

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Thursday 20th July, 1944.*

The Council met at 12 noon, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President in the Chair.

## PRESENT:

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

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

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.

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

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, C.B.E. (Georgetown North).

The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K.C. (Nominated).

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

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated).

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

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E. (Nominated).

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

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E. (Georgetown South).

The Hon. J. B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. C. P. Ferreira (Berbice River).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on Tuesday, 11th July, 1944, as printed and circulated were taken as read and confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

## WEST COAST SEA DEFENCES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. McDavid) communicated the following message:—

## MESSAGE NO. 2

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

It will be recalled that in February this year abnormally high tides and strong winds caused severe damage to the sea defences between Union and De Willem, West Coast, Demerara, which gravely endangered adjacent Government and private property. Acting under section 11 of the Sea Defence Ordinance, 1933, the Governor in Council on 29th Feb-

ruary, 1944, made the Sea Defence (Emergency Works) Order, 1944, requiring the Sea Defence Board to take such immediate action and construct such works as may, in the opinion of the Board, be necessary to avert or mitigate the inundation by the sea as the result of the damage to the sea defence works in the area. Steps were also taken to report the matter to the Council and to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

2. An estimate of the cost of repairs and reconstruction, totalling \$700,000, was subsequently prepared and submitted to Government by the Sea Defence Board with a recommendation that the works should be carried out as soon as it was found possible to establish the necessary supervisory organisation. Details of the estimate which was communicated to the Finance Committee of the Council, on 29th March, 1944, are given in the Schedule appended hereto, and it is anticipated that the work can be completed in two years provided equipment is obtainable and regular supplies of materials are available.

3. The estimated expenditure of \$700,000 on repairs and reconstruction has been sanctioned by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and \$100,000 is being provided on Supplementary Estimate this year. I shall be glad if the Council will approve of the execution of these essential works.

GORDON LETHEM,  
Governor

#### SCHEDULE.

Estimate for making good Sea Defences, West Coast, Demerara, damaged by Spring Tides between 25th and 26th February, 1944.

##### (1) De Willem—

(a) Cast new concrete back apron to protect dam—1,230 feet at \$20 per foot .....	\$ 24,600
(b) Dig new trench across De Willem facade to replace existing deep drainage trench behind sea wall, construct stop-off and fill existing trench behind wall .....	15,000
(c) Cost of protective works to dam already carried out.....	5,000
(d) Underpinning wall at \$20 per foot .....	6,000

##### (2) Zeeburg—

Construct new concrete back apron west of sluices—1,530 feet at \$20 per foot .....	30,600
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##### (3) Uitvlugt—

(a) Rebuild concrete coping between sluice—200 feet at \$60 per foot .....	12,000
(b) Rebuild broken section of coping east of sluice—450 feet at \$60 per foot .....	27,000
(c) Strengthening works to protect wall east of Uitvlugt sluices .....	10,000

##### (4) Leonora—

(a) Drive bulkheads east and west of affected portion of wall which recently subsided—2 at \$1,445 ..	2,890
(b) Fill in trench behind sea wall .....	1,000
(c) Construction of second line of defences including stop-offs .....	6,000
(d) Construct back apron to protect dam behind wall—1,200 feet at \$20 per foot .....	24,000
* (e) Construct new wall—500 feet at \$80 per foot .....	40,000

##### (5) Stewartville—

Rebuild short length of coping—50 feet at \$25 .....	1,250
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##### (6) Edinburgh—

(a) Fill behind wall near Leonora sluice and cast concrete apron to protect sea dam .....	11,000
(b) Boulder fill in front of wall .....	2,000

##### (7) Edinburgh—Anna Catherina—

(a) Drive bulkheads in sea wall east and west of affected length of wall—2 at \$1,445 .....	2,890
(b) Rebuild sea wall in front of Edinburgh—Anna Catherina—3,800 feet at \$72 per foot .....	273,600
(c) Cost of protective works—second line of defence .....	2,520

##### (8) Cornelia Ida—

Construct back apron to protect sea wall—400 feet at \$20 per foot .....	8,000
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\*This figure is to cover the cost of a completely new sea wall on the same line as it is at present. An attempt, however, will be made to save the present wall, which has settled badly, by driving toe sheet piling and strengthening the dam. If this attempt should succeed the figure of \$40,000 will be considerably reduced.

(9) **La Jalousie—**

(a) Raising earth dam and rebuilding sea dam supporting wall .....	1,000
(b) Casting concrete apron behind wall—850 feet at \$20 per foot .....	17,000

(10) **Union—**

(a) Rebuild earth dam behind sea wall .....	2,500
(b) Cast apron behind sea wall—1,900 feet at \$20 per foot.....	38,000

(11) **Plant and equipment required for above works**

	38,000
	602,850
Contingencies and Supervision .....	97,150
	<u>\$ 700,000</u>

**LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEMES.**

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Heape) communicated the following message:—

**MESSAGE No. 3.**

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

I have the honour to refer to Resolution No. XXXI of 1943 passed by this Council on the 1st day of December, 1943, in which this Council accepted in principle the recommendations contained in the interim report of the Committee appointed to make practical recommendations in regard to Land Settlement and agreed that the necessary action be taken to give effect to them.

2. Three areas have now been examined—Plantation Vergenoegen, **cum annexis**, on the East Bank of the Essequibo River, Plantation Cove and John on the East Coast of Demerara and Bush Lot or Lot No. 28 on the Corentyne Coast, Berbice.

3. **Plantation Vergenoegen, cum annexis**, comprises four estates:—

1. Vergenoegen .....	1,080 acres
2. Philadelphia .....	297 acres
3. Barnwell .....	599 acres
4. Greenwich Park.....	770 acres

2,746 acres

which have all been valued.

**Vergenoegen.** The front lands of Vergenoegen were sold many years ago and now comprise the Vergenoegen Country District with an area of 163 acres. It is not proposed to disturb the lands of proprietors in the Country

District in any way but to acquire the remaining portion of the estate with an area of 1,080 acres in which there is rice cultivation of 280 acres, scattered coconut trees and an area of 90 acres fenced round for the agistment of cattle. The remaining area of approximately 100 acres can beneficially be cultivated provided the main drainage—irrigation system and the empoldering dams are reconditioned. The Consulting Engineer estimates the cost of carrying out these works at \$15,000.

**Philadelphia, Barnwell and Greenwich Park** consist of an area of 1,666 acres of which only 240 acres are cultivated; there are also two small pastures of 50 acres each.

4. The remainder of these estates is covered by a dense growth of bush and small trees which in the back portions changes to thick forest which, it is estimated, will cost at least \$70 per acre to clear sufficiently for cultivation purposes.

The estimate by the Consulting Engineer for reconditioning the drainage and irrigation systems and carrying out the necessary repairs to dams and structures on the four estates is in the vicinity of \$75,000 to which must be added roughly \$70,000 to clear land which is overgrown with heavy bush, trees, etc.

To this sum of \$145,000 will have to be added the cost of breaking down for rice cultivation old sugar cane beds at Barnwell and Greenwich Park which, it is estimated, will cost as much as \$50 per acre if carried out by hand or \$10 per acre if mechanical appliances are available.

To this will also have to be added the cost of acquisition and of laying out and establishing as a land settlement. These costs are not known at present.

5. It is proposed to acquire the whole of **Plantation Vergenoegen, cum annexis**, by negotiation, and if this method is unsuccessful the provisions of the Acquisition of Land (Land Settlement) Ordinance, 1943, will be invoked.

It is realised that the cost of acquisition of the four estates and converting them into a land settlement will be high, but it must be appreciated that if Plantation Vergenoegen only is required it will not be advisable to dispossess the present tenants and the remaining area is insufficient for the establishment of a model settlement in addition to



which the most suitable land for residential purposes is already occupied by proprietors of the front lands within the Vergenoegen Country District. It would, however, be possible to extend the present cultivation along the lines of a land settlement scheme utilising the present tenants as a nucleus and housing additional population on the remaining front lands at Vergenoegen and on one or more of the other estates which it is proposed to acquire in the vicinity.

#### **Cove and John.**

6. Reference was made in my previous Message No. 25, Ninth Session, 1943—1944, that before coming to a decision as to further action or relinquishing of the proposal in regard to Cove and John that I would be glad to have the views of Members either in writing in response to my minutes or by discussion in Council, if so desired.

Only one Honourable Member has expressed his views in writing and it is now proposed to discuss this matter fully in Council.

7. The Land Settlement Committee in its report (Legislative Council No. 12/1943) recorded certain facts about this area and these have already been reproduced in Message No. 25, Ninth Session 1943—44, together with an estimate by the Consulting Engineer amounting to \$20,500 for reconditioning the drainage and irrigation of the estate. The Message also referred to a minute by the Chairman of the Drainage Board pointing out that the estimates for reconditioning do not guarantee the drainage of the estate as it is situated in one of the worst drained areas on the East Coast of Demerara and in order to guarantee farmers against periodic inundation it will be necessary to augment considerably the existing pumping capacity thus making the proposition uneconomic.

8. The Consulting Engineer has considered the matter of the provision of adequate pumping capacity for the area from Golden Grove to Victoria which includes Plantation Cove and John and is of the opinion that Cove and John would be properly drained only by mechanical means since it was too low for gravity drainage. Seven or eight pumps costing perhaps \$200,000, or more, would be necessary for the main drainage alone. The drainage rates would then be around \$7 or \$8 per acre.

I recently received a deputation from persons who stated they were residents in the area concerned asking that

Government proceed with the proposal for land settlement at Cove and John. The deputation was emphatically of the opposite view to that expressed by the Chairman of the Drainage Board and by the Consulting Engineer and was of the opinion that while the drainage of Cove and John was satisfactory it was that of Golden Grove, Nabaclis and Victoria, the remainder of the drainage area, which was inadequate and unsatisfactory.

According to a recent census taken by Government's Agricultural Economist the area of 1,682 acres which consists of 500 acres freehold and the remainder Crown land has existing cultivation at the present time as follows:—

Rice	.....	275	acres
Ground Provisions and			
Fruit	.....	495	acres
Coconuts	.....	375	acres
Cattle Pasture	.....	266	acres
		<hr/>	
		1,411	acres

9. Honourable Members will be invited to decide whether this estate should be acquired or whether the proposition should be relinquished, particularly having regard to the advice of the Chairman of the Drainage Board and the Consulting Engineer as to the inadequacy of drainage and the necessity of augmenting considerably the present available pumping capacity.

#### **Bush Lot or Lot No. 28, Corentyne.**

10. Consideration has recently been given to the acquisition of land to be used for the purpose of a settlement scheme on the Corentyne Coast. Several areas have received consideration, the most suitable of which appears to be that of Bush Lot.

Consisting of 546 acres of freehold property and 672 acres of Crown land of which 1,056 are empoldered, this area is at present cultivated to the extent of:—

Rice	.....	294	acres
Coconuts	.....	100	acres
Ground Provisions	.....	56	acres
		<hr/>	
		450	acres

while the remainder is used for grazing cattle with the exception of a small area for residential purposes.

Lands adjacent to and on both sides of the public road are suitable for and could be made into a residential area, while other lands in the first depth comprise alternate reefs and lower

lands which could be utilised for coconuts and growing provision crops interspersed with rice fields. The backlands are flat and suitable throughout for rice cultivation while the unempowered savannah lands in rear could be utilised for cattle grazing except in the very wet months of the year.

11. It is understood that the owners of the estate would be prepared to sell the estate to Government together with the rice factory and the estate house.

The cost of reconditioning the main canals and dams is estimated to be \$46,000 to which must be added the cost of purchase or acquisition and of laying out as a land settlement scheme.

These additional costs cannot be fixed at the present time with any degree of accuracy.

12. Bush Lot has the advantage that in the event of any considerable extension of land settlement in this locality being necessary or desirable the adjacent estates of Maida and Kilmarnock could also be acquired and laid out.

The owners of Maida and the major portion of Kilmarnock are not desirous of disposing of their properties, however at the present time, but the advantages of single large settlements is obvious when compared with the alternative of a number of small and unconnected settlements and it may be necessary to acquire these neighbouring estates at a later date.

