

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 10th December, 1942.

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

PRESENT:

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. M. B. Laing, O.B.E., Commissioner of Local Government.

The Hon. L. G. Crease, Director of Education.

The Hon. B. R. Wood, Conservator of Forests.

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

The Hon. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday the 9th day of December, 1942, were taken as read, and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION SCHEMES.

THE PRESIDENT: With reference to yesterday's proceedings and my remarks on the Drainage and Irrigation Schemes I wished to make it quite clear and I think I did say so, that the capital costs would be met entirely from the funds provided under the Colonial Development Trust Fund or other source. There is no question of a specific rating per acre of the properties concerned. It will be remembered that at the meeting we had last May I asked Unofficial Members to support me in the attitude that the capital costs of the Drainage and Irrigation Schemes should not be met by the proprietors but by finances from outside.

THE FLOOD SITUATION.

With regard to the question of drainage and the difficult situation which has arisen in the last few days I have asked

engineers and others to go out and see the areas principally affected. Sir Cosmo Parkinson is going out himself to see at first hand what arises in this country at times of heavy rain. One result that may follow from that is that we may find it convenient to postpone consideration of the Public Works estimates this afternoon.

IMPORTS FROM VENEZUELA AND BRAZIL.

I have a letter of some importance. I do not know if I have spoken specifically in this Council about trade with our South American neighbours, but I think in Finance Committee we spoke about the possibilities of imports from Venezuela and Brazil, and I have received general authority from the Colonial Office to get over certain formal obstacles that exist. As regards Venezuela we found that the difficulties were on the other side and I wrote to the British Minister there some time ago. I have his reply stating that the matter is being studied and he will inform me of the views of the Venezuelan Government in due course.

QUESTION OF PROCEDURE.

There is a point touching the procedure yesterday which may have been confusing to Members, and I have looked at the papers since. There is really no difficulty about it, but it might seem a little bit easier under Rule 17 which says:—

“When an amendment to a question shall have been submitted, and when more amendments than one shall have been submitted, the President at the close of the debate shall put the question for the decision of the Council in this wise: “That the words of the question stand as in the original motion” which, if it be decided in the affirmative, will throw out all amendments, and he shall then put the original motion to be affirmed or negatived. If the first question which would preclude all amendments be negatived, then, in case only one amendment shall have been proposed and seconded he shall put the question as it was proposed to be amended; but in case more amendments than one shall have been

proposed and seconded, he shall put the questions of amendment *seriatim* and in the inverse order of their having been proposed; and when any one amendment is affirmed all other amendments shall be thereby negatived, and the President shall then put the motion, as so amended, to be affirmed or negatived.”

I used the Parliamentary phraseology which is “That the words proposed to be deleted stand part of the question.” The difficulty is this: in a simple amendment which is a change of words or the insertion of a word or two, or the deletion of a word or two, the matter is quite simple, but when we have amendments which are in effect fresh motions then it becomes a little difficult, and one has, as provided in the Rule, to put the question: “That the words of the motion stand.” If that is affirmed it does not mean that the motion is there and then carried. It means that we continue the debate on the motion, and if there is a minor amendment it will be considered and we will proceed with the second question and put the motion for formal adoption. If it is negatived, which means that any Member who prefers one of the several amendments votes in the negative or against the original motion being considered in that form, then we proceed to take the amendments in inverse order. The procedure is a good one and gives ample opportunity for discussion. In yesterday’s debate we should have put the motion by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) in its original form, and if it was negatived we would then have taken the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) and seen whether we wanted to debate that. If that failed we would then have taken the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar). It is a procedure which does facilitate getting on with the matter, because it takes us back to the original motion.

Yesterday we said we did not want to debate the wording of the original

motion any further but preferred to debate one of the amendments. I used a form of words which I had used during the last eight years and which is the Parliamentary form, and when I saw this question arising I referred to the Manual of Procedure and refreshed my memory of the exact wording. Then the Attorney-General drew my attention to Rule 17 which uses a form of words which is apparently simpler. That is all right, but it is a little less desirable because it brings into the question the whole of the wording of the motion and everything that has gone before. Of course if it occurs again I shall be bound by Rule 17 and use those particular words. The procedure is a good one although Members found it a little bamboozling that if they are in favour of something they have to vote "No," but I tried to make it clear to Members.

AIR TRIP WITH SIR COSMO
PARKINSON.

There is just one other announcement I have to make and that is that I am going out of Georgetown early to-morrow morning with Sir Cosmo Parkinson, taking him around the Colony by air, and I do not expect to be back in Georgetown until Tuesday afternoon.

As regards to-day's business I should remind Members that we have undertaken to take the motion by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) to-morrow, and I now propose, subject to anything the Colonial Secretary might arrange, that we should give him an opportunity at 2 o'clock to-morrow, and in the meantime proceed as far as we can with the Estimates.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS.

LESSEES OF TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS
DEPARTMENT.

Mr. De AGUIAR gave notice of the following questions:—

1. How many lessees are on land owned by the Transport and Harbours Department—

- (a) within the boundaries of the Kitty and Alexanderville Local Authority (north of the railway line);
- (b) south of the railway line.

2. How many buildings are on the land referred to in (1)? Show (a) and (b) separately.

3. What is the amount received for rents for the year 1941 and up to 30th September, 1942? Show each year separately.

4. What is the amount owing (if any) for rents up to and including 30th September, 1942?

5. Is any contribution made to the Kitty and Alexanderville Local Authority? If the answer is in the affirmative, please state the amount contributed for the years 1940, 1941 and 1942, (separately) and the reason for these contributions.

6. Is any Commission paid for collecting these rents? If so, to whom is it paid, the rate paid, and the actual Commission paid for the years 1940, 1941, and up to and including 30th September, 1942. Show the figures separately.

7. Is Government aware that the lessees are on a monthly tenancy?

8. Is Government aware that eviction proceedings are usually taken after the expiration of one month's notice?

9. What steps are being taken to ensure that lessees are given a greater security of tenure?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Arising out of the announcement made by Your Excellency as regards the procedure to be adopted, I take it that if the amendment to my motion had been rejected Your Excellency would then have put my motion to the vote.

THE PRESIDENT: No, the exact wording of your motion would have fallen. Had the amendment been finally negatived the whole thing would have fallen, and all we would have had on record would be the debate. I tricked you a little bit by saying that in voting against the amendment you did not mean to vote against the substance of it. Of course we could have taken another motion later on.

Mr. WIGHT: The motion having fallen it would have come under the Rule which says that a similar motion cannot be introduced within a period of six months.

THE PRESIDENT: I would have to refer to the Attorney-General on that point. It depends on how you could have produced a new motion worded in such a manner as would bring it outside the Rule. It probably could have been done somehow.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESTIMATES, 1943.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of expenditure to be defrayed from revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1943.

MISCELLANEOUS (b) SUBVENTIONS, &C..
OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL.

Item 24—Recruitment and Training of Officers for Colonial Agricultural Departments, \$1,872.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I do not think I have very much to add to what I said yesterday when I spoke generally under this head, but in order to refresh the memory of hon. Members on the points I raised I will repeat that I asked Government to re-examine the question of these grants. I appreciate that we are bound to continue some of them for a certain period of years, and I realize the difficulty in trying to stop the payments all at once, but it has occurred to me that perhaps at this time we might put up a case for the postponement of these payments until the war is over, because it seems to me that we can hope to get little benefit from them, and after all most of these institutions are, as it were, only marking time at present.

Speaking generally on this item I should like to hear from the Director of Agriculture what benefits this Colony has been receiving as a result of this contribution.

Prof. DASH (Director of Agriculture): This item relates to the Unified Service Scheme which this Council agreed to accept and to contribute something towards the training of officers for the Colonial Agricultural Departments. That scheme is still in force and I do not think we could touch this vote without bringing up the whole question again, because we have agreed in principle to the Unified Services Scheme, part of which incorporates the training of officers for Colonial Agricultural Departments.

Mr. De AGUIAR: Have we ever sent an officer from the Department of Agriculture for a post-graduate course, or have we any officers in the Department at present who have taken advantage of the course? What training have our officers received?

