay towards these wells, they had to pay out of their own pockets for any wells sunk on their estates. With regard to the question of drainage, we know that pumps were installed in the country districts and a good deal of excess expenditure was incurred. Government has come to the help of the villages but it is not going to bear the whole cost of these pumps. It is just the same principle suggested for Georgetown. Let Government assist by all means but not with the whole. I agree that the people of Georgetown are entitled to some relief. The mover of the motion said that an agreement on a 50-50 basis is no relief. If it is no relief why not go back to the 80-20 basis. I seem to remember that at a meeting of the Town Council held a very short time ago it was unanimously decided to ask Government to come to an agreement on a 50-50 basis. Why this sudden change of front? It seems impossible to follow. I am in favour of a 50-50 settlement of the question. I am in favour of its being made retrospective and that the money the Town Council has already paid should be repaid to the Council, not in cash but extended over a number of years because we know that Government has not got the money. The point was made that Government is losing money in fees on transports and mortgages. I believe the reason for that is the delay in settling this question. There are also several large firms who have not paid their sewerage rates, not because they could not pay but because they feared that they would not get their money back if a settlement was favourable to them. It has been represented that a little more taxation

would not hurt people in the country, yet I have heard it said that taxation had reached saturation point. That has been drummed into my ear here day after day and now we are told something else.

Dr. SINGH: I expressed my views on this question some months ago. It is true that the scheme is an asset to the inhabitants of Georgetown, but it is also true that it is an asset to the Colony. I maintain that the interests of Georgetown are interwoven with those of the Colony as a whole. The external appearance of Georgetown is very striking in the number of houses untenanted and the number that need renovating and painting. That is proof that the owners are not financial. On account of the high rentals people have gone into the suburbs or country districts where rentals are cheaper. If this question becomes a Colonial one rental of houses in Georgetown would automatically drop, those people would find their way back to Georgetown, and in due time owners would be in a position to renovate their premises and thereby provide business for Water Street and relieve unemployment among masons, carpenters and painters. It is wisdom for Government to hearken to the voice of the people.

Mr. FARRAR: I happen to know the views of responsible people in New Amsterdam. They have been expressed to Government on more than one occasion and there was an expression of their opinion only last week. Briefly, it is that they are very greatly in sympathy with the City of Georgetown over their present difficulties, but they cannot see their way to the scheme being made a Colonial Question. Their view is that if the scheme cost \$5,000,000 Government should come to the rescue on a 50-50 basis. I take that to mean that a readjustment of the total amount spent on the scheme will be arrived at and 50 per cent. would be allocated to Georgetown and 50 per cent. to the Colony. A great deal has been said about the difficulties that now exist and I cannot help feeling that some of the difficulties of property-owners in Georgetown are not entirely due to the Sewerage Scheme but due to the severe economic depression from which people in other parts of the Colony and other parts of the world are suffering. I say for the people of New Amsterdam and of Berbice generally that

they do not favour the scheme being made a Colonial Question, but they view with sympathy the position of the people of Georgetown, and if Government can come to an amicable arrangement on a 50-50 basis on the original cost of the scheme they would be quite satisfied.

Mr. GONSALVES: We have had several discussions on the question of the re-allocation of the cost of this scheme. If Government had taken the view of the Town Council as represented in a resolution submitted recently a good deal of this discussion would have been averted. The hon. Mr. Seaford said he saw nothing wrong in paying on a basis of 50-50 and that it should be retrospective. A resolution to that effect was sent up by the Town Council. Government's reply was an acceptance of the 50-50 basis but the proposal that it should be retrospective and the conditions set out in that resolution were not accepted. That it is the general wish that relief should be afforded was shown by the public meetings which were held in the Town Hall. Those meetings were very representative and were attended by merchants, secretaries of responsible companies, and by people interested in sugar estates and other lines of business. If it is said that those persons were not responsible and that the meetings were not representative it is impossible to say what would be.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Major Bain Gray): This matter has been the subject of debate in the Town Council and this Council and of correspondence between this Government and the Imperial Government, but I think it is generally accepted that on the basis of an equal division a fair and equitable settlement has been arrived at. One hon. Member has asked the question: How does that statement compare with the report of the Committee which sat towards the end of 1930 of which I had the honour to be Chairman? That Committee recommended that the Main Drainage Scheme should be settled on the basis of an equal division of 50-50 and that the house connections part of the work should be settled on the basis of 40-60 between Government and the Town Council, giving a proportion of 9 to 11 whereas in the present settlement we have a basis of an equal division of 50-50. That Committee included the

hon. Member for Demerara River and the hon. Member for Georgetown North, and if my biography ever comes to be written I hope it will be recorded as one of my achievements that the Members signed that report with a very small reservation. Like the hon. Mr. Seaford, I desire to congratulate the hon. Member for Georgetown North on his persistence in bringing forward this question in season and out of season. If there ever is an Order for pertinacity I think the hon. Member ought to be the first member appointed from this Colony. When it comes to his advocating that the matter be made a Colonial Question on the analogy of the sea defences I believe that his recollection of that matter is not quite so consistent. We know, of course, that consistency is the last vice of statesmanship. I believe that at one time the hon. Member showed considerable reluctance to paying Georgetown's share of the sea defences. Hon. Members with a longer memory than I have will know whether that is the case.

We have by a process of discussion and consideration arrived at the basis of 50-50, and no one I think can seriously doubt that it is, taking all the circumstances into consideration, as fair a one as human ingenuity can arrive at. Reference has been made to the coastal drainage schemes in which Members may remember the original basis was 40-60, but with the alterations about to be made in a number of instances that will approximately come out on a 50-50 basis also, so that we have a closer approximation in that respect

also. It has been suggested that Government is responsible for the present holding up of a settlement of the scheme. I suggest that is not an accurate statement of the case. Government has arrived at what it considers a permanent settlement of the matter and the period we are passing now, I suggest, is due entirely to those who are suggesting that this settlement is not permanent. It is permanent as far as I know, as far as Government knows, and as far as any human being can foresee. The only question is whether the settlement is retrospective in the full sense. Government has informed the Town Council that is a matter for further consideration. Government sees a good deal of reason in that suggestion and that is the only question that can be described as outstanding in any degree at all. The hon. Member for Demerara River quite correctly stated the financial and constitutional position with regard to special taxation when he pointed out that a particular tax once it went into general revenue could not be earmarked for a particular purpose. I should like to remind him in support of that that the motion itself is a departure from the financial procedure he has advocated. In the light of the real and permanent settlement indicated Government cannot accept the motion, and it remains for the Town Council, Government and the community to proceed to make this settlement permanent and final at the earliest possible moment.

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