13. Members are now invited to consider the acquisition for land settlement purposes of

- (i) Plantation Vergenoegen, **cum annexis**, East Bank, Essequibo River;
- (ii) Plantation Cove and John, East Coast, Demerara; and
- (iii) Bush Lot, Corentyne, Berbice in connection with which formal motions will be placed before Council. **East Bank, Demerara.**

14. It is proposed to make recommendations with regard to the area—Craig to Coverden. A survey extending from Craig to Garden of Eden was first made by the Consulting Engineer some time ago. The Land Settlement Committee asked for an extension of this survey up to Coverden.

The plan of the survey from Garden of Eden to Coverden has now been completed. The area has not yet been visited by the Land Settlement Officer nor the land valued. As soon

as the necessary action has been taken and estimates prepared proposals for acquisition of suitable areas will be submitted.

GORDON LETHEM,  
Governor.

## PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

### PROCEDURE OF BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members of Council, I might just say a word on procedure today. We have a number of important motions and important pieces of legislation, some of which may not be entirely easy. The Attorney-General tells me that he had received notices of a considerable number of amendments on the Bills, and I would like to express my appreciation of that action by Members, as it will certainly facilitate and expedite action in Council.

I would propose after taking the first reading of the Bills to proceed to the motions. Mr. Laing is present and will speak to the motions touching Land Settlement, as he has a far more complete and intimate knowledge of that question than we other Government Officers present. I had hoped Mr. Case would also be present, particularly in view of questions raised touching figures for one of the projects, but he is unwell. If necessary, when we come to the point, I can defer one or all of the motions in order to secure his presence, but we will see how we get on.

At three o'clock I propose to adjourn in order that there should be held the meeting of the Finance Committee on the third Thursday of the month. The Treasurer will preside and it is probably unnecessary for me to come, but I will hold myself ready in case of need.

I would like to take this opportunity in pursuance of our practice of keeping Members as fully as possible aware of steps Government may be taking, and recording in our proceedings any recent activities of importance.



**SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS.**

The Social Welfare Officer, that is Mr. Laing, has completely swamped the Colonial Secretary and myself with a number of Social Welfare projects of every kind and variety. These, or most of them, are going forward to the Secretary of State for assistance under Development and Welfare Act after consultation with Executive Council and, as our practice is, explanation of what is happening to Members of this Council, probably most conveniently in Finance Committee.

**RICE EXPANSION.**

Further, the eighth scheme touching rice expansion is going forward to the Secretary of State. I have in fact passed the despatch today. Members will remember that £131,000 (\$628,800.00) was granted for rice expansion, and this is the last of the eight schemes, Bloomfield-Whim, which had been somewhat held up owing to detail of construction. Members are of course aware that actual work is well in hand under the vote of funds advanced some time ago. I would here remind Members of the procedure that none of these projects, which are the subject of correspondence with the Secretary of State, and applications for assistance actually commit this Colony to expenditure until they have come finally before this Council, and financial provision made, when of course all details can be put forward.

Now I wish to take you a step further regarding action on the two principal Drainage and Irrigation projects, that of East Demerara and that of the Corentyne.

**EAST DEMERARA DRAINAGE SCHEME.**

I regret to say that in regard to the former, the East Demerara Scheme, we have come up against certain difficulties which were not evident two

years ago or earlier when the first engineering plans were made. Certain important factors—disadvantageous—have materialized since.

I should remind you that in my original comprehensive despatch of the 31st January, 1943, I stated that after the Bonasika Scheme which had then been sanctioned and was beginning, the East Demerara project was the most economic and most likely to carry itself and pay its way with return. I was given every reason to believe from the sugar interest that the estates at least could carry their share, and that it was regarded as an economic proposition by the East Demerara Water Conservancy. New and very important factors have intervened. The most important is the curious and abnormal development on the seashore, the constant accretion which has in turn greatly hampered drainage and greatly added to the expense of drainage. Further, the abnormal rains of 1942/43 have tremendously emphasized this difficulty. In the returns that are now coming to us, particularly for expenditure in 1943 on drainage, the rates have worked out very high and remain high in the Estimates for 1944.

Examination by Mr. Case has very clearly shown the resulting heavy liability that will come against Government. Under the formula of the Committee on maintenance rates, of the recommendations of which you are aware Government is to carry 40 per cent. of the burden, in certain instances that is even now a liability against Government for \$27,000 for the year, and there is no foreseeable end to this liability at present. Rates have run very high, over \$5 in the case of one village, up to nearly \$6½ in the estimate for this year. Further, if the new irrigation project went through with the additional liability spread over the whole area per acre, there would be an addition of \$1.54 per acre; and on the assumption that Government had

again to assist, a further liability of \$38,000 per annum would be incurred. A total of \$65,000 per annum is to be paid by Government in respect of the village areas. There would be no certainty of return or such productivity as would enable this to be carried by the village areas.

This has been the conclusion expressed by the Consulting Engineer; and the Agricultural Economist, Mr. Huggins, whose report on the agricultural and sociological and economic aspects is also nearly ready, reaches the same conclusion working independently.

I have been dealing with the village areas which were of course the immediate concern of Government in this matter, but the same general factor is found in regard to the estates. The East Coast sugar estates have in fact approached me with representations showing their quite abnormal difficulties over the last two or three years, showing their comparative figures: and while some of these refer to other factors such as labour and particular war difficulties, such as the shortage and high price of fertilizers and bags, a very principal factor is that of high costs of drainage. They showed me a very heavy figure indeed actually spent in 1943 with maintenance rates per acre also very high, averaging up to \$8½, and on one estate at least going over \$10 per acre. Now these are very high rates indeed, especially when we compare them with costs in other parts where gravity drainage is feasible and costs may be well under \$2 per acre.

We are naturally very much concerned over this new aspect of the matter, not only of course with reference to the particular East Demerara Drainage and Irrigation Scheme, but also in regard to the whole future agricultural economics of this area. The Director of Agriculture, in fact, speaking to me yesterday, emphasized this aspect of it.

We feel ourselves, therefore, compelled to consider the serious necessity of getting down drainage costs before we can proceed with any scheme in the hope that it might be economic. The Consulting Engineer is therefore reverting to an older idea which has been considered, I believe in the past, but was not considered practical owing to its cost being higher than private interests can reasonably carry. This project is to divert the drainage from the sea to the rivers, the Demerara and Mahaica; to do on a large scale what we have done last year on a small scale in the Ann's Grove, Clonbrook, Greenfield, Unity, Lancaster section, providing drainage by a new canal to the Mahaica, instead of using the Greenfield sluice to the sea. On a much bigger scale it should be an engineering possibility to drain the whole of the East Demerara area into the rivers. This should not only mean much cheaper drainage, but also should be definitely beneficial to sea defence. As you know what is good for sea defence, like this recent accretion, is bad for drainage, and *vice versa*; and a sea defence wall or line which was not complicated when numerous drainage sluices were in action, would of course be a much more satisfactory arrangement than what exists at the moment. Such a scheme would be expensive. It might very well reach \$3,000,000 but even at that price it might be valuable if the results are cheaper drainage, cheaper and better sea defence and the salvation of the perhaps impossibly difficult agricultural future in this whole area. We feel bound to pursue this project and make the plans and estimates.

Now I should say a word or two as to the Corentyne Scheme. I am glad to say that so far we have not met any particular snags. I informed you a fortnight ago that the report by the Agricultural Economist had been definitely favourable, in fact, optimistic to a degree I had not expected. Mr.



Huggins had satisfied himself as to considerable prospects of increased production and even that rice lands under ordinary normal circumstances would be able to carry the necessary charges. Moreover, the maintenance rates estimated, that is, for the main drainage and irrigation system—on exactly the same parallel as East Demerara—are quite low. For example, the amount chargeable for irrigation maintenance on village areas works out at 45 cents or in specially difficult years at 54 cents, with total rates which village areas would have to pay well under \$2.00. The irrigation costs which might be chargeable against estates would be quite negligible. Using the same formula as recommended by the Committee on maintenance rates in reference to village areas, the costs given would work out at the small amount of less than \$8,000 per annum for the whole area, which is a very different picture from the \$65,000 in East Demerara.

It is of course accepted that a very great deal of internal planning and internal drainage has also to be done before the lands can be taken up: but I might remind you that quite a lot of the internal drainage is being done even now in connexion with Rice Expansion Schemes. For example, that at Crabwood Creek is practically complete.

In view of the favourable indications of the agricultural and sociological report and of the present low estimate of maintenance costs, it seems very well worth while to pursue the examination of the internal works and of the economical planning which may be necessary. Mr. Huggins's report has been completed and is going round to the Government Officers immediately concerned.

There is one matter I do wish to make clear and that is that of procedure: that all these discussions and despatches do not commit the Colony to anything. We get the advice of the Secretary of State and of the Comp-

troller and we may even get a definite allocation of funds. But I would repeat that no action can actually proceed until the matter has been actually brought before this Council and financial provision made, and at that time of course every detail may be requested and stated. That is the best time for such examination in detail. But if we wait to do all that sort of thing first before we venture to put our plans into initial form and get them forward, we should have to wait for a very long time for everything and then have all the delay of getting such things begun.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Now I want to touch on another subject, a matter I have had in mind for a long time but which I have forborne to put forward because of the difficulties of practical application. That is, the question of post-war long-term planning of economic development.

I have written a minute, copies of which have gone to Members of Executive Council, and perhaps I might most simply give its gist if I quote from a summary in the last paragraph which reads:

“The aim should be a truly comprehensive examination of what is needed for the fullest development of the basic resources, both material as well as human, and of the services and organization of the territory. The principal objective that must be borne in mind is the improvement of productive and earning power in order to increase the chances of self-support.”

I began my minute by saying that I thought the time had come when we might endeavour to get on record in a co-ordinated form a conspectus of future social and economic development in this Colony. I referred to several official papers there are on this subject,



as to action proposed or actual in other countries, and I referred to the value of a machinery for the purpose which, if we had not got in Executive Council or in any department we might have to create. I commented a little cynically on a glib facility with which these things can be written up, and the easy assumption that all we have to do is to appoint a cabinet of ourselves as experts to pronounce. I commented on the need of practical objectives and of certain postulates in accordance with the policies on which the Imperial and the Colonial Governments were proceeding—though of course it may well be that close examination might produce facts making necessary some reorientation or alteration of priorities.

I said that the general terms of reference should be wide and something as follows:

“to examine, report and make recommendations as to long-term post-war planning and development in the Colony.”

I then made particular reference to all the important problems of the Colony.

*(His Excellency here detailed briefly the list of Headings).*

In regard to agricultural development the principle of comprehensive planning of drainage and irrigation would be a foundation and the rate of progress might depend on several factors.

It is then said in the minute that the growing of sugar cane and the production of sugar must, as far as can be foreseen, be continued to be regarded as the basis of agricultural stability. On the other hand, it must be accepted that the production of sugar must be accommodated to a much more diversified agricultural development than has been evolved in the past. It should be Government's aim to assist the industry to the utmost possible degree, to take advantage of world conditions and of all the assistance, direct or indirect, available: the sugar industry on its side must accommodate

itself to changing sociological conditions and to policies which aim at such things as making available to agricultural workers land with security of tenure, house plots and agricultural ground, diversification of agricultural development, and general social welfare improvement in rural districts, which are other prime objects of Government's policy.

The rice industry is then referred to, saying that it is already considerable and that it has great, if uncertain, potentialities. The aim must be the securing, maintenance and expansion of export markets in the western hemisphere. The industry must realise that production costs must be kept down if it is to be able to compete successfully in these markets. The industry must realise that while Government will do its utmost to develop the necessary conditions and in particular mechanisation, a considerable degree of control and legislation will be necessary to secure continuity of production and fair distribution of results to all classes engaged in the industry.

Commenting on mining, the minute speaks of a greater degree of industrialization and processing in the country and the encouragement of constructive gold mining with modern equipment with a higher degree of extraction, and comments on the need of transportation in the mining areas.

#### LABOUR AND IMMIGRATION.

The proper use of labour resources will be one of the most important subjects to be tackled. The policy must have regard to fair distribution amongst the proper and worthwhile diversified activities of the Colony, and the day of concentration of labour is past. On the other hand, the prosecution of large-scale public works which this country requires must be reasonably adapted to the requirements of all economic industries.

It seems therefore to follow that the question of immigration of labour for public or other works, of a kind and in places where immigration labour can be usefully employed, must be considered in one form or another.