Prof. DASH: We have come into the picture this way: that if we want officers we apply for them, and we have had officers. I cannot recall whether any of our own men born in this Colony have actually participated. There may be one, but I cannot answer that off-hand. We have the privilege of calling on the authorities to supply us with officers under this arrangement.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I am afraid that I am somewhat dense but I do not think I am fully satisfied with the explanation. Probably I ought to confess that I do not understand it. Am I right in saying that if an officer is required for the Department of Agriculture the Director goes to the institution for that officer?

Prof. DASH: Part of the training takes place at the College. The Unified Service controls officers in receipt of a certain salary. I think it is from the

£500 to £600 class up. This question has been fully discussed in this Council before, and when we accepted the Unified Service Scheme we agreed to join in the provision of funds for the training of students or candidates for the Colonial Agricultural Service so that there will always be a supply. To ensure that the Home Government puts up a substantial sum of money, and each Colony was asked to contribute something towards that expense. That is as far as I can go.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I do not wish to challenge the statement made by the Director, but I do not recall the discussion he referred to in the Council on the scheme. I have been a Member of this Council for 12 years and that discussion must have taken place before my time. I raised the question some time ago, though not quite in this form, and if there are any papers on this scheme perhaps the Director might undertake to pass them around for the benefit of Members. From all we have heard this morning it seems that this is undoubtedly a matter which requires re-examination, and I am asking that this particular item be re-examined in the light of the remarks I have made.

THE CHAIRMAN: I myself would like to see the papers and to see whether any discussion took place before, but I should anticipate that it is something like this: As you know, a number of services have been unified over the whole Colonial Empire, and there is an interchange of officers directed from London. The Agricultural Service is one and the Police is another. I admit that when this was done part of the scheme was to arrange rather carefully the training of agricultural officers to be appointed to posts in the United Services, and all the Colonies were asked to contribute in proportion to their means. I cannot say off-hand what direct connection it has with the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture.

Prof. DASH: The arrangement was that these officers would be selected on merit and qualification, if not a University degree, and then they are submitted to two years' post-graduate training, one year at Cambridge and one year at the Imperial College. The whole matter arose because there were very few candidates at one stage offering for the Colonial Agricultural Service, and the desire of the Colonial Office was to put the whole question of the training, selection and salaries of officers on a proper basis in order to attract the right type of candidates. That is how the whole thing started. We came into it by accepting the scheme, and this was a sort of corollary to that scheme.

Mr. McDAVID (Col. Treasurer): I think I can add to that by saying that there was a scheme and a large volume of correspondence on the subject, but these contributions have a definite period—a five-year period. Whether it will cease in 1943 or not I cannot recollect now, and as to what new form the scheme will take after that I cannot say now.

THE CHAIRMAN: Item 25—Contribution towards Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford, \$576—is a contribution for five years. Perhaps the Conservator of Forests will tell us whether that is a similar scheme for the training of Forestry officers.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): There is a good deal more than that in that particular case, because now that they have a system of apprentice tours and men doing their Imperial Forestry Institute course after their apprentice tours it undertakes a final year's training of recruits who have already done two years' service, and all the refresher courses which have to be taken periodically by officers at different stages of their service, and also a certain amount of research work for the various Colonies. I cannot remember off-

hand whether we agreed to make this contribution for a period of years, but I rather think we did.

THE CHAIRMAN: It says so in the note. On the general point raised by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) that the various contributions require re-examination. I would point out that when there was a new service of this kind arranged by the Colonial Office it was the policy to appeal to the individual Colonies and ask them to contribute in proportion to their means. That was done in principle some years ago. Now that we have this new finance policy it might be reasonable to raise the point whether there is need to call on all the Colonies to contribute their little bit. The reply might be that psychologically it would be. The House of Lords has recently been discussing the Unified Services and the handicaps the Colonies suffer, and the remedy, as Lord Moyne said, was that the same rates of pay should apply no matter whether the Colony was poor or rich, and that those rates should be made up from Imperial funds in cases where a Colony could not afford them. On the same principle we may go back and say: "Why inflict all these little things on us?" I am quite prepared to do that.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I would tell them that after this year we cannot continue this grant. All we have heard is only a matter of "obscurantism." We were told that it was for the purpose of getting graduates from the Universities to go to Trinidad to study tropical agriculture. We asked what were we going to get from it? A gentleman was here at the time on a visit and by using what we call in this Colony "sweet mouth", he got this Council to agree to make this contribution. We were told distinctly that it was for that purpose. If anybody wants to go there now he will have to pay. This thing has brought us no benefit at all. It has

done the Institute some good because some men came here to see the difference between grass and rice. In those days there was no talk about Unified Services. We have got no benefit from this scheme, and everybody knows that; at least the Professor does. He used his influence here and got the Council to grant this amount.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you like to contract out altogether? In that case when we apply for an officer they will tell us "You do not belong to the family; we cannot help you."

Mr. JACOB: I am a little bit confused. I understood yesterday that Your Excellency was going to raise the question of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. I am wondering whether we are discussing items 23 and 24 together, or whether it would not be better to discuss them separately. As regards item 23—Annual Grant to Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture \$3,600—I made the point yesterday that this grant should definitely continue. I gathered from the hon. Members for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) and Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) that while they are not opposed to the continuance of the grants they want the whole question re-examined. By all means re-examine the question, but I should be sorry to think that the College in Trinidad should not be supported by this Colony when we are looking forward to such great agricultural development. We have been importing agricultural products from Canada, the United States and Australia, and we should have a College in the West Indies to enable us to abandon those unnecessary imports and the unnecessary use of ships. I cannot understand hon. Members suggesting that this grant should cease.

I am pretty young, but I am not as young as I look. Twenty years ago the sugar interests here were very well

satisfied when they got two tons of sugar per acre, but to-day if they do not get four tons of sugar per acre they are not satisfied at all. Sugar production in this Colony has doubled itself, all due to scientific research, and all praise to those who are responsible for this achievement. When it comes to rice, coconut and other products we see a definite and general decline all the time. We have had 20 years of decline, and I would be sorry to think that Government would suspend or abolish this grant to the Imperial College. I am strongly in favour of the College being supported. In fact we should do something more to expand it.

I observe that Trinidad is going to plant its own rice. We have been messing around with that problem all these years. They are going to plant their own rice and Venezuela or Brazil will also supply them while we sit here and mark time because it suits certain interests that we should not have any other than sugar interests in this Colony. If we are not able to do it in this Council maybe some supreme authority may be able to do it for us. I feel very strongly about the matter and I appeal to Government to get more export products here apart from sugar.

THE CHAIRMAN: You do not oppose either item 23 or 24?

Mr. JACOB: No, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: The proposal was made yesterday that we should make certain representations to the Secretary of State and to the College in order that we might get more service from the College. I am inclined to agree with that. My experience is that we are getting less than my last Colony was getting.

Mr. De AGUIAR: The hon. Member is quite right. He did not understand what was being said.

Mr. JACOB: With regard to item 4—Grant to Infant Welfare and Maternity League—For Midwives, \$9,944—do I understand that this grant is being distributed throughout the country, or is it for Georgetown alone? If it is for the country districts I would like to make a point. There have been insistent demands from the North-West District, that a subsidized nurse-midwife should be stationed at Morawhanna. The nurse-midwife at Mabaruma is unable to take care of the patients at Morawhanna, and when I discussed the matter with the previous Director of Medical Services I was told there were not sufficient funds, and that some League was unable to provide the money for it. I am sorry the Director of Medical Services is not here. I would like the matter to be gone into.

Prof. DASH: I should like to clarify one point in connection with item 23 which has not been brought out. Admittedly I am not as familiar as I used to be with the work of the College, and more recently transport difficulties have got in the way of more frequent intercourse both by students and Professors. I would like to say that that grant was obtained by Sir Arthur Shipley who was Chairman of the Board of Governors when the College first got on its feet in 1927. He visited this Colony and other Colonies, and pointed out that it was an institution in the West Indies, and that we should show our goodwill towards the College and help its budget. As a result this Colony agreed to contribute £1,000 a year. During the depression and financial difficulties the vote was cut, but I do not know if it ever had any strings to it. Then it developed that we were allowed to send diploma students on the scholarship system. I thought I should mention that because the new Members of the Council were not here when this Council gave Sir Arthur Shipley a gift of £1,000 a year which has since been cut.

