

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 8th May, 1945.

The Council met in Special Session at 10.47 a.m. to mark the official declaration of the cessation of hostilities in Europe. His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G. President in the Chair.

PRESENT :

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

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. M.B. Laing, C.M.G., O.B.E. (Acting);

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. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Dr. 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. T. Lee (Essequibo River)

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated)

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES IN EUROPE.

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members of Council, we are met here on a very momentous occasion, and yet I feel that in this last hour-and-a-half everything has been said and it is scarcely necessary for me again to speak formally here. You have just been good enough to listen to me speaking along with the Mayor, somewhat under difficulties, and I will ask you to excuse me and let me excuse you listening again to a second address from me. I have to speak again—I think three times in the open air—and it is scarcely a holiday for myself, as you will see. I am leaving for the Base this afternoon at 2 o'clock to celebrate the occasion with our American Allies there.

I have nothing more to announce to Members than you have already heard today from the Prime Minister that the document was signed at 2.41 a.m. yesterday and that it is to be ratified in Berlin today and that the formal cessation of hostilities will be at one minute past midnight tonight. Of that you are all aware. I have no more special word I can communicate to Members here, and it will not be until tomorrow that I take the act of signing and renouncing quite a number of these Defence Regulations and Restrictions under which we have been living. I might, perhaps, have been able to announce them to you today, but I do not think you would have understood 90 per cent of them as they have not affected us in this Colony.

We have met here today formally to record in our minutes the cessation of hostilities and further to give an opportunity to the hon. the Deputy President to give notice and lay on the table for future action a motion of loyalty, gratitude and thankfulness which this Council will duly move perhaps next week. In that we are following exactly the example of the House of Commons in London. I would merely like to say this: In the intimacy of this Council some of us have thought that this Council should have been dissolved many times during the last few years. Opinions differ, but you gentlemen will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that you have been Members of the Honourable Council throughout the period of the war from its beginning and seen it right through to its successful conclusion in Europe. I feel sure that in the years to come that will be a satisfaction to Members of this Council. You will also have voted considerable sums of money necessary to carry out public services in this Colony and, perhaps, your successors may have something to say about that. But that day of reckoning is not yet.

In the meantime, let me thank you in the name of His Majesty who has appointed us and in the name of the people of British Guiana whose representatives you are. Let me thank you especially for your services to the Colony throughout these five and a half years of warfare. I will now proceed to ask the hon. the Deputy President to give notice of the motion which I know he has ready for us.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I beg to give notice of the following resolutions which in view of the occasion I ask your permission to read:—

LOYALTY AND DEVOTION TO THE THRONE

"BE IT RESOLVED: That this Council respectfully invites His Excellency the Governor to convey to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on behalf of the inhabitants of this Colony the renewed expression of their continuous loyalty and devotion to the throne, and their profound

admiration of the sincere interest and gracious sympathy shown by His Majesty the King and his consort in the welfare of their subjects in the prosecution of the war against the common enemy."

GRATITUDE TO THE ARMED FORCES

"BE IT RESOLVED: That this Council places on record its deep sense of gratitude to the Armed Forces, including the Home Guard, Merchant Navy, Civil Defence Units, Red Cross and kindred organisations, and to all workers in munition and other factories of the United Nations for their gallant heroic and devoted services in bringing about the defeat of Germany and in freeing the enemy-occupied territories from the tyranny and aggression of German rule, and hereby tenders its profound and heartfelt sympathy with the families and relatives of those members of the forces who have died in action since the commencement of the War, with the peoples of Great Britain, and those of the liberated countries in the terrible distress and privation suffered by them during the last five and a half years and more of warfare."

I further give notice that at the next or subsequent meeting of the Council I shall move the resolutions which I have just read. I beg formally to lay these resolutions on the table of the Council.

The PRESIDENT: The resolutions having been notified to this Council for action, I propose myself to fix provisionally next Wednesday for the motion. The time has come to adjourn Council and for those of us who want to proceed to the Old Parade Ground for an Act of Thanksgiving at 11.15. It gives us reasonable time to get there.

In conclusion I would just like to say again how moved I feel that in this most fitting and worthy Chamber in which the Representatives of this country meet. this experienced body should today record its deep sense of relief and uplift of the heart. This will be a day, I think, we shall not readily forget. I declare the Council adjourned to Thursday, which is not a holiday, at 2 p.m.

The Council adjourned accordingly to Thursday, 10th May, 1945.