Industrialization is mentioned and the wide field for it as well as hydro-electric development of the wood pulp proposals.

Touching the sociological development the question of land and land tenure is emphasized, urban and rural housing and education and health services. The difficulties attending the financing of the two latter are mentioned.

The paragraph on transportation touches air communications, the Government Transport Services and their difficulties, and road transportation.

The policy touching the interior is the subject of reference, while the Committee recently appointed will of course deal with the immediate objectives.

#### POST-WAR FINANCE.

Finance in post-war conditions will be a particular concern. The postulates appear clear. "Capital Equipment" can only be secured by outside assistance in one form or another, by grant or long-term loan preferably free of interest from the United Kingdom; the possibility of loans raised by the Colonial Government is however also relevant.

As regards recurrent budgeting, it behoves the Colony to do its utmost to cover recurrent expenditure by revenue. But it is clear that in the case of many development and welfare projects this will not be possible in the immediate future; in particular the high costs of educational and health services, if, to be of good standard, will be beyond the abilities of the Colony to carry for many years and recourse to assistance under the Development and Welfare Act will be necessary. Nor can any

effective administration and development of the interior be so carried and special financial arrangements will be required.

The question of continuance in some form of many controls and of public direction of industry established in war time and of the proper spheres of public and private enterprise will be proper subjects of examination in reference to the conditions of this Colony. These are specially discussed in the papers mentioned in the first paragraph.

I put this minute before the Government Officers who, very properly in my opinion, represented the utter impossibility of senior Government Officers tackling such a programme effectively, pointing out that we are a handful of us working under a considerable strain with day to day administration only.

Again, I feel I can scarcely inflict it on a few devoted and well meaning Unofficials who will be driven to turn to Government departments and reference papers of all kinds.

I have therefore felt it best to accept the advice of the Colonial Secretary that we should do as was done in another Colony in his own experience, and attempt to get someone specially qualified from outside who could give his whole time to such work for the necessary period of time. We in turn could supply him with an appropriate Advisory Committee of Officials and Unofficials who will be driven to turn conditions and opinions. I know this kind of procedure is being followed elsewhere and, as the matter is not one of extreme urgency, I propose to take it up with the Colonial Office on my visit.

We will now proceed to the business of the Day.



## PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following documents:—

Report of the Director of Education for the year 1943;

Statements of the accounts of the Georgetown Mariners Club for the period ended 31st December, 1943.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

## RECONSTRUCTION OF W.C. SEA DEFENCES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motion:—

THAT, with reference to Governor's Message No. 2 of the 5th of July, 1944, this Council approves of the estimated expenditure of \$700,000 on repairs and reconstruction of the sea defences between Union and De Willem, West Coast, Demerara, which has been sanctioned by the Secretary of State and of an amount of \$100,000 being provided on Supplementary Estimates for the current year.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the following Bills:—

The Soap Bill, 1944.

The Assistant Attorney-General (Repeal) Bill, 1944.

The Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Bill, 1944.

The Licensed Premises Bill, 1944.

The Shops (Amendment) Bill, 1944.

The Intoxicating Liquor Licensing (Amendment) Bill, 1944.

The Clubs Registration (Amendment) Bill, 1944.

The Employment Exchanges Bill, 1944.

## Purchase of Pln. Vergenoegen

The COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motions:—

**Be it Resolved**, that with reference to Resolution No. XXXI of 1st December, 1943, and the Governor's Messages No. 25 of the 5th of May, 1944, and No. 3 of the 8th of July, 1944, this Council

approves of Government negotiating with the proprietors and purchasing from them Plantation Vergenoegen *cum annexis*, East Bank, Essequibo River, for the purpose of land settlement;

**And be it further Resolved**, that the Council approves of the expenditure of \$145,000 the amount estimated by the Consulting Engineer for reconditioning the said estate.

## Purchase of Pln. Bush Lot

**Be it Resolved**, that with reference to Resolution No. XXXI of 1st December, 1943, and the Governor's Messages No. 25 of the 5th of May, 1944, and No. 3 of the 8th of July, 1944, this Council approves of Government negotiating with the proprietors and purchasing from them Plantation Bush Lot or Lot No. 28, Courentyne, Berbice, for the purpose of land settlement;

**And be it further Resolved**, that the Council approves of the expenditure of \$46,000 the amount estimated by the Consulting Engineer for reconditioning the said estate.

## Purchase of Pln. Cove and John

**Be it Resolved**, that with reference to Resolution No. XXXI of 1st December, 1943, and the Governor's Messages No. 25 of the 5th of May, 1944, and No. 3 of the 8th of July, 1944, this Council approves of Government negotiating with the proprietors and purchasing from them Plantation Cove and John, East Coast, Demerara, for the purpose of land settlement;

**And be it further Resolved**, that the Council approves of the expenditure of \$20,500 the amount estimated by the Consulting Engineer for reconditioning the said estate.

## UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

## LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEMES.

Mr. JACOB gave notice of the following questions:—

1. Will Government explain why Plantations Cove and John and Vergenoegen in Demerara have not been acquired for land settlement purposes, as recommended by the Land Settlement Committee which was appointed in February and which submitted an interim report in August, 1943?

2. Is Government still unconcerned about the welfare of hundreds of workers who are being victimised by certain landlords in Demerara and Berbice, and who have been and are being given notices to remove their houses, out-houses and cattle pens, or in the alternative, in some cases, pay an increase rent of over 300%?

3. Will Government cause a census to be taken to ascertain the number of persons and/or families who require house lots on which to build their houses and to lease cultivation and pasturage areas to the extent of from three to fifteen acres per person and/or family as recommended by the 1943 Land Settlement Committee, in the following districts, each district separately:

- (a) West Coast of Demerara,
- (b) West Bank of Demerara,
- (c) East Bank of Demerara,
- (d) East Coast of Demerara,
- (e) West Coast of Berbice,
- (f) East Bank of Berbice,
- (g) The Canje District,
- (h) The Corentyne District.

### ORDER OF THE DAY.

#### PUBLICATION OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS CONTROL REGULATIONS.

Mr. ROTH asked and the COLONIAL SECRETARY laid over replies to the following questions:—

Q—1.—Was official authority given for publication in the local press on 8th January, 1944, of what purported to be the draft Regulations for the Control of Private Schools?

A—1.—No.

Q—2.—If so, by whom?

A—2.—See Answer 1.

Q—3.—If not, will Government cause enquiry to be made as to the person responsible for this premature leakage of information?

A—3.—If not, considered that an enquiry now will serve any useful purpose:

State Lottery suggested.

Q—In view of the vast increase in the country's commitments in regard to Civil Service, Teachers' Salaries, etc., etc., and the consequent apprehension felt in many quarters as to our ability to honour those commitments, will Government be prepared seriously to consider a suggestion that there be set up a state Lottery as has been done in more than one country of the Commonwealth?

A—The answer is in the negative. It is felt that the balance of public opinion is entirely opposed to the adoption of such a suggestion which is considered to be anti-social in that it would

discourage the obligation to earn a living and tempt the uneducated to rely upon a lottery to produce sudden and unearned affluence with deplorable results.

Government is confident moreover that the proposal would not receive the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

### BILLS—FIRST READING.

The following Bills were read the first time on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded by Mr. WOOLFORD:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to control the manufacture and importation of soap, to provide for a standard of quality thereof and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to repeal The Assistant Attorney-General Ordinance, Chapter 253."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide better security of tenure for tenant farmers; to fix the rent payable for the letting of rice lands; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to consolidate and amend the law relating to licensed premises."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend The Shops Ordinance, 1944 in certain respects."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Ordinance, Chapter 107, by prohibiting the grant of an entertainment licence and by restricting the grant of an occasional licence, in respect of club premises."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Clubs Registration Ordinance with respect to the sale of excisable liquor in club premises where the premises are let by the club."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the establishment of Employment Exchanges and for purposes connected with the matter aforesaid."



RECONSTRUCTION OF W.C. SEA  
DEFENCES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No.2 of the 5th of July, 1944, this Council approves of the estimated expenditure of \$700,000 on repairs and reconstruction of the sea defences between Union and De Willem, West Coast, Demerara, which has been sanctioned by the Secretary of State and of an amount of \$100,000 being provided on Supplementary Estimates for the current year.

Hon. Members are fully conversant with the circumstances which have led up to this motion, and I need not refer to them in detail, especially as they are set out in the Message. We know that owing to the abnormally high tides in February of this year considerable damage was done to the sea defences on the West Coast of Demerara, and as a result the Governor-in-Council and the Sea Defence Board had to take immediate steps to save that part of the country from serious damage. The Sea Defence Board proceeded to make out an estimate of the cost of the necessary reconstruction works which was communicated to the Finance Committee on the 29th March. The estimate is set out in the schedule to the Message and, as Members will see, the various items total \$602,850, with an allowance for contingencies of 97,150, making a total bill of \$700,000. The work is, of course, already in progress, but as it is contemplated that it will be spread over a long period, probably two or more years, it has been thought fitting to come to the Council and obtain formal authority by resolution for the whole of the work.

As stated in the Message, \$100,000 is being spent this year, and it is quite possible that another half a million dollars will have to be spent next year. For the present all this money is being charged to current expenditure, and it

is very fortunate that we can do that. On a previous occasion we have had to do it by loan. I had expected that Mr. Case, the Consulting Engineer, would have been here to answer any questions that may be raised on the details of the estimate, and I hope hon. Members will not press me to explain any points on the schedule. If so I shall certainly ask the hon. Member on my right (Mr. Seaford) to answer them for me. I formally move the motion.

Mr. SEAFORD seconded.

Mr. JACOB: Before I speak on the motion I should like to be advised what amount has been spent on this work as from February to this date, and which of the proposed works have been completed or started? After receiving replies to those questions I may have something to say.

Mr. SEAFORD: With reference to the questions asked by the hon. Member there has been actually no permanent work completed at all. Certain works of a temporary nature were carried out immediately after the destruction of the wall in an endeavour to prevent flooding throughout the whole area. In the meantime the Public Works Department has appointed one of the District Engineers to supervise the work entirely and do nothing else. His time has been spent chiefly in trying to collect materials for the work, and I may point out that it was at a time when no granite could be got and no means of transport, and also a shortage of cement and steel. All that has been done so far is to try to get transport by means of crafts and to get material for the stone crushers and sifters, and the general organisation of the scheme. I do not think any actual work or reconstruction has started. Only preparatory work has been going on.

Mr. JACOB: I have got no statement as to the amount spent to date. It appears to me rather unsatisfactory

to ask this Council to vote the sum of \$100,000 to be spent this year and to be told by the mover in introducing the motion that possibly half a million dollars would be spent next year, and that the work may be spread over a period of two or more years. Basing what I have to say on that, I think I should begin by saying that the estimate of \$700,000 appears to be a very comprehensive one. Details have been given and I think the unusual procedure has been adopted of getting the Secretary of State's approval of this expenditure beforehand. I would have thought that the matter would have been debated in this Council first and then the Secretary of State would have been asked to say whether such a large sum of money should be spent. No statement has been made as to what amount has already been spent, and what is more, no details are given as to how this \$100,000 will be spent. That is what I am concerned about at the moment. The details as regards the \$700,000 appear to be comprehensive, but we have been told by one of Government's unofficial experts that no work of a permanent nature has been done up to the present time. I recollect Your Excellency being somewhat alarmed when in February or March you stated that grave damage had been done and that huge expenditure would have to be incurred. Up to now nothing has been spent. I am wondering why this alarm—why this estimate of \$700,000, why only \$100,000 is to be spent this year, and why nothing has been spent up to the present?

Mr. SEAFORD: A certain amount has been spent in collecting material.

The PRESIDENT: Have you got any figures at all, Treasurer?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: They can be very easily secured, sir.