Mr. AUSTIN: I would like to refer to the point made by the hon. Member

for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) yesterday with reference to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad. The authorities of the College have not helped us at all in increasing the production of sugar from two to four tons per acre. It has been done as a result of the technical knowledge of the people we have brought to the Colony, and the type of machinery used. I think the hon. Member for Georgetown North made a very useful point. We are not getting the assistance we should get from this College. If you, sir, in your despatch could point out to them that we lack that assistance, which perhaps is given to other Colonies, I think a very useful object may be achieved. We really feel that in respect of farmers' cane there are problems which are worrying us from the sugar producers' point of view as well as from the farmers' point of view, and a technical officer of the College could easily have been sent here by air to give us some advice and assistance.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I am not opposing the item, but aren't we putting the cart before the horse? What we want is an expert drainage officer in view of what I saw on Sunday and Monday. We have very fertile lands in this Colony which can grow almost anything, but we want a drainage expert. We rely too much on the sugar estate engineers. The sugar estates are certainly well drained, but Government does not seem to get the right type of officers for irrigation and drainage.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you know that we are bringing one out?

Mr. WIGHT: I am very glad to hear that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think I said so in Finance Committee in connection with the Bonasika-Boeraserie scheme, that we have specifically asked for drainage and irrigation experts. We have asked for several, but so far we have only got one drainage expert who

will be paid for by the Home Government out of the grant. But we want to go further than that.

Mr. JACOB: I have a distinct recollection that the Manager of the Sugar Experiment Station here went to Trinidad and took a course at the Imperial College for a period of a year and a half or two years. I therefore think it is a little ungenerous to say that the services of that officer are of no benefit to this Colony.

Prof. DASH: That officer did not take a post-graduate course at the College. He went to Harvard University to take up studies in Genetics.

Mr. JACOB: Are you referring to Mr. Cameron?

Prof. DASH: No, you referred to the officer in charge.

Mr. JACOB: He went to Trinidad and remained there for some period. Now he is the Manager of the Sugar Experiment Station here. It looks a little ungenerous to say that the training, experience and knowledge that officer acquired in Trinidad are of no benefit to the sugar interests here.

Item 56—Subsidy to Canadian National Steamship Service, \$40,800.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: In Finance Committee, it was suggested that this matter would be considered on the lines of the possible withholding of the subsidy. I trust that the matter will receive the earnest and expeditious attention of Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, certainly.

Item 70—United Mariners' Club—Grant for running expenses of—\$5,000.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I would like to know whether this Club will be an exclusive institution or will be available

to all seamen? There is some feeling that it is likely to be an exclusive Club for a certain class of seamen. Is it for all mariners?

Mr. McDAVID: There will be no exclusion whatsoever. It is all embracing, and everyone entitled to the designation of mariner will be entitled to go there. I move that the new sub-head 72—Grant to Seamen's Club, \$960—as printed in the report of the Finance Committee be inserted.

Item agreed to.

THE CHAIRMAN: In regard to the representations I am to make to the authorities of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture I anticipate that the possible answer of the Principal might be that the teaching staff of the College cannot be posted off to other Colonies. That may be perfectly true, but the practice hitherto has been that at certain periods opportunity was taken by the teaching staff to visit other Colonies and give their services. Another point is whether the College has not advisers attached to it in addition to the teaching staff. That again raises the further question of the Leeward and Windward Islands which, of course, had a special service. In those Colonies we had a Commissioner of Agriculture and an Assistant Commissioner who were attached to the College, and all the advantages of the laboratories and equipment of the College. We had to pay for them separately, but we always had them available to us at any time.

I think what Members have said means that we feel that within the last two or three years there has been a kind of exclusiveness about the College, an unwillingness to help us here. Those are the points I shall raise in my despatch.

OFFICIAL RECEIVER.

Item 1 (a)—Official Receiver, Public Trustee and Crown Solicitor (\$4,320 by \$120 to \$4,800).

Mr. JACOB: I think the permanent holder of this office is now in charge of the Commodity Control, and I am wondering whether the acting officer is being paid a flat rate or will draw some of the fees which the permanent holder draws I think it would be far more satisfactory if the acting officer is paid an inclusive salary and that all fees be paid into the Treasury. This matter has been raised in this Council over and over again and I think the previous Attorney-General ruled that it would be far more satisfactory if that were done in respect of the permanent holder of the office, but it was not practicable to do so in view of the contract with Mr. King. Immediately that contract expires and a new officer is appointed all fees should be paid into the Treasury and the officer paid an inclusive salary.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the case of the substantive holder of the office it is not intended to change the existing arrangement. You are referring also to the temporary arrangement. I am not sure what the precise arrangement is.

Mr. McDAVID: The arrangement is that the acting officer gets the substantive salary and fees.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He only draws certain fees, a very small proportion of the fees.

Mr. JACOB: Whether the fees are small or large I think it would be far more satisfactory if they were paid into the Treasury. This matter was debated in this Council in respect of the Assistant Attorney-General and one or two other officers, and I strongly urge that Government has

an opportunity now to make a change. Let it begin at once and do not put it off. I was given an assurance here on a previous occasion that immediately an opportunity arose it would be done. Now I am told that this acting officer is on the same basis but receiving small fees. I think other Members know what happened. Of course the majority of them are members of the legal profession and may not want to say it, but it is definitely unsatisfactory to permit that arrangement to continue.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The hon. Member who has just spoken always says that he cannot understand the hon. Member for Berbice River. There is very good reason for that, because the hon. Member for Berbice River never knows what he is talking about. The permanent holder of the office, a solicitor of experience, is only temporarily out of his office, yet the hon. Member tells Government that it can change the whole arrangement with respect to the fees. Where is the opportunity? The acting officer stands to lose certain of his own fees and should get the fees attached to his acting appointment.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) seems to have a very poor opinion of the legal Members of this Council. He thinks that because a matter happens to concern the legal profession no legal Member of the Council would be prepared to express an opinion on the subject. He should peruse the oath which every member of the legal profession has to take when he is called to the Bar. The point was raised by me some time ago that there should be a computation of all fees and the holder of the office given a fixed salary, but hon. Members, including the hon. Member for North-Western District, were rather against that on the principle that were that procedure adopted—

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction. From the first day I entered this Council I have been definitely against fees being paid to any member of the Government apart from his substantive salary.

Mr. WIGHT: The argument adduced against my suggestion was that if it were adopted there would arise the question of paying pension on the amount which was so computed, and that, I take it, was one of the reasons why this Council did not approve of it. I happen to know that the officer concerned would be only too willing to accept a computed amount and an increased pension.

PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES.

Mr. JACOB: I am not opposed to paying increased pensions. I would be glad to see the officer referred to under the previous head receiving an additional pension. I rose to support increased pensions to those officers whose pensions are so low that they cannot live on them. I want to suggest that in the same way as salaries up to \$60 per month have been temporarily increased by war bonuses it is only fair that pensioners, particularly those receiving up to \$50 per month, should be given a temporary increase. I think Government has had one or two requests, but I think a flat rate of 10 per cent on all pensions up to \$50 per month should be paid to all pensioners, and I commend that to Government's consideration.

THE CHAIRMAN: As a war measure you mean?

Mr. JACOB: Yes, sir.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to repeat what I said yesterday in respect of those people who receive from \$8 down to \$5 per month as pension. Some people are definitely grudging as regards pensions, and that is the reason why the hon. Member for Georgetown

North (Mr. Seaford) laboured it and this Council agreed that no pensioner should receive less than \$10 per month. I know of several who are getting \$8 per month. A female ex-employee at the Mental Hospital gets \$8 per month as pension. If that sum was good enough before the war it does not go anywhere now. I think during the last war Government also gave a temporary increase of 10 per cent. to pensioners. I know that the Imperial Government has recognized the principle of giving war bonuses to pensioners as well.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I take it that the hon. Member is suggesting an increase to pensioners irrespective of residence.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not know of anybody outside the Colony who gets a pension of \$8 per month.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will make a note of the point raised.

POLICE.

Mr. McDAVID: I move the additions recommended by the Finance Committee which amount to \$296, making the total of the head \$580,568.

Mr. JACOB: I am going to make a point I have made before—I think I made it in Finance Committee—that officers below the line, those on the Unfixed Establishment, should have the opportunity of being promoted to the Fixed Establishment by virtue of service. Up to the present time I do not believe—take for instance item 10, “10 County Sergeants-Major”—any of those officers can be promoted to any position up to and including that of Commissioner of Police. I do not know whether it is the intention of this Government, or the Imperial Government, or other Authorities to continue this kind of discrimination. It has gone on too long and it is time that it be removed. Here we have

certain people who begin at the bottom and get old and retire without getting over the line. It is only in respect of this Service that we find this thing happening. I think the time is overdue for a stop to be put to that kind of discrimination which is due particularly, I think, to pigmentation. I do not propose to mince words here. I have made up my mind to speak frankly and freely on these matters. It is time that our masters, wherever they may be, realize that we—I at least—do not approve of this kind of business and that my presence in this Legislature is to represent the views of the people whom I have the honour to represent. I think it has continued too long and should be stopped.

I want to take this opportunity to refer to one or two very glaring acts of discrimination. It reaches up to the top—item 1 (Commissioner of Police). Your Excellency is aware of a certain communication that I addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a copy of which was sent to Your Excellency. I do not want to say very much more about it now, but I think the sooner all officers of this Government realize that irrespective of position, influence or colour, Police Officers are there to do their duty without fear or favour to anyone, the better it will be for all concerned. I have had a personal and practical experience of it not only on one occasion but on two definite occasions, and I do want it to be recorded here that from the top of this Department there is definite discrimination. Letters go in all the time about it but we get very little redress. In fact we get no redress at all.

I am glad the Head of this Department is here listening to what I say. I want him to take his mind back to when I approached him and spoke to him about a certain matter. He asked me who is the person involved,

when I wanted him to take action. He himself suggested the name of the person involved and then said "I am sorry we are not able to get the evidence and so can take no action." Here is a case which, I think, is the worst case that can ever be put before any body of people, anyone who wants to see justice and fairplay. The matter is past, but I trust that nothing of the kind will ever happen again in this Colony and particularly in the Police Department.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I cannot allow the estimates of this Department to pass without supporting what the hon. Member has said, though it is not often I do that, as I do not often know what he is talking about. On this occasion he knows what he is talking about and I compliment him. I think the time is ripe for something to be done in this Department. Some small attempt had been made but it did not go as far as it might. I notice that they have engaged a large number of young policemen. They are certainly an improvement on the older type of policemen in so far as educational ability is concerned. They are better educated men and I wonder if Government cannot go a little further and make the pay more attractive so that we can get a better class even. I noticed in the Press a day or two ago that in Trinidad they are catering for University men and for men who have had a Secondary education and have passed the Joint Board Examination. They are offering such men salaries commensurate with their educational attainments and I wonder whether we cannot improve our system here in the same way. When some time ago it was found necessary to increase the Police Force the men were getting a meagre salary, something like \$32 a month, and in order to reduce it still further they made a Fourth Class after the probationary period and gave a salary of \$24 a month. It is still there, and so I can only assume that this improved type of young police-

men is receiving that \$24 with, perhaps, a little war bonus. You cannot improve the Force in that way.

Instead of doing like Trinidad, catering for the better class of young men all round, physically as well as mentally, you are catering to a second rate bunch and offering a reduced pay of \$24 a month. That is not good enough. If they would follow what is done in Trinidad, what the hon. Member referred to and suggested would certainly be attained, because if you have fellows with University degrees and there is opportunity for promotion there can be no difficulty in making them Junior Superintendents before their time for retirement. But under the old regime, I am sure the reason why they did not pass the rank of a Sergeant-Major was because there was some little thing wanting, just as in the case which Your Excellency mentioned last week, where a man did the work of a Class I clerk but could not be made a clerk because something was wanting. In the same way you have these men and pay them a small salary; you keep them for all these years and make a line which they shall not pass—the position of a Sergeant-Major. To tell you the truth they would be told: "It is because you have not the Senior Joint Board certificate that we cannot risk that.

We want men of higher educational attainments for the higher ranks." I refuse to believe that merely because of a man's colour he is made a Sergeant-Major and nothing else beyond that. I might be offending somebody, but it is only in a few instances have I found a man here and there whom I could regard as being capable all round to be a Superintendent. There have been one or two, but certainly the large majority cannot boast that way. The reason for that is that there was no allowance made at their entrance. They did not cater for men of any special attainments and the men could not do better when they joined the Police Force. They

could not get any work and before doing nothing they joined the Force. Those days are over. We are spending a large sum of money on education. If the men take advantage of it and go to High School and come out with Senior Joint Board or Matriculation certificates—some even going abroad and getting University degrees—they should be encouraged by being paid commensurately, and the Force would become very much improved. As a matter of fact, I do not know who is to be blamed, but somebody is, for some of the things that are going on. Crime is on the increase and detection of crime is on the decrease. It is because we want men of a higher calibre, men who can reason. We do not want “Sherlock Holmes” as I do not think we will get any, but certainly we do want men who can follow up a case and capture the culprit. We have too many culprits escaping justice. I hope Government will look into this matter.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I am getting on in years and do not know how much longer I may remain in this Council, but it is within my recollection that a man of colour, who was a Non-Commissioned Officer, was offered the post of Sub-Inspector in this Colony and he declined it. His name is Ainsworth.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That was 50 years ago!

Mr. WOOLFORD: I am only recalling that incident in order to make a few observations. He declined it for the very reason that the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has just mentioned. He felt that culturally and in other respects he could not maintain the position. That may account for the precedent not being repeated, but I hope that will not be found as a reason why suggested appointments along these lines should not be made. We all know that cir-

cumstances differ and there are degrees of discrimination. I have noticed very many happy changes, and I hope it will not be necessary for the hon. Member to call attention again to what is considered a dissatisfied service. I do know that that no longer permeates the Civil Service. One only has to go to the Colonial Secretariat and other Departments to notice the entire change of atmosphere. I sympathize with the hon. Member and express complete agreement with him if he thinks appointments are measured along those lines. I do claim that men who may not be thought competent to be appointed Sub-Inspectors are really competent and equally as competent as Sub-Inspectors and should be given higher and more responsible duties. I refer to the fact that those men are very often alone in charge of stations in outlying districts, but they are not allowed the privilege of granting bail to persons who are arrested and brought to the station. I wonder how much longer this principle is going to be recognised.

The majority of the County Sergeants-Major who have had very long experience of those duties are being retired, but whilst they held office they were not allowed to exercise the same discretionary powers as the Sub-Inspectors whom they have taught their duties. I know several men who can very well be entrusted with the discretion of granting bail. Why should a person be kept in custody for one week before the visiting Magistrate enters the district? Why should the matter be referred to the County Inspector who may be miles away? It does not require one to be a specialised Officer to know that if a person is arrested and tenders “B” as surety, “B” must be the owner of a property. A Sergeant-Major can, if given the facility look at the title deed of the surety, see the manner of expression on his face. He is quite competent to say whether the amount of

bail should be \$100 or \$250. Why should he not be allowed that discretion? I know of no indictable case where it is permitted, and in some cases it is very often refused, except for very minor offences. It is no good saying it is the discharge of a responsible duty. It is only a tradition of the Service and I would like to see it removed.

I am under the impression that the present Commissioner of Police when he was Detective Superintendent held that view himself and if in any case a County Sergeant-Major is in any doubt or is not quite sure of his ground he can telephone the Superintendent in charge of the district and ask his advice. I do ask that the practice I have referred to be stopped. It amounts to the illegal imprisonment of a person who is qualified to furnish bail and is entitled to bail. I hope not to have the necessity of calling attention to this matter again. There is no reason for its continuance, and you are making these men thoroughly dissatisfied when you try to withhold from them the exercise of authority which is given to men in similar positions in England. They feel it but are unable to express their disagreement. They like it to be thought that they can be invested with power of that kind. In some cases it would be a greater satisfaction than an increase of salary.

THE CHAIRMAN: No point of detail has been raised on which to call upon the Commissioner to reply. I have listened to what has been said by the three hon. Members with great attention, great interest and considerable sympathy, particularly to what has been said by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam and the hon. Member for North-Western District, and I hope I shall have an opportunity to do what I can in the direction they would like to see the Force built up. I did not entirely follow what was said by the hon. Member for Berbice River, but I think

I heard him say that we should try and get better people as is being done in Trinidad. I would like to say that I have a little knowledge of the Police Force throughout the British West Indies, and I am quite certain that this Force yields to none and is probably the best of them.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think Your Excellency misunderstood what I said. I know myself of the Force in Trinidad, and I know that men from here have gone there and got big positions because they were head and shoulders above those there. But I saw in the papers that they in Trinidad are welcoming men of University standard and men of Secondary School attainments and are offering them high remuneration. I was only asking Government that that be done here. I know that boys of the Senior Joint Board standard will not join the Police Force under the present system at all. \$24 a month will not attract them, and I am asking Government to follow Trinidad in this respect, not because Trinidad is superior but because they have made a step in a direction which I think should be followed.