Mr. JACOB: My experience has been unfortunate. When figures are put

up in such a form they are absolutely of no assistance to hon. Members who want to take an interest in matters of this kind. I have in mind particularly how the funds of the Public Works Department have been expended. I do not wish to refer to what is going on in another place at the present time, but I wish to make myself perfectly clear that in the case of expenditure of this kind proper details should be given and kept by the Public Works Department, and proper checks should be carried out. I have been familiar with Public Works methods for over 20 years. I have also been familiar to some extent with sea defence methods, particularly when the East Coast Corporation was doing sea defence work on the East Coast, and I know what happened. Whenever large sums of money are to be spent on public works people begin to get busy and formulate schemes as to how the money should be spent and diverted to other channels. Here is a clear case how certain people are manoeuvring things to suit themselves without proper details from the Government side. I am assuming that even if Government has the details I am not sure that the Public Works staff is capable and competent to handle this work. It suits certain interests to have huge sums of money wasted and to give no return at all, and I am strongly suspicious that this will be one way in which a great deal of money will be wasted. I am urging Government, if it wants to see progress in sea defence and drainage and irrigation and in schemes in which the Public Works Department is concerned, to be exceedingly cautious of estimates of cost and the kind of people employed on such works.

I do not see the Chairman of the Public Works Department Advisory Committee here. As Your Excellency knows, I am not at all satisfied. I have little or no confidence in that Advisory Committee, and another Member has also expressed that view. I do not know



whether the Committee is going to examine the accounts and, if necessary, look at the works. I urge on Government to take extra care to see that plans and specifications are submitted and adhered to, and that the various sums of money are properly entered, checked and paid out. I am not at all satisfied as to what is being done and I have information as to schemes that are already in view as to how a good deal of this money should be diverted. I have ample reasons for speaking as I do but I am not prepared to say anything more, except that I hope the Council will be supplied with particulars as to how this \$100,000 is to be spent, and another \$500,000 next year.

Mr. deAGUIAR: I am not very clear as to the position the hon. Member is taking up in this matter. I am not quite clear whether he is prepared to support the principle underlying the motion or is merely confining himself to details. Nor am I aware that he is cognizant of the position as it existed on the West Coast some years ago.

I am prepared to support the motion in principle. This Colony is committed to works of sea defence, and in that respect the hon. Member must know that there is a Board which is charged to carry out those works. It is true that whilst the plans and details are worked out by the executive officers of the Board the actual performance of the work is carried out by the Public Works Department.

I am not quite sure whether I understand the hon. Member's criticism at all. If his criticism is levelled against the Board, then of course I think I will be correct, as a member of the Board, to join issue with him. He has asked for details. I do not know whether the hon. Member realizes the nature of the work that has to be done there. In the first place, if he does not know the extent of the damage it naturally follows that he would not know the nature of the work to be done, and he is simply

floundering, trying to obtain information. I can tell him that the information is available. If he wants it he knows exactly where to get it, and it is a matter for regret that if he attaches such importance to the details of this work to be carried out, he did not attempt to ascertain those details before the Council assembled. I want to remind him that it is almost impossible to estimate to the last penny how much works of this nature will cost. They are dependent on so many varying conditions—a possible rise in the cost of materials and labour, and what is more, the difficulties of working between tides. Perhaps the hon. Member is not aware of some of the difficulties. I am in a more fortunate position because I happen to be a member of the Board. I do not know whether the hon. Member is levelling criticism at the Board or at the Public Works Department. He should know, however, that the work is being carried out by the Public Works Department on the instructions of the Sea Defence Board.

The hon. Member made reference to the fact that the procedure on this occasion was reversed. Of course that is really a point to be answered by Government, but again I would ask him whether he was aware of the alarming state of affairs on the West Coast, and that the first estimates were somewhat alarming too? Surely, with such a situation facing the Colony the first thing to be done was not only to notify the Secretary of State of the calamity that had occurred but to indicate to him that the expenditure involved was likely to reach very large figures. I do not think it would be possible for any member of the Board or even the person who prepared this estimate to say that the reconstruction work will only cost \$700,000. Speaking for myself I sincerely hope it will not cost any more, but I know that the situation is very alarming and that a long stretch of the coast is involved. The damage extends from La Union to DeWillems, and the hon. Member knows the great

distance between those two places. If he or ten men like him could give an estimate of what the works will cost we would be in a very happy position.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I am not going to pose as an expert on sea defence—maybe the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) is an expert, but I think a little foresight on his part would have carried him to the point that there was great destruction and likely devastation of the area in which the breach occurred early this year. It is only wise that those who know about matters of this kind should first of all carry out temporary works. They have to clear the area and lay foundation for permanent works to be done. An estimate has been clearly given and in detail, that the works are likely to cost \$700,000, and I do not see why, because the Council is only asked to vote an expenditure of \$100,000 this year, Government should descend to particulars as to how that money is to be spent. It is only part of the whole expenditure. It is expenditure which we have to meet at least for the first year, and I fail to see what the hon. Member's remarks were leading to when he said that someone was hiding something about this matter. I happen to be a member of the Sea Defence Board and I feel sure that the Board has considered the matter very carefully. I think that angels fear to tread where fools rush in.

Mr. FERREIRA: I support the motion. This work is essential and must be undertaken. The situation was undoubtedly alarming but I think I can see what the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) is getting at, and to a certain extent I agree with him. He is advising caution and I do advise caution in spending this money. We know what has happened in the past, and for that matter, in the case of certain expenditure at Sisters in Berbice quite recently, certain works

were very badly carried out with definitely inferior materials. If the hon. Member considers it necessary to advise caution I think he is perfectly in order, and those concerned would be well advised to keep their eyes open.

Dr. SINGH: There were several breaches along the West Coast and the result was a state of emergency. Something had to be done and someone with responsibility took the initiative in order to prevent further destruction. Now the position is that permanent reconstruction work has been planned for the future. I therefore feel that I should support the motion.

Mr. DIAS: The hon. Member for North Western District made reference to the absence of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. He is not here but I as a member of the Committee would like to say that he is mistaken in believing that any member of the Committee was competent to estimate the nature of the work to be done and revise these figures. We are not experts in this branch of work. I am sure Government did not appoint me there as an expert.

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction! I did not suggest they should examine the estimates or correct figures. I suggest they should see that the money is properly spent.

Mr. DIAS: I understood the hon. Member to say that the plans would go before the members of the Committee, but they would not be any wiser as to the calculations of the estimates. No one would know about them as no one had any knowledge of them. I am sorry that he has lost faith in the Committee. I am not going to remain there if the public is going to lose confidence in the work that the Committee has undertaken and is doing. I can assure him that the Committee is concerned with the expenditure of Public Works funds certainly not less than he is. We are trying to do what we can in order to



see that expenditure is properly incurred and no waste takes place. We have so many lessons lately that they are really the cause of considerable extra attention being paid so that repetition will not occur. I do ask hon. Members to have a little more confidence in the Committee because it acts as an encouragement for one to continue. One is discouraged by the statement that the people have no confidence in what is being done, and to tell us that then there is no good our staying there. We are giving services willingly. The attendance is growing larger at every meeting. We have a considerable amount of work and have actually gone into the country and seen how the payments are made on pay-day. We are not responsible for those who know nothing about it. For example, one item struck me on the estimates which called for a large and alarming sum, but I could not criticize it—Contingencies and supervision, \$97,000. That seems an extraordinary sum of money to spend on a layman, and yet it may turn out to be an insufficient amount. I was not able to criticize it as I did not know anything about it, and not a single member of the Committee was any the wiser.

Mr. SEAFORD: In view of the strictures made by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob), I think that in fairness to the consulting staff of the Drainage Engineer's Office it should be stated that the detailed plans for this work have been discussed with Mr. Macdonald who is an engineer on Sir Frank Stockdale's staff and who was down here. A very careful detail of the estimates was also got out and checked over two or three times, and then put before the Sea Defence Board. Needless to say, without implying any stricture in so far as they are concerned, very few members of a Board like that are competent to express an opinion on the estimates got out by the Engineers of the Department. They are not there to go into the

question of estimates; they are there to see as much as possible that the work is being carried out and they are bound to take the advice of the Engineer. Also in fairness to the Director of Public Works, I think, I can say he is taking every precaution he possibly can in the matter. In order that the work should be carried out as economically as possible he has appointed one Assistant Engineer to do nothing else but supervise this work. I know he is giving it his own close attention as well. The estimates are put before the Board and the members of the Board see them, but they are really not capable of going into the details of the work or expressing an opinion.

I do feel that these estimates, as put before this Council today, give as much detail as Members of this Council are able to understand. But even so, when they talk of "Underpinning wall at \$20 per foot," how many Members are capable of criticizing whether it is high or low. I may point out that in estimating for sea defence work it is very difficult to get absolutely precise figures. As has been pointed out by the hon. Member for Central Demerara, sea defence work like any other work, which depends on the sea which even King Canute could not control, depends on the weather, rains etc. and all an engineer can possibly do is to get out an estimate as approximately near the figure he thinks it will be. I can assure hon. Members that every precaution is being taken to look after the job and to look after Government's interest by the members of the Engineer's Staff both of the Public Works and the Consulting Engineer Offices.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There are just one or two points I would like to refute—to use the words of the hon. Member for North Western District—for the sake of record. He suggested in his remarks some unusual or incorrect procedure is being followed in connection with the matter. The position is this. On the 28th February,

1944, the Sea Defence Board sent in their report to Government of what was taking place on the West Coast Demerara. The report indicated that a very serious calamity had occurred which landed Government into an expenditure of several thousands of dollars. The next day Your Excellency, as customary and properly, reported to the Secretary of State for the Colonies what had occurred and informed him that the Government might be put to serious expenditure. The Executive Council met on the 29th February and, under a section of the Sea Defence Ordinance which specially provides for such circumstances, issued an Order-in-Council to the Board directing that Board to take all necessary steps to perform such works as in the opinion of the Board may be necessary to avert or mitigate the inundation by the sea. The section is put to give the Governor power to take steps and spend money in circumstances of this nature: That is to say, this Council authorizes the Governor whenever there is a calamity of that nature to take the necessary steps and spend money without coming to this Council first or immediately.

The next step was the Board had to take temporary measures and do temporary work. They proceeded to get out an estimate which was communicated to the Finance Committee of this Council as early as the 29th March, 1944. I was not present at that meeting as I was out of the Colony, and so I cannot say exactly what took place; but from the records on the file I believe that the amount to be spent was communicated and the fact that preliminary work was going on was also communicated and, I take it, the Finance Committee concurred with the action which was being taken.

As regard the expenditure this year, we did not know how soon the work would be put in hand. As the hon. Member on my right (Mr. Seaford)

knows, a certain deal took place as regards getting equipment and at the last moment we learnt we had to be satisfied with only \$100,000 to be spent this year. That is the amount which is being put on Supplementary Estimate this year. As I said earlier, in the case of long term work of this kind in which a large sum is involved the proper course is to go on and obtain substantial results. As regards the point as to whether the Council is informed before or after the Secretary of State, the normal procedure in cases of large works is that we usually get the consent of the Secretary of State first. The approval of the Secretary of State of a Government project is obtained before the consent of this Council is sought, as has happened in the case of this calamity.

The last point I would like to make is in connection with the remarks of the hon. Member which implied that certain curious happenings were taking place or about to take place in connection with the work. I think I heard him say there was manoeuvring of certain interests. I do not know what is implied by the phrase and I would ask him if he has any facts or notes of anything at all which would go against the proper carrying out of this work to inform Government, either the hon. the Colonial Secretary or his colleague who is Chairman of the Advisory Committee, and so give Government a chance to put matters right. I hope nothing serious is implied and, if there is, then communicate it at once and let the proper action be taken and so prevent anything going wrong.

The PRESIDENT: I would just like to say this Council is entitled to have any figures before passing any particular motion for any particular sum of money to be charged against the Colony, showing precisely how much is proposed to be spent and precisely how much of it has been



spent and on what. If that is the will of the Council I am prepared to obtain and put that before you before passing the motion. On the other hand the details of the whole scheme are sufficiently clearly set out with the total included in the Message. You have further security on the Sea Defence Board of not less than five Elected Members of this Council, and the Advisory Committee of the Public Works Department is entirely composed of Members of the Legislative Council. I suggest that is sufficient safeguard as to the actual expenditure of money. I think the general feeling of the Council is that we proceed with the motion, and I now put the motion standing in the name of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed.

#### PURCHASES FOR LAND SETTLEMENT.

The PRESIDENT: As I explained at the opening I have here Mr. Laing who is prepared to speak to this motion as he has a knowledge of the matter greater than any of us, Government Officers. We can in putting the first motion ask him to speak to the whole matter, the whole three motions, just to see to what degree this Council is prepared to proceed with either of the particular motions and, if necessary, defer voting or a final decision until we have the Consulting Engineer available to answer. As you see these motions cover two particular recommendations of the Land Settlement Committee adopted by resolution of this Council in December. In respect of one of these, the figures are not yet complete, but we have added a further one—Bush Lot, No. 28, Corentyne—for consideration today. I therefore call upon the hon. the Colonial Secretary formally to move the first of these motions,

#### ACQUISITION OF PLN. VERGENOEGEN

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: With the consent of the Council I beg to move formally the following motion:—

**Be it Resolved**, that with reference to Resolution No. XXXI of 1st December, 1943, and the Governor's Messages No. 25 of the 5th of May, 1944, and No. 3 of the 8th of July, 1944, this Council approves of Government negotiating with the proprietors and purchasing from them Plantation Vergenoegen **cum annexis**, East Bank, Essequibo River, for the purpose of land settlement;

**And be it further Resolved**, that the Council approves of the expenditure of \$145,000 the amount estimated by the Consulting Engineer for reconditioning the said estate.

For the reasons which Your Excellency explained I ask with the consent of the Council that Mr. Laing under Article 17 of the British Guiana Constitution Order-in-Council be allowed to take part in these proceedings and to speak on this motion.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Mr. LAING (Commissioner of Local Government): Your Excellency, Land Settlement, as hon. Members are aware, is an ordered plan for the settling of people on the land as small holders. During recent years Government has appointed committees to consider Land Settlement and these committees have put forward certain proposals. The Committee of 1939, which presented its report at the time of the arrival of the Royal Commission, considered that settlements should be established at Anna Regina, Vergenoegen, Craig-Garden of Eden area, East Bank Demerara, and the village areas of the Nos. 64—78 District, Corentyne, and the Bloomfield-Whim area should be extended. The Committee, which was appointed in 1943 and made recommendations of which this Council had approved in principle by Resolution XXXI of 1943, also recommended that Vergenoegen, Craig-Garden of Eden and Cove and John should be purchased and laid out for Land Settlement,

In connection with Land Settlement, the West India Royal Commission in their recommendations said that in the West Indies it is expensive in relation to the number of persons settled. That is particularly true of this Colony, and it is inevitable that any system of land settlement is likely to prove expensive, more expensive here than perhaps in other places, for the reason that land settlement must be on the coastland which is the agricultural belt in this Colony and those lands have been already allocated. It therefore follows that if we are to settle people we must acquire the estates from their present owners. Further there are difficulties of drainage and irrigation which have not to be overcome in other Colonies but which are extremely expensive works to carry out.

In connection with the Committee of 1939, it recommended that certain village areas should be extended, particularly those of the Nos. 64—78 districts and in the Bloomfield-Whim area. These works have been recently carried out or are in process of carrying out by the Rice Expansion Committee. It may be right to say that the expense of drainage works is estimated in respect of the Nos. 64—78 area—the empoldering works together with the internal works—likely to cost \$256,600. The expense in the smaller area of Bloomfield-Whim will amount to \$123,500.

In selecting areas for Land Settlement the Committee could not recommend that estates which are fully occupied, or village areas which are beneficially occupied, or small estates under cultivation, should be acquired for the reason that would merely mean dispossessing certain people to put others in their places. The Committee had to look for areas not under cultivation. It is inevitable that in these areas drainage and irrigation are extremely poor and in some they do not exist at all. Therefore the Committee had to look for areas of known

fertility and selected the areas of Vergenoegen which was an old sugar plantation, Cove and John where cane was also grown, and Craig-Garden of Eden on the East Bank Demerara where natural drainage is obtainable.

Since this Council accepted in principle the recommendations of the Land Settlement Committee of 1943, certain examinations have been made of those areas and the Consulting Engineer has been able to put up estimates as to the cost of reconditioning those areas. I do not propose to deal this afternoon with the conditions under which the land settlements will be laid out, for those have been already discussed when Resolution XXXI of 1943, approving of the recommendations of the Committee, was before this Council. The motions before the Council today ask for permission to negotiate with the owners for the acquisition of those estates and for approval of the amounts estimated by the Consulting Engineer to be necessary for placing those estates in good order in regard to drainage and irrigation.

In addition to these expenses there will be the cost of laying out the lands for Land Settlement purpose, building of houses and providing necessary living amenities, such as, well water for drinking purpose, recreation fields, burial ground and also postal, medical and educational facilities where those do not already exist. If hon. Members refer to the Message from Your Excellency to which the hon. the Colonial Secretary has referred, it would be noticed that it will cost something like \$145,000 to recondition Vergenoegen estate. By that estate I mean *cum annexis* — Vergenoegen, Philadelphia, Barnwell and Greenwich Park which form the whole plantation of 2,746 acres—and the estimated cost of reconditioning the drainage and irrigation is \$145,000. It is also suggested that all cane-beds should be levelled and this will be in addition to the sum of \$145,000. Whether that will be actually



necessary I very much doubt, because I think that is work that may very well be left to the settlers themselves to do.

It will not be practical to acquire one section only—that is the Vergenoegen section—for the reason that there is at the present time on that section a small Country District. That means a part of the front lands have been already sold and these are occupied by the villagers who are organized in a Local Authority. In that particular area about one-third of the land is under cultivation which will leave only some 700 acres for further settlement. It is therefore suggested that the other sections should be acquired with it which will make an area capable of settling some 150 or 200 families. The advantage of the Vergenoegen estates is that gravity drainage is obtainable, and one has not the additional expense of providing pumps.

In regard to Cove and John, that too was an old sugar plantation. The land is of known fertility and, as far as I know, it was successfully carried on as a sugar estate up to within recent years. I think one hon. Member the last time I spoke on it said he did not think it has been a successful estate, but at least the old proprietors were able to sell and go on to Barbados where, I suppose, they lived happily after.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Both Mr. Bascom and his brother are dead.

The PRESIDENT: They may nevertheless be happy!

Mr. LAING: I expect they were happy during the time they were in Barbados and we hope their happiness has continued. Cove and John has an area of 1,682 acres of which some 1,411 are at the present time occupied, although I will not say actually under cultivation. The cost of reconditioning the drainage is estimated by the

Consulting Engineer to be \$20,500, in addition to which will be a sum as large as \$200,000 for pumps which are to be provided.

The area of Bush Lot, which is now included, has been included for the reason that we have received representations from certain persons in the Corentyne District that Land Settlement is desirable in that area and that many persons are wishful of settling on the land there. An examination has been made of the Bush Lot estate also known as No. 28, Corentyne, and the cost of reconditioning that estate is estimated to be \$46,000.

In regard to the East Bank, Demerara estates, these have been surveyed but the Consulting Engineer has not yet had an opportunity of preparing estimates of the cost of reconditioning, and of irrigation and drainage in the area. That is in process now of being completed.

The motion before the Council is therefore that this Council having already approved of the principle of Land Settlement is now invited to give Government authority to negotiate with the present owners for the acquisition of these properties and to give approval to the expenditure of the sum mentioned for the drainage and irrigation of these areas.

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Laing has spoken generally to all three motions, but it is only convenient to move one. Members are at liberty to speak generally or to anyone of these three propositions. I would ask any Member who desires to address the Council. (*After a lapse of a few minutes*) Is no Member speaking?

Mr. FERREIRA: There are certain questions I would like to ask: We have been told generally about these schemes, but what I would like to know is the purchase price and how many families these estates can house. I think those

are essential things we should know. As regards Vergenoegen, we have been told that it has been a successful sugar estate. One would like to know why it failed.

The PRESIDENT: Can Mr. Laing answer those questions?

Mr. LAING: It is estimated it will take some 1,500 acres to house 150 families. That is in accordance with one of the reports of the Land Settlement Committee. With respect to the purchase price I am not able to give the information. As I said, the sums mentioned in the notice now include the purchase price or the cost of the laying out of the areas for land settlement purpose but are merely the cost of reconditioning the irrigation and drainage.

If the Council approves negotiations will be made with the present owners as regards the price of the estates, but if those negotiations fail there is, of course, the Land Acquisition Ordinance under which action can be taken.

The PRESIDENT: Are you able to give any valuation?

Mr. LAING: We have valuations in respect of some of them, but not all.

The PRESIDENT: Government has valued some of these properties as a result of tentative conversations with the owners. Of course, in several cases a higher value was put on them by the owners. It will probably be necessary for us to proceed under the Land Acquisition Ordinance and have a final fixation of the value made by the Court. All we can give Members is our own valuations and the prices demanded by the owners.

Mr. FERREIRA: I know nothing about the first two estates, but as regards No. 28, Corentyne, that estate comprises 450 acres and I think

it can accommodate 50 families. If Government is going to spend \$45,000 on drainage, and I presume the estate is worth \$30,000 or \$35,000, I think the investment would be a very poor one. I suggest that the Corentyne should be given internal drainage and the people would settle on the land themselves.

Dr. SINGH: I do not say it because one of these estates happens to be in my district, but I think Pln. Vergenoegen is an ideal place for Land Settlement. Some years ago a private company proposed to acquire it for that purpose. I think this question of land settlement has been on the tapis a long time and it is about time Government made a start. I am in favour of an early acquisition of these estates.

Mr. de AGUIAR: It appears to me that Members are somewhat frightened by the magnitude of the task before them this morning in connection with these proposals, and I was hoping that perhaps my colleagues at the other end of the table might have opened the debate. I think we are all agreed that Land Settlement Schemes are ideal things in themselves, but the experience we have had in the past has not been so very happy or successful, and I do not know whether I am right in assuming that perhaps hon. Members, like myself, feel this morning that we are taking a very big bite in proposals of this kind. We are asked here first of all to approve of negotiations being conducted with the proprietors of the estates named for the purchase of those estates, and for authority to spend \$211,000 in accordance with the estimates put up by the Consulting Engineer.

I would like to say at once that these figures, large as they may seem, indicate very little to me as to what the ultimate cost of these schemes will be, and while I agree that land settlement is a very good thing and that it is very desirable to embark on these



schemes, they are on such a large scale that should they result in failure it would certainly cramp our future efforts in this direction. I am therefore wondering whether a more prudent step should not be taken. We have had it stated here from time to time, and from the Government side in particular, that we are undertaking works without the personnel to carry them out. Then again, we are finding it extremely difficult to obtain mechanical implements and materials for works of this kind and public works generally. It may well be that the purpose of the motion to-day is to ascertain the reactions of this Council in regard to Land Settlement Schemes in general. If that is the idea then I have no doubt that Government will receive its full support. On the other hand, if the purpose of these motions is to secure what may be described as a blank cheque or an open order to proceed with those schemes as outlined in the report of the Land Settlement Committee and also in these motions, then I am afraid that Government will not receive the support which perhaps the schemes warrant, for the reason that Members will undoubtedly be a little bit cautious as to the—

The PRESIDENT: The purpose of the motions is to authorize Government to negotiate with the proprietors of these particular estates. If they are passed we can proceed to negotiate, knowing that if reasonable purchase prices can be negotiated we would be supported by the Council in proceeding to complete the purchase. The reason why the motions were put in this form is because the Council is already committed in principle to Land Settlement. They were put in general terms without any statement as to what these estates would cost, but the Council must remember that when we buy we buy value. The money is not simply thrown into the sea. If the motions are passed Government expects the subsequent support of the Council when it comes

back to the Council to get the purchase money as soon as the negotiations have been completed.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I am very grateful indeed for that pronouncement. I really wanted a pronouncement of that kind to be made because, without trying to decry the able speech made by the Commissioner of Local Government on the motions, I would point out that they did not really go as far as to say that. I am fully aware that the purpose of the motions is really to give Government authority to enter into negotiations with the proprietors for the purpose of acquiring these estates. That may sound very well and I think, generally speaking, most hon. Members will be in agreement with that view, but at the same time I think it will be admitted that with that authority in hand Government will proceed to acquire these estates and work will at once commence to put them in order. Further than that: I understand from the mover of the motions that there will be further expenditure in laying out the areas so as to make provision for housing, water supply, etc. It is too big a task to ask for further particulars on that score. I prefer to leave that for another occasion, because I have no doubt that Members will be given an opportunity to do so.