Head passed as amended.

POOR.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I have raised it in several places other than here and I have mentioned it in a couple of letters that I really do think some better provision should be made with regard to the Alms House. I think the whole set up should be changed. In other words we should not have an Alms House but have a Poor House working on the same principle as abroad. Once I raised this point and some kind gentleman in some paper (I call it a "rag") thought I was advocating the abolition of the Alms House and advocating the abolition of a refuge for the Poor. That can be treated with the contempt which it deserves. But I do

consider that to have the Alms House situated as it is, is an anachronism. The more modern tendency is the placing of those incapable in an Infirmary as an adjunct to a hospital or otherwise and extending the principle of Workhouses. I think myself that will meet the case much better and, perhaps, afford better provision for the Poor of the Colony.

Mr. JACOB: For record purposes I would like to refer to items 12, 13, 14 and 15 under "Out-Door Poor." I notice that the provision for 1943 is the same as that for 1942 and practically the same as that for 1941. Your Excellency, I was a member of that Committee that went into the question of Old Age Pensions and made recommendations. That Committee was supplied with figures in regard to the allowances given to the Poor in Georgetown and the country districts. Looking back through those figures I find that the allowances for the Poor in Georgetown were from 24 cents to \$1.44 per week. That was in 1940. In the country districts the monthly allowances were from 36 cents to \$5. I do not know how many people get \$5 but I know that a large number of people get from 36 cents to 96 cents per month. The list is a long one and the amounts per individual are 36c., 48c., 60c., 64c., 72c., 84c., \$1.00, \$1.20, \$1.28, \$1.32 and so on up to \$5.

The estimate here does not provide for anything additional to the last two years' allowances, and I am wondering whether there is not some mistake. It is true a supplementary provision did go through for last year, but I think it had nothing to do with the allowances. I understand that no one in the country districts will receive less than \$1 per month. I think \$1.50 is being paid now. I think the amount here is very inadequate and there is some error somewhere. I just draw Government's attention to that aspect of the matter so as to let it be placed on record that the people in Georgetown are only

getting 24 cents per week and those in the country districts 36 cents per month, and yet we have been told here that provision is already made when certain hon. Members, who spoke on Old Age Pensions, asked for an indefinite postponement of that motion. Looking back through those figures over a period of years the more I see that unless attention is given to the poor some of the rich will certainly get poor very shortly.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I rise to support what the hon. Member said. I have given very earnest attention to this matter for a considerable time. I know all about these allowances of 24 and 36 cents, and I know that in these days such amounts can carry nobody anywhere. I have tried to the best of my ability to see how the problem can be solved and I have failed. I am not going to blame Government where I can make no suggestion, but I think the motion accepted in principle yesterday, if expedited by Government, would help to solve the problem to some extent. It is a pity that we have to think of giving persons 72 cents to keep them for a month, but it means a lot to these poor people. See how they clamour for it and the joy they exhibit when they receive it, but that is no reason why we should confine them to that if we can do better. I cannot make any suggestion except by way of this Old Age Pensions scheme. Some hon. Members are of the opinion that Government will never bring forward the Bill for the balance of my natural life, which I do not consider to be very long. I know of instances where Government has accepted motions in principle, as was done yesterday, and they have not been brought back yet. The hon. Member who moved the motion is afraid that he will never see that Bill, and this morning when he returned to the Council Chamber he said the same thing to me. I hope Your Excellency will assist me in giv-

ing him the lie. Let him see during Your Excellency's regime here that it does come up in a practical shape.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I am sorry I cannot answer the question of the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) as to the adequacy of the amounts. These estimates were framed by the Department concerned, the Poor Law Commissioners, and I take it they have made that provision. On the other hand if the provision is inadequate they would have to come back to the Council for a supplementary provision. I would ask the permission of the Council to deal with items 13, 14 and 15 as one and to have the total vote for the Out-Door Poor in one lump sum, although the details will be shown as an inset. It will allow greater freedom in subdividing these amounts accordingly. It is important to divide precisely the amounts for Georgetown, Essequibo and Berbice and to have them shown, but I prefer, if the Council agrees, there should be one Head "Out-Door Poor" with the total lump sum and that the sub-division should be inset. It will make no alteration in the total vote.

Mr. JACOB: In arriving at the total figure of \$98,900 I would much prefer that it be divided into the several districts rather than to have one lump sum given. I think it is a little retrogressive not to have the amounts for Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice separately. You must get the figures from the several districts to arrive at the lump sum. I am wholly opposed to that suggestion. Sufficient reason has not been given in support of it.

Mr. McDAVID: I thought I had made myself clear. What I said was that there will be the several subdivisions but you will not carry the amounts as separate votes. They will be shown separately as an inset, but the vote will be shown as a lump sum.

Mr. JACOB: It looks like a distinction without a difference. You remove the amounts from one column and put them outside and then ultimately remove them.

Mr. McDAVID: There is a difference. It is this. If the amount provided for Berbice is found to be short there is a saving in the amount provided for Demerara, Government will have the power to make up the deficiency from there, without coming back to the Council. You will make one County pay for another.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I was waiting for the hon. Colonial Treasurer to say that. I am not an Accountant but I know something about floating balances. It means that if Berbice overdraws a little, either Essequibo or Demerara will suffer and vice versa. There will be greater scope in the manipulation of the vote. I use this expression in no derogatory sense. We allow too much freedom of action—to traverse from the Berbice Coast down to the Essequibo Coast. I think that, perhaps, nothing better can be done than to leave the items just as they stand on the Estimates.

Mr. McDAVID: I am surprised at the sensitiveness of hon. Members in respect of the money provided for the vote. Under the Head "Magistrates" all the votes are lumped for the travelling expenses in respect of the districts. They are not itemised.

Mr. C. V. Wight: To a point of information! If you anticipate that any particular vote for one particular area will be inadequate and there will be a lapsing vote in another area, then I prefer the vote to lapse in the one area and a Supplementary vote given for the other area.

Mr. McDAVID: I am not pressing the point. If hon. Members prefer Government to come back for a supp^l,

mentary vote on each Head. I anticipate we may find what I am afraid of—that the vote has been overdrawn and the money is not there. I am just trying to anticipate the usual informative reply of Government Departments.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I would like to see "Berbice" on these Estimates because I know that we provide 40 per cent. of the taxes and get 15 per cent. spent there. What is worse, some time ago when Berbice was specially mentioned for a grant for sanitary purposes in New Amsterdam the name "New Amsterdam" was removed and a lump sum was given. We were told to ask the Director of Medical Services for the amount and last year because we objected to the money being spent in the way it was being done without any reference to us, we did not get any more. It was money put down for New Amsterdam but the name New Amsterdam was deleted and a lump sum for Berbice provided, and eventually we lost it altogether. Let "Berbice" remain.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Treasurer does not want to press his motion!

Head agreed to.

POST OFFICE.

Mr. McDAVID: These estimates for the Post Office were very thoroughly discussed in Finance Committee. Some small additions were made totalling \$486.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Under this Head I have not much to complain about in respect of the internal working but much about the treatment the people get from Government economy. When Government is going to economize it is always at the expense of the taxpayer. He pays the piper, but Government calls the tune. Fancy a Post Office closes in a country like this at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, so that if a

man dies at Eversham after that hour his friend in Georgetown cannot possibly know about it that same day because the Post Office closes at 4 o'clock. Why should it be necessary to close at 4 o'clock in the afternoon because the Telegraph Operator is going to ask for overtime to work until 5.30, which will amount to 12 or 16 cents? Rather than give that small amount for overtime you say to him "Close down at 4 o'clock and go home." You have put the public at an inconvenience in not being able to send a telegram one minute after 4 o'clock in the afternoon or even to get a penny stamp.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think that matter comes under Head XXX. The hon. Member is talking about telephones and telegrams.