Now that the ground is clear and we know that for the present at any rate the intention of the Government is merely to proceed with negotiations to acquire these estates, perhaps it is well that hon. Members should express their views as to the manner in which those negotiations should be made. If I understand the position correctly, there can be no doubt about it that most of these estates, if not all of them, are in very bad order, and that is confirmed by the estimates that have been prepared in order to put them in some reasonably good order so that the lands may be beneficially occupied. If that is correct, then it naturally follows that in negotiating for the purchase of these estates due regard must be paid to their

condition so that an economic valuation may be arrived at. In other words, it is clear to me that Government cannot consider these lands to be of much value to anybody at the present time, and I am wondering at the yardstick that is going to be used either by the responsible Government officers concerned or whoever is charged with the responsibility of carrying on those negotiations.

I am very deeply concerned as to the method that will be adopted in arriving at the value of these lands. I am fully aware of the difficulties that are ahead and I am also fully aware of the powers of Government in the event of the negotiations falling through. Government has power under the Lands Acquisition Ordinance to acquire these lands, but there again there is also the question of assessors being appointed for the purpose. I do not think too much stress can be put on this point: that where land is of no value at all, where it has been allowed to be overrun by bush with no drainage or irrigation, it can hardly be of much value to those who own it. In short, what I want this Government to be safeguarded against is being held up to ransom by the proprietors of these estates merely because it wants to offer these lands to people for beneficial occupation. How the problem is going to be solved I am not in a position to offer any assistance.

There can be no doubt about it that these schemes are valuable, but very great care should and must be taken in acquiring these lands, otherwise I fear that this Colony would be paying too much for them. That is the evil that hovers around the Colony to-day. The minute Government attempts to do something for the benefit of the people some hindrance develops. While I do not want to say that if the prices are too high the scheme should be abandoned, I do say that every step should be taken to see that the lands are acquired at prices considered not only reasonable but having regard to their

present condition and the use they are being put to at the present time, otherwise I am afraid that the entire cost of the schemes would be prohibitive.

I understood Your Excellency to say that although the mover spoke in respect of all of the motions it is your intention to take them one by one. I can see a little difficulty there. I was hoping that land settlement in this Colony would have progressed step by step. I do not think it a wise policy to attempt at this stage to acquire or even to begin to negotiate, however desirable the proposals are in respect of all of these lands. I had hoped that one or, even at the most, two areas would have been selected and the work on them carried to finality, and that as a result of the experience gained the schemes would have been extended in other areas. I realize, of course, the desire to spread the schemes out in various parts of the coastland, and I think that must have operated in the minds not only of the Committee but of the mover of the motion, because I know he has given considerable thought to this matter. As a matter of fact, the motions speak for themselves. There is a scheme for the Corentyne, one for the East Coast and one for the East Bank of the Essequibo River. That is very desirable, but I thought we would have taken these proposals up one by one, gaining experience as we proceed.

There is one thing I am certain about and that is that it will be absolutely impossible to carry out the various works at the same time. I do not see how that is practicable. If it is admitted that it is not practicable then my suggestion that we should proceed step by step is a more desirable one. I am afraid that when we attempt to bite off too much in this country we do not only become downhearted but we make errors, and very often when we make errors we lose vigour and become more inclined to allow things to slide. I would hate to see something like that happening in connection with



land settlement schemes and that is why I suggest that Government should proceed with caution. I think I have said enough to indicate my line of thought on these proposals, and I urge upon hon. Members to give them very careful consideration so that whatever decisions which may be made here to-day will be such as can be reasonably acted upon and achieve the results we hope for.

The PRESIDENT: I would just like to make one or two other points clear. There was some difficulty about the form of motion. We could have put it in another form indicating estimated purchase prices, but that would have committed us to those figures. It would have helped us to get on quicker, provided we could have purchased within those figures. The present form of motion does make it necessary that we should have to come back to the Council and report the results of the negotiations or other proceedings to acquire these estates.

As regards the suggestion that we should proceed with these schemes one by one, the position is that if we did that we postpone for years progress in other parts of the country. If we start on the West Coast we postpone the Corentyne, not for one year but for a period of years. I have already appointed a Land Settlement Officer and I have negotiated with the Comptroller for Development and Welfare for the necessary staff and personnel, and if we get machinery we should be able to handle schemes in more than one part of the Colony. I think Mr. Laing can confirm that.

Mr. LAING: Yes, sir.

Mr. AUSTIN: I am in thorough agreement that negotiations should be carried on in respect of the purchase of these properties, but I would like to bring to the attention of Your Excellency and Members of the

Council a matter which occurred some years ago in connection with the acquisition of *rin. Anna Regina* on the Essequibo Coast, which was sold to Government for \$100,000, payment being spread over a period of 5 years. That estate was acquired in good condition; it had fairly good drainage and it was carried on for a year with a small profit. In the case of Vergenoegen I think that estate has been abandoned for about 60 years and has been converted into a rice estate. I do not think it has ever paid its assessment for sea defence, drainage and things of that sort, and there may be still arrears outstanding. Is Government, going to purchase an estate unless it is certain that it will be an economic proposition? It will have to be thoroughly cleaned up and it will cost Government a lot of money. I think the condition of the estate should be considered when the purchase price is being arranged.

The PRESIDENT: Is that not included in the \$145,000?

Mr. AUSTIN: Not the cost of putting it in order. Is it worth \$75,000 as it stands today? I do not think any agriculturist in this Colony would pay that amount for that particular block of estates unless they are very urgently wanted for Settlement Schemes, and even then I do not think it is a good spot from a health point of view. We have lots of problems in front of us involving expenditure, and I think we should proceed in other directions rather than embark on a Land Settlement Scheme in a locality where the health of the settlers is bound to be affected.

The Commissioner of Local Government can give you some idea as to the health condition of Tuschen and neighbouring estates. I understood from him on a previous occasion that he considered that particular block should be more or less abandoned from a residential point of view and, if necessary, let

it be reverted back into bush which to all intents and purposes it is now. Have we not to consider the question of health when we are taking over these estates? Are we satisfied that \$75,000 is sufficient to recondition these places for the people to live happily on? Although I favour that negotiations be started, I really think that the particular site should be very fully considered by the engineers and medical men before any further action is taken.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: Land Settlement is not new to this Colony. The hon. Member who has just taken his seat referred to Anna Regina. I have not heard of that being a success. With all due respect to your expression about the acquisition of the three properties, I am entirely opposed to it. I feel we should make haste very slowly. One of these propositions I am in favour of and that is the best of the three. I am in a position to tell you without boasting—I am an old man and, I think, on the first occasion we met I told you I am not disposed to undertake any new jobs as regards my seat in this Council—quite a lot about these lands and the chances of success with them. Unfortunately Vergenoegen *cum annexis* as a property fell into my hands twice and on each occasion I lost money. I had difficulty in selling it even in sections. Vergenoegen was sold to one man. I think Philadelphia is owned by one of my sons. Barnwell was sold separately and also Greenwich Park. The drainage of the estates gave trouble and I could not rear cattle and sheep on them.

With regard to Cove and John, that also fell into my hands. I have heard the Commissioner refer to the acquisition of the estate, but he forgot to tell us that it was purchased during the last war by a syndicate for \$100,000 and it never turned out a success as a sugar estate. The machinery is of no value. Everything has been dismantled by the person who holds the mortgage.

As I have said, I am for one of the schemes, but which of them is a matter we should go into. I am prepared to make a statement, and I challenge any man in this Chamber to say that he can give the value of land more accurately than I can, barring one Member whose opinion in that respect I will take second place to, the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford). I am satisfied that very few persons in this Colony can go on any land and give you accurately the value of it. I have been over every inch of Vergenoegen, and as regards Bush Lot on the Corentyne I sold it and I happened to own Pln. Maida which is next to it. I know that land better than I know my own Georgetown property. We are running too fast.

I certainly think the people are entitled to have Land Settlement, but have we got the inhabitants for three different Land Settlement propositions at the same time? I am afraid not. I may be considered pessimistic, but I cannot conceive our making a success of three such propositions together. We have few men in the Government Service we can second to supervise these jobs. I claim to be mediocre, and I must admit that if we had brilliant men years ago I would not be where I am today. I am convinced that to give Government—as one hon. Member said—a blank cheque in this matter is not the best thing. I would certainly prefer that the propositions be placed before this Council in respect of each of these properties. There are better lands available for Land Settlement than any of these which have been selected, but I have not been consulted in the matter. Had I been asked it would have been a very simple thing for me to suggest other lands.

The PRESIDENT: Why have you not given us the benefit of this advice before? We have been at this thing for a year. We appointed a Committee to examine this matter and its report was available for many months. It was brought to Members of this Council



eight months ago and the Council accepted it like that. Now that we have got a little farther on with it and have got our figures ready and brought it again to this Council everyone wants to go over it again. We can appoint another committee with yourself on it and begin it all over again. That is why British Guiana stagnates. (applause) I am not referring to you personally.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I know that. I never push myself into anything and I never volunteer information unless it is requested of me. I am not against any one of these schemes. I only express my personal view in a few words and adhere to what I say. I was never asked.

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members were asked on the 1st December last year.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: That was when the proposition was before us.

The PRESIDENT: If any Member had objection to our proceeding with more than one part of the Colony, why did he not say so then? The resolution was passed unanimously with a great deal of compliment paid Government, and Government was therefore entitled to go on with it. Government proposes to start Land Settlement Schemes in three parts of the country. If Members of Council are not prepared to play up to their duty and to say so, how can Government get on at all? Your chance was in December last to state your objections. However, we can go back and begin again.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: With all due respect to what Your Excellency has said, I might not have been present at any of those meetings of Council. I have not been paying attention to the business of this Legislative Council because my age does not permit me and I have other business to attend to. I may say candidly I have not had a square deal from this Government in respect of land and I have a grievance against Government.

I am not against any of these schemes. I am only making the suggestion that we should make haste slowly and proceed with one scheme at a time—one this year and another next year. I never indicated that I was against these propositions. I plead guilty, however, to not having paid more attention to the matter. My honest conviction is that we should decide on one of these schemes and do that. The expenditure is going to be a quarter or half million dollars or more, and we cannot afford to venture out on new propositions which are going to impose a greater tax on us in this country. I am practically retiring and am not taking an active part in business. I am taking things easily; my health does not permit me to do otherwise. To blame me and to say that I should have come here long ago with my suggestions, I cannot agree with that.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I cannot understand the amount of pessimism that invades this Council. For many years Members of this Council have advocated and clamoured for Land Settlement. Committees have been appointed and have reported from time to time, and this last Committee reported in favour of certain sites. What is being asked today is for an expression of opinion from Members, who have approved of the matter in principle, as to negotiations for the purchase of those properties. If the price is too high then we will have to drop it. If the expenditure for putting the places in proper condition for settling people from a health point of view is too heavy, then of course we will have to scrap the scheme. But I agree that as long as we take up this attitude British Guiana will never progress. You, sir, have advocated schemes of irrigation and drainage; you have written, after very much deliberation and thought as to the condition of this Colony, a long despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and despite that some people are trying to dampen what you have done by objecting to these schemes which you have recently advocated. It

is no wonder that men who come here and advocate schemes of this nature are taken away from us at the very first opportunity. I fear that your visit to London will result in your not returning, because we are too pessimistic here. Members of this Council have stated here over and over that Government does not want to do anything for the people, but really it seems they do not want anything to be done. It is no use remaining a Member of this Council if things are to lag and continue in this manner.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I agree with the hon. Nominated Member who has just spoken. We have no unity in this Council, but outside the people in general clamour for Land Settlement. I do not know if some of those who had clamoured for Land Settlement thought it would never come about and that is the reason why they asked for it, or having seen it in print some thought it too good to be true and that too much benefits were to be given to some people. I do not think Land Settlement should be based on the cost of the scheme, as to whether it is economical or not so far as the construction cost is concerned, because I presume that in selecting settlers for any one of these schemes care will be taken to select good and genuine farmers and also to select those who cannot afford to buy land for themselves. I cannot understand the fear that people may not be found to put on these places. After all, according to the estimates given by the Commissioner of Local Government, all we can accommodate on those three or four places is 400 families. Your Excellency has moved around quite a lot in the country and can say whether there will be any difficulty in finding 400 families throughout the Colony who cannot afford to buy sufficient land to occupy in order to maintain themselves.

When I say construction cost should not be taken into consideration, it is because of this fact: If these people cannot procure land by their own

means to be able to assist themselves by their own efforts, and every year their families are increasing and their difficulty is also growing, they will be a charge eventually on the State. Is it then not a wiser plan to find somewhere to put them so that they can make their own livelihood, be prosperous and become good citizens of the State to which they belong? I fail to see otherwise. Take for instance the West Coast Demerara; the area selected there will accommodate 200 families, but you are not making sufficient provision to so accommodate them as to enable them to assist themselves and their families. On the other hand on the East Coast Demerara, take Cove and John, will there be any difficulty in finding 150 families to occupy there? It is monstrous to think so far as the Corentyne is concerned, that you are only making accommodation for 50 families. I think that the plan is well laid out and it is because of the latitude and privilege you give to this Council that this motion has come before this Council to-day otherwise, I take it, when this Council accepted Land Settlement in principle it might have passed a similar motion to this one at the moment and Government would not have had to return to this Council.

So far as the fear of the hon. Member for Central Demerara is concerned, I know that he is giving his full support to any Land Settlement Scheme, but he is afraid that Government is so weak that the proprietors of these places will fleece Government when it comes to the negotiations about the price of the properties. But has he forgotten that we have quite recently passed an Ordinance to acquire lands for similar purposes? If Government thinks that the proprietors want more than the value of the land, it has the machinery with which to proceed. Maybe the hon. Member for Central Demerara may be one of the Umpires. I do not think he should entertain much fear in so far as the fleecing of Gov-



ernment is concerned. He also fears that he may not be selected as an Empire.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I am not.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I hope this Council, after considering the benefits that Land Settlement will give to the entire Colony and that the expenditure will be recouped in some other form or other, whether it be a reduction of the Poor Law Vote, or a reduction of the Hospital Vote or a reduction even under the last Ordinance we have passed for Old Age Pension because the land will be put into such condition that even those persons at the age of fifty-five may be able to grow something around their plot to maintain themselves, will support the motion. I appeal to Members of Council to look ahead. We have just before this authorized the expenditure of \$100,000 to keep off the sea from these Land Settlements so that they will be able to give immediate benefits and assist the settlers, because I see one of the proposed sites is on the West Coast Demerara. I appeal to hon. Members to look ahead, and I am fully certain that we will be pleased in years to come that we were Members of this Council when such a scheme was passed. It is what we have been clamouring for all these years.

Mr. JACOB: Again I cannot say that I follow the procedure that is being adopted to-day. I have been a member of the Land Settlement Committee. I have been a member of the Rural Housing Committee. It appears that the one interlocks the other. When the Committee was considering the question of Land Settlement, in fact when I was appointed a member of that Committee I expressed the hope that it would adopt the 1939 Report and within a few months something practical would be done. The Commissioner of Local Government was Chairman and, I think, I had his assurance that was decided. Although there has been some delay the Committee reported in August last year and this Council

approved of the principle of Land Settlement and, as Your Excellency reminded the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, it was unanimously adopted. Before that, an Ordinance was passed giving Government power to acquire lands for Land Settlement—Ordinance No. 14 of 1943. His Excellency gave his assent to it on the 6th August, 1943. During the debate on Land Settlement I was informed distinctly and, I think, it was the unanimous opinion of the members of the Committee that as soon as that Ordinance was passed certain properties would have been acquired. I do not believe any member of that Committee objected to that assurance being given by the Chairman, and in fact I pressed that Plantations Vergenoegen and Cove and John should be acquired. There is a paragraph in the Committee's Report which reads as follows:—

"The Committee recommends that Plantations Cove and John and Vergenoegen *cum annexis* be acquired as soon as the necessary Bill to amend the Acquisition of Land for Public Purposes Ordinance is passed. In the case of Vergenoegen, settlement should commence only on the completion of the Bonasika scheme but meanwhile the present tenants should be allowed to remain if they so desire."

That is clear and conclusive that the Committee recommended those two properties should have been acquired, and this Government had the legal authority to do so. Why all this *rigmarole*, adopting the Committee's report and coming back here and asking for permission to negotiate for the purchase? I was alarmed a moment ago to understand from a member of the Committee when he spoke—I refer to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. J. A. Luckhoo—that if the cost is prohibitive then the scheme should be scrapped. I am not concerned with the cost at all. I thought I would have heard when he spoke on the motion for Sea Defences that perhaps the money should not be voted. But, no; when it comes to Land Settlement, when it comes to the question of putting people on the land and giv-

ing them an opportunity to live in some kind of comfort it should be scrapped if the cost is prohibitive. I am strongly of the opinion that this Government is just delaying this matter. Government has the authority to proceed whether the price is \$100 or \$100,000. Why come to this Council and delay the matter all this time when it is within the knowledge of Government that at least 15,000 families require lands? Is not that within the knowledge of Government? If not, I ask that a census be taken to ascertain that.

The hon. Member for Georgetown Central is in favour of one of these propositions and not all three. I am speaking on the motion which is actually moved that this Council approves of Government negotiating with the proprietors and purchasing from them Plantation Vergenoegen *cum annexis*, East Bank, Essequibo River. Now, what is the area of Vergenoegen? As given in the Governor's Message, No. 3, it is 2,746 acres. The Land Settlement Committee recommended in paragraph 1 (iv)—

"House plot should be 1/3 to 1 acre and the unit for cultivation 3 acres minimum, and 15 acres maximum, to be determined by whether or not acres adjacent to the settlement provide the settlers with other avenues of employment."

I am taking the average or mean of 3 and 15 acres—9 acres. That is the average to be accorded to a settler to make him independent. If you divide Vergenoegen's 2,746 acres into 9 acres to the family you can only get accommodation for 305 families to be removed from certain parts of West Coast Demerara for permanent settlement on Pln. Vergenoegen. What settlement will 2,746 acres provide? From my knowledge of the West Coast I think there are at least 3,000 or 4,000 families who require land to settle on. What is the difficulty? Why not take the risk—if it is a risk at all—of experimenting

with 300 families right away? I am a little surprised that the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight) should have ventured the opinion that Government should make haste slowly. Make haste slowly in a matter of this kind in which Africans and East Indians have been clamouring for land settlement for at least 25 years? Government has done absolutely nothing within that time to settle people on the land, but it pretends that it is doing all it can to make people independent. We have certain groups of people in this Colony who say that the people will not go back to the land; they want white collar jobs. I am suggesting to Government to put the matter to the test. Offer 2-acre blocks to the people and you will find that those who want white collar clerks will not get them. Government wants to support a group of people who desire to employ workers at wages ranging from 36 cents to 3/- per day of 8 to 10 hours but do not give them five days' work a week. Government is supporting its own Departments and others who are large employers of labour.

My point is that this scheme should have been started long ago, and that Government is delaying it, perhaps unwittingly. Probably there is no staff, but I am not sure that it is a question of staff. I am not sure that the Land Settlement Officer appointed is a suitable person for that job. I do not think he is. I suggest that a Land Settlement Officer from Jamaica should be employed in this Colony, and no one connected with other interests in the Colony should be given the job which is a key position in the interest of the peasants of this Colony.

I reserve further remarks on the subject until a later stage, but I cannot refrain from referring to two questions I asked at the last session of the Council, in respect of which I was granted the courtesy of receiving replies by letter. With your permission,



sir, I will read the questions and the answers so that they may be put on record at least. I asked:—

“Q. 1—Will Government explain why Plns. Cove and John and Vergenoegen in Demerara have not been acquired for land settlement purposes, as recommended by the Land Settlement Committee which was appointed in February and which submitted an interim report in August, 1943?

A.—The Land Settlement Committee decided that settlement should not take place on land that was not both drained and irrigated. Government is obtaining estimates of the cost of draining and irrigating both estates before finally deciding on acquisition. The whole position as regards land settlement including the two estates has been set out in Message No. 25 for consideration of Members of the Legislative Council.”

I have had occasion to complain about inaccuracies in replies that have reached me from time to time. This reply is certainly not accurate. I re-read Message No. 25 last night and Message No. 3 also, and I hope that this reply will not be repeated in respect of the questions which I have repeated in the notice I gave this morning. The second question was:—

“Q. 2—Is Government still unconcerned about the welfare of hundreds of workers who are being victimised by certain landlords in Demerara and Berbice, and who have been and are being given notices to remove their houses, out-houses and cattle pens, or in the alternative, in some cases, pay an increased rent of over 300%?

A.—The general position as regards rural housing is being actively pursued. Government appointed a Rural Housing Committee which reported on 30th September, 1943. By resolutions passed on 1st December, 1943, the recommendations of the Committee were accepted in principle by the Legislative Council and action on the report is proceeding. The authority necessary is being created.”

I cannot accuse the Colonial Secretariat of deliberately giving an incorrect reply, but there is something fundamentally wrong somewhere.

The PRESIDENT: What is this all about? Is it about rural housing?

Mr. JACOB: Yes, sir.

The PRESIDENT: Well it is not quite relevant.

Mr. JACOB: I think it is, but if Your Excellency thinks otherwise—

The PRESIDENT: I think we should get on with Land Settlement.

Mr. JACOB: Land settlement includes houses for the settlers, and when the reply was given to my question why people cannot get land to plant and build houses that the Rural Housing Committee had reported, it was a deliberate attempt to mislead this Council and throw me off the track. The Rural Housing Committee had nothing to do with Demerara and Berbice. Its terms of reference were confined to Essequibo.

The PRESIDENT: Quite true, but all that is not relevant to these motions.

Mr. JACOB: I submit it is, because houses have to be built. Government is trying to cloak its delay while it pretends that everything is being done to make the people comfortable. I suggest that the Secretariat should be a little more careful about giving correct answers.

The PRESIDENT: I will appoint a highly qualified officer to answer the hon. Member's questions. I am sure the Colonial Secretary would welcome an increase of staff for the purpose. (laughter).

The hon. Member for North Western District is perfectly correct in pointing out that by accepting the Resolution of the 1st December this Council accepted the report of the Committee which recommended that these estates should be acquired as soon as the Land Settlement Ordinance has been passed, and in principle fully

empowered Government to purchase these estates straightway. We did not do that. Had we done that and had Members awakened one morning in March and found that Government had spent half a million dollars in purchasing these estates that would have meant jumping the Council. The hon. Member is a champion totalitarian of this Council, but I have no desire to vie with him. I think that in spite of that Resolution it is fair to come back to the Council with what particular steps we propose to take in the light of the information we have obtained since that Resolution was passed. That is the answer to the point that Government is delaying this matter. We had to take a certain fair account of what the sentiments of Members of the Council would be, and I am sure that they would like to be consulted again.

Mr. JACOB: It will mean then that after Government has negotiated you will have to come back to the Council.

The PRESIDENT: I am prepared to do that. I am not prepared to jump this Council with expensive purchases without Members knowing what has happened. It is only fair that they should know what Government is doing.

I have tried to get a Land Settlement Officer from Jamaica but I have failed to get him. I consulted the Comptroller and his advice is quite definitely against my pursuing that particular purpose.

Mr. JACKSON: I rise to give my unqualified support to the motion before the Council. We are all agreed that there should be land settlement schemes for the benefit of the people of this Colony. In the course of this debate reference has been made to the failure of the Bush Lot scheme in Essequibo. I would like to say that failures or disappointments ought to be stepping stones to success, and I have

no doubt that the elements that brought failure to the scheme in Essequibo can be turned to good account in implementing the schemes we have in view. I think that Government is quite right in bringing forward this matter in the manner in which it is put before us today. I think the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. J. A. Luckhoo, was quite right when he referred to the pessimism that exists in this Colony and said that it has been the drawback of the Colony. I support the scheme and I sincerely hope that if the negotiations are successful Government will proceed at once with the implementation of the scheme as envisaged in the motion.