Mr. McDAVID: Those remarks can better come under the next Head—Post Office—Telecommunications and Electrical Inspectors' Branch.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am calling a spade a spade. This Head is Post Office. The Postmaster General governs the whole thing. If that is so, it is the Post Office Department we are dealing with. Because the Department cannot pay an Operator 16 cents for the extra hour to send telegrams after 4 o'clock in the afternoon the whole community must be placed at a disadvantage. Is that economy? That is parsimony with a vengeance. Mere innovation is not a requirement. It is a monstrous thing that the whole Colony must be inconvenienced so as to make a vote look a little smaller. You strain at a gnat and swallow a whole camel. You save a penny and spend a pound. That is Government's policy at the expense of the unfortunate taxpayer.

Mr. JACOB: I propose to raise a matter that I have raised year in and year out. While there has been a little improvement in one direction it is not sufficient. I refer to the deliv-

ery of letters. I was at pains here last year to point out that it would be far more satisfactory for the Postal Authorities to deliver letters rather than to send them to one, or two, or three parties before the letters actually reach the addressees. I am glad to say that so far as Pln. Diamond is concerned an attempt, a kind of half-hearted attempt, is being made to deliver letters direct to the parties concerned. I have been viewing matters in this Colony very closely and, I am sorry to say, whenever any improvement is to take place, anything new is to be started the worst possible place is selected. By all means test it out at Pln. Diamond, but why not at Plns. Cane Grove, Albion, Anna Regina as well? I would like Your Excellency to look into this matter, if you can spare the time. At Pln. Cane Grove there is a dam dividing Cane Grove from Virginia Village. Letters are delivered direct to the people at Virginia, but when letters go to persons residing on the estate they are sent to the Manager's House and then to another place and probably another place then to a driver and then to the addressees. The Postal Service is a very necessary service. A man writes letters and wants them delivered. He expects replies, but the policy here has been to restrict, and discourage attendance at schools so as to keep the people ignorant, unlettered and illiterate. People are sent to live in certain places—for instance Hague Back which has 500 people resident there—with neither a Post-Box nor a decent road and their letters have to remain at the Post Office for days to be called for. I think that some more expeditious method should be adopted at once. I have talked about this thing year out and year in. No doubt it is because the Member for North-Western District has spoken about it that nothing must be done. It is definite nonsense and blowing of hot air to suggest that posted letters should be delivered to the addressees and not to other parties. Let us take Pln. Ogle and Goedverwagting. The

Sparendaam Post Office, is six miles from Georgetown. A letter posted to a resident of Plaisance is delivered the same day from that Post Office. If the letter is addressed to a resident of Ogle Front or Goedverwagting Pasture it is sent about two miles away to the estate.

The hon. Mr. Austin has opposed this principle of mine on several occasions in this Council, but I am sure that his letters go to him. Why should persons whether resident in town or country not have the same facility? Why restrict the liberty of some people? I have heard Members of the Executive Council object in this Council to ordinary simple methods being carried out. When is a stop going to be put to this kind of business—letters and other things being definitely and deliberately delayed? Don't we want to educate the people? Last year I was told by the acting Colonial Secretary that at the Anna Regina Post only one letter was received over a period of weeks for one individual. That is all the more reason why the delivery can be done by the Post Office to the addressees. I speak strongly on this matter. I do hope I shall not have the necessity to repeat this on another occasion.

MR. AUSTIN: I heard my name mentioned just as I was coming in.

THE CHAIRMAN: Your name was mentioned, but it was quite out of order though I did not draw attention to it at the moment.

MR. AUSTIN: This question has been raised in this Council for several years. It came up when Sir Geoffrey Northcote was here and he said he had lived in a village in Devonshire and had to send 9 to 15 miles away to collect his letters, and there was no hardship so far as he knew, and also other people in the outlying districts in the United Kingdom could not get their letters and papers once a day. The hon. Member said the letters are sent to the Managers' houses. The letters are sent to

the offices of the Estates, I would not say by the wish of the people who posted them, but certainly it is preferable that they should be distributed through the Estate Office rather than delivered personally as there are so many East Indians with the same name that it is possible for delivery to be made to the wrong person. If you take a census of the East Indians resident on sugar estates you will find that most of them prefer their letters to be delivered in the way it is being done now than otherwise, which may mean they will never get them.

As regards the question about Ogle mentioned by the hon. Member, the individual lives about four miles from the Manager's house where there is a little settlement and expects the Postman to go there from the Post Office at Sparendam or a messenger from the estate to go to his house and deliver his letters. He sells milk. That is what these individuals living on the outlying lands in other places desire, just to ascertain and pick up knowledge so as to create trouble which will influence the willing people on the estate who wish to carry on their ordinary work. If the hon. Member would only think of what he is saying it would be better for him and all concerned. During this Session he has been so often inaccurate that I cannot really understand why he desires to continue with his inaccuracies. I am wondering—

Mr. JACOB: To a point of order! Is the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Austin, privileged to say that I make inaccurate statements without stating the exact portions of the statements which are inaccurate?

Mr. AUSTIN: I say he has made inaccurate statements here and when they are denied he just laughs. He does not mind. I think that people are beginning to see through it.

Mr. JACOB: I should like to reply to that by saying that the statement I

made about Goedverwagting is that letters addressed to an individual resident there should be delivered direct from the Post Office to that individual. I made no suggestion that the letter is handed to one person for another. That is what my hon. friend tried to convey to this Council. I am complaining against the method that is going on. My suggestion is that the addressee should receive his letters direct from the Postal agent or letter-carrier or Postmaster of the district and not sent through one or two or three parties before they actually get to the addressee. I think my hon. friend confuses the whole issue.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I cannot sit down and be a party to this kind of thing being propounded, and that is why I have got up. Is the hon. Member telling this Government that the Post Office must take upon itself to find a letter-carrier to serve 600 people living in a district with a house to house delivery when in an East Indian community you have twenty of them with the same name? Is it not better for the letters to go to the Estate Office where the people are known and they can be sent for? The hon. Member knows that. He was an apparently intelligent boy in the same village with me. He knows that we all had to go to the Post Office for our letters. As time went on things improved and we have now a district letter-carrier who goes to the different homes, knows the people and delivers the letters. The hon. Member is now saying that a man living seven miles from the public road must have his letters delivered to him by the letter carrier. The estate gets no benefit from doing what it does. Take Pln. Nonpareil. They send a man on mule back to the Post Office at Buxton for the letters and he takes them to the Estate Office, and the people themselves go there and call for their letters. My hon. friend knows that. I cannot understand his proposition at all. The thing is a physical impossibility. When the

men know a letter is coming from a lawyer they hide, and if you don't get the Manager to call them for it they will not go for it. If at all a man suspects receiving such a letter he will not go for it.

Mr. JACKSON: I am going to make a very reasonable request for better postal facilities on the West Coast Demerara. I raised this question some time ago in this Council and a half-hearted attempt was made to ascertain the number of persons requiring early postage. But that was the end of it. It is impossible to get a letter posted on the West Coast Demerara in the morning, delivered in Georgetown before 4 o'clock in the afternoon. A letter coming from New Amsterdam, posted there in the morning, will not only reach Georgetown on the same day but will be delivered on the West Coast Demerara, on the same day. I live seven miles from Georgetown and if I post a letter in the morning it is not taken by that morning train, although the train passes early enough to take it. That letter reaches Georgetown by the 1.30 p.m. ferry boat if the train catches that boat, otherwise it never gets into Georgetown until about 2.30 p.m. and not delivered until the next day. It will entail, perhaps, the appointment of an additional man in the train to receive letters from the Post Offices in the morning, and I do not think it is an unreasonable request that that man should be appointed so that letters delivered at the Post Office during the early morning on the West Coast, Demerara, can arrive in Georgetown by that early train to Vreed-en-Hoop.

Seldom do I make any request in this Council and I do not attempt at any time to speak for the matter of speaking. I am speaking because I desire to have a real grievance removed. I think if the question is gone into it will be seen very clearly that with very little expense it can be righted. The first

train in the morning connects with the 8.45 boat, and I think it is reasonable enough to expect that letters lodged in the Post Office during the previous evening or early in the morning should get to Georgetown by that train and boat. I may mention that when I brought the matter to the notice of the Council a year or two ago we were told that no special notice was given to the various Post Offices that letters should be taken to the train. Even the Police did not know, and when I found that the Police had received no intimation I spoke to them about it and they took advantage of the early morning train. But that was done only for a month, and the letters were considered not to be sufficient to warrant the employment of an officer, so the matter dropped. I am asking Your Excellency to go into the matter and arrange, if possible, that letters posted in the evening or the early morning on the West Coast reach Georgetown early.

Mr. G. F. SHARP (Postmaster-General): I thank His Excellency the President and the Members of Council for admitting me to their debates for the first time at the round table. I think it is more satisfactory to all of us now that the Colonial Secretary no longer stands between me and my critics.

I wish to deal first of all with the remarks of the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar). He seems to be the only public man in this country who wants telegraph offices to be open after 4 p.m. He is aware, I am sure, that formerly the District Post Office staffs were on duty from 6.30 a.m. until 6 and 7 o'clock at night, and it was the former Postmaster-General who made the change, not because he wanted to rob the hon. Member of an opportunity to buy stamps or to send a telegram after 4 p.m., but he did it in response to a unanimous request from the staff. They felt that after a day's work starting between 6 and 7 in the morning, they were entitled to close the

offices at 4 p.m. As a matter of fact they do not get away at 4 o'clock because any telegram handed in by 4 p.m. has to be transmitted that same day. We have very few trunk telegraph lines, and if one office is on a line, other offices have to wait. The consequence is that the Central Telegraph Office never closes before 4.30 p.m., and sometimes even at 5.15 p.m. and later. So actually the men at district offices are kept on duty until 4.30 p.m. or 5 o'clock. Even if we did pay for overtime, the men have done a good day's work by 5 o'clock, and I should strongly resist any extension of hours in the absence of a strong and justifiable public demand, of the existence of which I am not at all convinced.

The hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) has written not only to me but to the Colonial Secretary and the Governor on the subject of postal deliveries on sugar estates, but if he would permit me to say so with the utmost friendliness, he seems impervious to argument and to facts. When I first came to British Guiana in 1939 I started off by being entirely in agreement with the hon. Member that in theory at least it would be an excellent thing to deliver a letter, in accordance with postal practice, at the house or into the hand of the person to whom it was addressed, but I had not been very long in the Colony before I found that this was absolutely impracticable. It is not only a question of money, although I am satisfied we would have to double the number of rural letter-carriers. There are already very few opportunities for promotion for letter-carriers, so that the avenues for promotion would be proportionately less and less. The practical difficulty is that the East Indian has a nomenclature entirely of his own. For example, if a boy is born on a Monday he is given a particular kind of name, and many have several names.

We had an opportunity of testing out the hon. Member's theory at Pln. Diamond, East Bank, Demerara. Having been warned by my experts, I selected and transferred a most able East Indian letter-carrier to Grove Post Office and told him he had a chance to show what he could do. He tried it for three weeks and threw up his hands in despair. I had to put a special notice in the *Gazette* explaining how letters to the three residential areas at Pln. Diamond should be addressed but the rural letter-carrier have a difficult job trying to find the actual addresses. I am told that on most of the sugar estates the houses are not numbered, and that the ranges are not named or lettered; but they are at Diamond which makes the task of delivery easier. On other sugar estates it is absolutely impossible for the letter-carrier to be sure that he has delivered a letter to the person for whom it was intended. Last year I received 1,154 enquiries about missing inland postal orders. I would have 11,500 if the hon. Member's suggestion were adopted. I am convinced that if the bulk of the addressees were not satisfied with the present system, I should have heard from them. I have only heard from the hon. Member and one or two secretaries of organizations, and I am not aware that there are any sugar estates in the North-West District. Therefore I am absolutely against any immediate general extension of the present system: but if there is any particular estate where (as in the case of the one near Kitty), the houses are numbered and the streets named, the letters could then be given to the rural letter-carrier for delivery; but do not let us agree to some general principle which is not immediately practicable.

As regards posting box facilities, whenever I have received, during my four years in the Colony, any request for posting box facilities, I send it to the District Postmaster concerned and get the full facts of the case—how

many people are affected and whether there is a licensed stamp vendor nearby. If it is justified I ask Government for a few more dollars, and one of my officers makes a posting box which costs me \$10. If the hon. Member or any other hon. Member has a case and can show that his own constituency is being neglected in the matter of posting boxes, I would be delighted to hear about it, and if practicable I would take appropriate action. I resent any suggestion that the bulk of the people in this country are ill-served by the Postal Department. I think they are getting a very excellent service for the price they pay.

As regards an early morning mail on the West Coast Demerara railway, the hon. Mr. Jackson visited me in my office and convinced me with his arguments or his charm, and I fell for his proposals against the advice of my local officers. I regret to have to admit that I was wrong, and my experts were right. The number of letters involved was very small and the early morning mail from W.C. Demerara offices served very little purpose, for the reason that the City letter-carriers go out at 7.30 in the morning and the West Coast train does not reach Vreed-en-Hoop until 9.15 a.m. so that in any case those letters are not delivered until 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon. We deliberately keep the postmen back until 3.15 p.m. so that even if the afternoon train does not come in promptly at 2 o'clock, those letters are still delivered the same afternoon. Except for Georgetown residents, who rent private letter boxes, a morning service from W.C. Demerara offices would not serve much useful purpose. Again, it would cost a lot of money, because the Transport Department will not agree to accept the custody of and responsibility for mails; therefore I would have to put my own Postal Clerk on board the train and arrange for his sleeping accommodation

at Parika. My Department wants more money very badly, but I feel I can spend it much better than in the direction in which the hon. Member suggests. If at any time the postal deliveries in Georgetown are increased from two to three a day, the hon. Member would have a very strong case for mail arriving by the early morning train being delivered in Georgetown early the same day.

The hon. Member for North-Western District dealt with the case of postal deliveries at Bush Lot, Anna Regina, which is for him a particularly bad case. On enquiry, I found that at Bush Lot there are no shops and no school, and the people have to go to Anna Regina to shop and to attend school. They call at the Post Office, Anna Regina, for their letters. Actually, the responsible people at Bush Lot are quite happy with the present state of affairs, and I think the hon. Member is asking for something for which they have never asked.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to have an explanation. I have an idea that East Indians with all those names live in the villages too, and I wonder how letters are delivered to them. For instance there is a large Indian population at Triumph, Buxton, and Betterverwagting. I should like to know if letters for those villages are not delivered direct to the addressees. If the idea is that it is impossible, of course it will remain impossible in the present circumstances. I am told that no request has been made to the Postmaster-General. I think I understood the Postmaster-General to say that. If he wants requests he will certainly get those requests. I am sure about that. I understood him to say, too, that for three weeks an experiment was tried at Diamond but the whole scheme collapsed. I would like to know if the people at Diamond—there are between 5,000 and 6,000 East Indians there—

were told about the change. Apart from seeing something in one of the newspapers I knew nothing about it.

It is most difficult to get unlettered people to understand anything within three weeks, so that if the scheme has collapsed and will not be pursued I must place the responsibility somewhere. I feel that a different approach must be made to these matters. It is definitely unfair to say that because the scheme will not work in a certain place it must not be tried out elsewhere. What I have suggested is working well in the villages. Why can't it work well on sugar plantations? If a census were taken it would be seen that there are more East Indians in certain villages than on certain plantations on the East Coast of Demerara. There is a definite disinclination to facilitate education amongst those people.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not think it should puzzle my friend to know why a system can be applied at Buxton but cannot be applied at Fellowship. The simple reason is that the letter-carrier is there and he knows the people, but if he has to go to Nonpareil to find 20 Baboolalls, where is he going to find them? He does not know them. If they choose to live in the bush they must take what they can get there.

With regard to the representation of the Post Office Workers' Union that their hours of work are too long and that the whole community should suffer because of that, I submit that is no argument at all; it is mere rhetoric. I must compliment the Postmaster-General on his rhetorical powers but his arguments are not convincing. My contention is that if the reason assigned is that the Post Office workers complain that their hours of work are too long then other arrangements should be made to relieve them instead of penalizing the public.