Mr. SEAFORD: I wish to preface my remarks by saying that I was unfortunately out of the Colony on the 1st December when the original motion was before the Council, otherwise it might have affected the views which I will express today. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. J. A. Luckhoo, referred to the pessimism of this Council. I cannot agree that pessimism is the right word. I think what this Council has shown is caution rather than pessimism. Members are asking Government to be careful, and I entirely agree with them. I am sorry that we have not full estimates before us today. I think the Council is entitled to estimates when it is asked to vote for any particular scheme. I know that we have estimates for the laying out of the land. I appreciate that it is difficult to state the cost of the estates, but there are other commitments which Government will have to face, such as the laying out of roads, the provision of schools, post offices and medical facilities. In asking us to approve of this motion it is only right that we should ask to what extent we are committing the Colony. I am a little bit nervous about our total commitments generally. I am rather fearful as I do not know what we will have to face in the near future. May I sir, recall a few words which you uttered in this Council not



very long ago when you were dealing with the Old Age Pension Bill, but not a single newspaper published those words. To me they were most important, and I think all Members will regard them as such. You said:—

“We are getting into something like deep water. The Treasurer and I are engaged on an examination to get some idea (guess-work it will have to be) as to what our recurrent revenue and expenditure will be in say two years time. It is going to be very difficult to do, and the picture is not going to be a very pleasant one. We must realize that we have just the other day taken on a liability of \$300,000 for teachers' salaries. That is now before the Secretary of State. It is going to rise to very much more than that and if it is going to be kept down it is going to be kept down by certain measures which will not be very popular. Our total liability at the moment must be getting on towards two million dollars, and I should be nothing but a fool to give you any cheerful likelihood that a re-examination of this matter a year hence would mean a change.”

With those words coming from you, sir, it is only natural that responsible Members of this Council should advise caution. I am in favour of land settlement schemes wherever we can establish them. In voting for these motions I am going to ask that we be given estimates. I take it for granted that the cost of these schemes will be borne by the Imperial Government.

The PRESIDENT: No. The principle is definitely this. The purchase of land will be our own responsibility. As far as I know that has been laid down in all development schemes in respect of which land has to be purchased and remains our own property. Services such as you have described would certainly be considered a proper case for an application for a grant from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. We are not spending money and throwing it away like that. We are getting land for the money we are spending, and we are going to recover a lot of it either by

sale or leasehold. Those extra services I know will be uneconomic, but would be a proper ground for an application for a grant.

Mr SEAFORD: I think I remember reading in a speech made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in Parliament that the Imperial Government was prepared to bear the capital expenditure on such schemes, and in view of that Government might ask for assistance from the Development and Welfare Fund.

The PRESIDENT: I should, of course, but I think the answer will be that if we are going to retain the land we should be prepared to pay for it. It is always ours. In our present position I think we should have to pay for it.

Mr. SEAFORD: That being the case it is all the more necessary that this Council should ask for figures showing what the maintenance cost is likely to be, and what we are likely to get in return for this expenditure. I think Your Excellency said a few months ago that we would get a return of a considerable amount of the capital expenditure. I am afraid I do not see where that is going to come from. The most we can expect from the people we are going to put on the lands is that they should maintain those lands and get some returns from them. There will be very great difficulty in getting back any portion of the capital expenditure. In view of our future commitments I think it is only right that this Council should ask Government to put those figures before us. The first Nominated Member stated that all Government asked for was the authority of the Council for Government to negotiate. If it rests there I agree that Government should go ahead and negotiate straightway, but that is rather controverted by the motions before us.

The PRESIDENT: I notice that I am prepared to come back to the Council and say what the purchase price is before we do anything. In spite of the arguments of the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) I think it is only fair to the Council.

Mr. SEAFORD: The second resolution states:—

“And be it further resolved, that the Council approves of the expenditure of \$145,000. the amount estimated by the Consulting Engineer for reconditioning the said estate.”

The PRESIDENT: Obviously we cannot spend it until we have purchased the land. The object is to show Members exactly what it is going to mean. That is the reason why we have not proceeded on the Resolution of the 1st December and have not brought it up before now. Mr. Laing wanted to know what the cost of the properties would be.

Mr. SEAFORD: With that construction on the motion before us I am in entire agreement with it. I think it is high time Government did make headway with this Land Settlement Scheme, and I hope that when it comes before us again we will have complete estimates. Had Your Excellency not expressed that view it would have been rather difficult for us. I was somewhat bewildered to know how to act with respect to the three motions. All might be thrown out.

There is one other point. Mr. Laing spoke about the various schemes. In the case of Vergenoegen there is natural drainage. In fact we know that on the West Coast there has been natural drainage for a great many years. As regards Cove and John my great objection was that I could not see how good drainage could be got there, but in view of what Your Excellency said in your opening remarks as regards the natural drainage of Better Hope the position has been changed completely. In the circumstances there

could be no better place for Land Settlement than Cove and John. I support the motion.

Mr. KING: I did not intend to speak on the motion because I did not think it would be necessary. I am certain that every Member realises and appreciates that Land Settlement in this Colony is absolutely essential. Had a well defined and well executed Land Settlement Scheme been inaugurated 25 years ago the lot of a great many of the labouring classes in this Colony would have been far better than it is today, but we must not allow posterity to speak of us in the same terms as I am speaking today. This is an undeveloped country, a huge country with tremendous natural resources, a country of considerable potential wealth, but unfortunately we have not in this Colony a wealthy type of proprietor such as is found in other well populated countries. In those countries Schemes of Land Settlement are inaugurated either by companies or wealthy proprietors, but in this Colony the few wealthy people we have here have not in mind the development of the land for the welfare of certain classes of the community. Therefore the duty must fall on Government to inaugurate and carry out Schemes of Land Settlement for the benefit of the Colony. Unless that is done I can quite see that in years to come most of the large estates would be abandoned. Portions of them would be occupied, but most of them would be abandoned as we have seen in various parts of the Colony. It is undoubtedly the duty of the Government to do everything in its power within a reasonable cost to inaugurate and carry out Land Settlement Schemes for the benefit of the people.

The places mentioned in the Message are, I think, very suitable. One or two of them are, I think, ideal, and I am quite certain that Land Settlement in all of those places will have a very fair chance of success. After all that is about the only thing that most of us can possibly hope for. If we had a



prophet on whom we could rely he might be able to tell us which of these schemes would succeed and which would fail, and help us to make a decision. Failing the help of a prophet we can only do what normal people would do and that is to exercise our discretion on the facts before us. I am certain that no Member is against Land Settlement. For a certain class of people it is the only hope I can see of their acquiring a plot of land which they can look upon as their own, and through which the Colony can develop to a size and condition to which I am sure we all look forward. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other parts of the Colonial Empire have been developed by means of Land Settlement, backed in most cases by their respective Governments. About 30 years ago I remember seeing a scheme which was inaugurated by the Government of Australia, a copy of which had been obtained from Australia by my father who was and still is very interested in the welfare and development of this Colony. It was a scheme whereby settlers in Australia were given fairly large tracts of land and fairly substantial sums of money by the Government to enable them to occupy and cultivate the land. As a result of that Australia is a well-developed and wealthy country today, one of the best countries in the British Empire. We can therefore look forward with a certain amount of hope that this Colony, if we act now and help the people to settle, will in time develop into a prosperous country and the lot of the people who at present suffer to a certain extent from rapacious landlords will be far better and far happier. I support the motion.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: In rising to support land settlement I wish to say that I am very anxious for it, and especially my Union, because after the war many people who are now employed in war industries will be thrown out of employment. We should therefore plan immediately for land settlement which

would provide employment. I heartily support the motion. It is 3 o'clock, sir. (laughter).

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member has lived up to his suggestion of last week. I would just like to raise the point about the form of the motion. Putting the words "and purchasing" will authorise Government to proceed straightway and purchase. I think it will be in accordance with the general feeling of Members that Government is not authorised to purchase without something being submitted by way of a figure and that we should not take advantage of a Government motion and purchase no matter what the cost may be. We may put an outside figure and then Government will have authority to purchase within that figure. But I do not see any practical disadvantage in coming back to the Council, when we do not know exactly where we are and what the figure is that we can effect the purchase. When we know what the figure is we can proceed to use the powers under the Ordinance. Mr. Laing, what do you say?

Mr. LAING: I do not see any disadvantage in the procedure.

The PRESIDENT: You do not propose to have authority to effect the purchase whatever the price may be!

Mr. LAING: I think hon. Members will want to know how much is being paid. That is my feeling. Hon. Members would like to know before we actually purchase, in which case we can omit or change the words "and purchasing". We want to give the people an opportunity for negotiation, and if we see no chance of success then we can proceed to take preliminary steps under the Ordinance on our own valuation. So I suggest the substitution of the words "endeavouring to arrange purchase of" for the words "purchasing from them" in the motion may suit.

Mr. KING: If I may make a suggestion to Government, the words "and obtain option for purchase" may be considered.

The PRESIDENT: Negotiation will surely cover that. The next step is when we have to proceed under the Ordinance.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: You can use your power under the Ordinance, but I certainly must bring to the notice of this Council that the procedure that is going on is very unsatisfactory to the inhabitants of this Colony. When such a case is tried privately, the public is entirely put out in not being able to know what is going on. A special Magistrate is appointed to try the case and for reasons of fear of private information going out he is told the trial must be held in camera. I deprecate that attitude.

The PRESIDENT: I trust that will not come into the matter of land settlement.

Mr. LAING: I would just like to express gratitude to those Members who have supported this motion which means so much to the rural inhabitants who are anxious to have a scheme for land settlement. I think that possibly few people appreciate to what extent persons living in rural areas desire to have land on which to build their houses and land which they can cultivate. To illustrate this: Recently I had 100 acres of land to give out in the West Demerara District. It was to be allotted in one-acre plots. For that we had applications from residents around that vicinity totalling 180, and it placed me and my officers in some difficulty as how to divide that land among those applicants. That is only one indication of the real desire which exists in this Colony for land on which people can place their houses and also cultivate.

I realise that some time has expired since the acceptance of the motion by this Council approving in principle the Committee's recommendation, but hon. Members will appreciate that the Engineers and Surveyors attached to the Public Works Department are very severely pressed at the present time and these works have to take their place in order so that other works of a more pressing nature may go forward. The Public Works Department and Engineers have done their best to prepare estimates, but they are difficult things to prepare and eventually we have had the figures put before us. I can appreciate the opposition of the hon. Member for Georgetown North when he asked that the Council be informed what it will cost to lay out this settlement. The 1939 Land Settlement Committee did attempt to prepare estimates, but at the present time I do not think any of us will be prepared to put estimates before this Council because of the difficulty of being able to estimate for materials, the cost of labour and other things. I certainly hope that the land settlement may be proceeded with now much faster than we have been able to go in the past.

With the consent of the Council the motion was amended as suggested by Mr. Laing.

Motion as amended put, and adopted.

#### ACQUISITION OF PLN. BUSH LOT, NO. 28 COURANTYNE.

The PRESIDENT: I will now put the second motion without the necessity of discussion and with the same amendment as the previous one.

With the consent of the Council the following motion was amended by the deletion of the words "purchasing from them" in the third and fourth lines thereof and by the substitution thereof of the words "endeavouring to arrange purchase of":—



"Be it Resolved, that with reference to Resolution No. XXXI of 1st December, 1943, and the Governor's Messages No. 25 of the 5th of May, 1944 and No. 3 of the 8th of July, 1944, this Council approves of Government negotiating with the proprietors and purchasing from them Plantation Bush Lot or Lot No. 28, Courantyne, Berbice, for the purpose of land settlement;

And be it further Resolved, that the Council approves of the expenditure of \$46,000, the amount estimated by the Consulting Engineer for reconditioning the said estate."

Motion as amended put, and adopted.

#### ACQUISITION OF PLN. COVE & JOHN.

With the consent of the Council the following motion was amended by the deletion of the words "purchasing from them" in the third and fourth lines thereof and by the substitution therefor of the words "endeavouring to arrange purchase of":—

"Be it Resolved, that with reference to Resolution No XXXI of 1st December, 1943, and the Governor's

Messages No. 25 of the 5th of May, 1944, and No. 3 of the 8th of July, 1944, this Council approves of Government negotiating with the proprietors and purchasing from them Plantation Cove and John, East Coast, Demerara, for the purpose of land settlement;

And be it further Resolved, that the Council approves of the expenditure of \$20,500, the amount estimated by the Consulting Engineer for reconditioning the said estate."

Mr. ROTH: May I ask that this motion be deferred?

The PRESIDENT: I think we will have another opportunity of bringing Mr. Case (Consulting Engineer) forward with his figures and have them recorded. I therefore put the motion as amended.

Motion as amended put, and adopted.

The PRESIDENT: I now adjourn the Council to 12 noon tomorrow when we will begin straightway with the Bill.

Council adjourned accordingly.