Mr. SHARP: I may explain that before the representations of the staff were submitted to Government a census was taken of the telegraph traffic, and it was found that there was very little use of the telegraph service after 4 o'clock that could not be covered by use of the trunk telephone lines. I would not cut New Amsterdam off from Georgetown at 4 p.m., but we have a telephone service. I do not think in actual practice there is any real wide demand for telegraphic service after 4 p.m.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Having heard the explanation given by the Postmaster-General that there is no demand for telegraphic service after 4 p.m. I think I am in a position to challenge that statement so far as the Post Office on the West Coast of Berbice is concerned. I have often got the Postmaster on the telephone long after 4 o'clock and found him still operating the telegraph line every day of the week. I would ask the Postmaster-General to enquire whether that is not so.

Mr. SHARP: That is correct.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: The Postmaster-General has made out the impracticability of delivering letters to the addressees on the sugar estates because there happen to be so many names alike. May I enquire what is the method adopted by the sugar estates to deliver those letters? Can't the same method be adopted by the Post Office? If that is impossible the sugar estate messenger could deliver the letters. I think that is the weakest argument which has ever been put up by the Head of a Department for not carrying out a duty that should be done by his Department.

POST OFFICE—SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. JACOB: May I enquire how the Savings Bank acknowledgments are delivered to depositors, and what happens when they are unclaimed?

Mr. SHARP: We do not send acknowledgments for deposits under \$50, because the person who deposits money already has an acknowledgment in his pass-book. For deposits above \$50 we do send acknowledgments to the depositors.

Mr. JACOB: I wonder if the Postmaster-General will tell the Council how many East Indian depositors there are in the Savings Bank; whether there are any difficulties in receiving deposits from them, and if so, what are those difficulties?

Mr. SHARP: There is not so much difficulty in receiving money from East Indians, although we have had to appoint two interpreters at the G.P.O. to assist illiterates and semi-literates, but there is very considerable difficulty in paying money to East Indian depositors and making sure it is the right person who is applying for and receiving the money. Fortunately we have thumb print impressions which I wish were universal. There seems to be a feeling that there is some loss of social status when you identify yourself by means of a thumb print, and I was happy to see that in America it is perfectly legal and acceptable for military draft purposes, because it does stop a lot of argument, inconvenience and delay in paying money. The ordinary counter clerk can easily verify whether the thumb prints correspond.

Mr. JACOB: Will the Postmaster-General tell us what percentage of the depositors are unable to write their names, and what percentage have to make their thumb prints?

Mr. De AGUIAR: May I ask if the Council has reached the stage when questions can be asked in the manner being pursued by the hon. Member? I think it is really getting beyond a joke. I am sorry I have had to use

that term, but I have been sitting here waiting patiently for a long time and the hon. Member persists in rising every minute and asking questions in the form he has put them. The hon. Member must know that questions of the nature he is putting to the Postmaster-General should be put in another way, and I am going to ask Your Excellency to put the question. I move that the question be now put.

THE CHAIRMAN: I therefore put HEAD XXXII.

Agreed to.

PRISONS.

Item 1 (d)—Chief Prison Officer, New Amsterdam, (\$936 to \$1,176 by \$48), \$1,176.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am not asking for the deletion of this item, and I am not asking for an increase, but I wish to bring to the notice of Your Excellency and the Council a few facts which may influence Government to do what I propose to ask. Your Excellency must have observed in New Amsterdam during the Grow-More-Food Campaign that at the Prison Farm there are about 26 acres under cultivation. The Chief Prison Officer is not an agriculturist but simply a Prison Warder who, although not drawing his maximum salary, has been doing exceedingly good work. Where he has failed I am inclined to think he has been wrongly advised by somebody. He has maintained the farm in an excellent manner, and prison labour is not willing labour. A man who can get so much out of prison labour is certainly above the average. I understand that Government proposes to establish a piggery and I am asking Government to see its way to give this officer some recognition by giving him his maximum salary at once. The Chief Prison Officer in Georgetown is getting the same salary but he is only a clerk and he has the Su-

perintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Prisons above him. The officer in New Amsterdam carries the whole responsibility of the Prison, and in addition is agricultural instructor, adviser and superintendent, and is now to be a veterinary surgeon.

In connection with the New Amsterdam Prison I have discovered that the officer next to the Chief Prison Officer, who is also in the Farm, happens to be the senior of the 2nd-class Warders. When it was proposed to appoint a 1st-class Warder he was overlooked and a man very much his junior was appointed above him. That is an anomaly and I am asking Your Excellency to enquire into it.

Mr. WOOD: The hon. Member made a slight inaccuracy when he said that the Georgetown Prison had a Superintendent and an Assistant Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent is in charge of the Prison at Mazaruni and is not stationed in Georgetown at present.

THE COL. SECRETARY: I should like to answer a question raised by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) in Finance Committee with regard to passes for prisoners on discharge. I have made enquiries and the Superintendent of Prisons informs me that every prisoner gets a ticket to travel by train, steamer or by bus on discharge from the Prison, which takes him as near as possible to his home; certainly to the district in which he lives.

Mr. JACOB: I think the hon. Member referred to certain prisoners only. Do I understand the Col. Secretary to say that all prisoners are given passes?

THE COL. SECRETARY: That is what I am informed by the Superintendent,

PUBLIC DEBT.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to say that I am very jealous of my privileges here. This morning Your Excellency was at pains to refer to your method of procedure. I, too, would like to be very exact here in what I do and to be strictly correct. While the Savings Bank estimates were being gone into I got up and raised two points. One hon. Member got up and said that I was abusing my position here, and asked that the question be put. Your Excellency ruled and put the question. I would refer Your Excellency to one or two items under Miscellaneous on which Members spoke on several occasions. Under the head Your Excellency ruled just now I only spoke on two occasions and I think in Committee a Member is permitted to speak on probably four occasions. I would like Your Excellency to please note that, sir.

Under this head on November 5, 1935, at page 72 of Hansard, I asked this question:—

“Does Government intend to approach the Secretary of State for the Colonies with a view to converting all Loans bearing interest above 3 per cent. per annum with the object of reducing the interest paid to a figure not exceeding 3 per cent. especially as the two Banks operating here (the Royal Bank of Canada and Barclays Bank (D. C. & O.) have reduced their savings bank interest to 1½ per cent.?”

The reply was given on the 20th Nov., 1935, at page 420 of Hansard, that

“Government has no such intention at the present time.”

I refer to that because my unfortunate experience has been in most cases that whenever I raise a question I am told that the answer is in the negative, but a little later something is done. I do not know whether the idea is to discourage Members from raising issues or from pointing out things that may be wrong, but I am glad to see that the system has

been continued, and the Treasurer has said that immediately he assumed office one of his first jobs was to see that loans which were redeemable were redeemed promptly, with the result that this year we have a decrease of \$90,768 in interest being paid under this head. There is a surplus balance in the Colony and I think a suggestion has been made that we should invest that money. I know it has not been definitely decided, but I want to suggest that any loan which can be redeemed should be redeemed, and no money should be put on the reserve fund at the moment. It would be far better to pay off our debts than to invest money. I do not think it is the best principle for a debtor to invest money while he owes debt.

I am not going to refer to the interest which is unnecessarily paid to the Banks, but I hope that when my questions are answered Government will immediately decide not to borrow money when there is a surplus. The Public Debt charges of the Colony have been responsible in a large measure for the chaotic state of its finances up to a few years ago. This year we have to pay \$1,026,411 in interest and sinking fund, yet we are continuing to borrow money. When practical suggestions are made they are either rejected or those Members making them are definitely discouraged. I feel that I am definitely discouraged in pursuing my policy here in bringing matters of great importance to the notice of Government. I may be wrong but that is how I feel.

Mr. McDAVID: I have only one remark to make. I did not say that since I became Colonial Treasurer I started putting into effect the conversion of public loans. Conversion of loans, as Members should know, had been going on for many years before I became Colonial Treasurer. What I said was that that was one of the first duties I had taken under my purview. It was going on in the time when my late chief was Colonial Treasurer.

Obviously, any Colonial Treasurer would not be worth his salt if he did not watch for any opportunity to convert loans to a lower rate of interest.

When the hon. Member makes the vague suggestion that we should use our surplus funds to pay off debts he only indicates that he has not the slightest knowledge of what he is talking about. He should know that public loans are borrowed on specific terms. You cannot pay off a loan at your sweet will, but in accordance with the terms under which you borrowed it. For example, the loan of which we have just completed conversion was borrowed in 1922, and the first redemption date was 20 years after, in 1942, and until that date arrived any ordinary public man must know that we could not pay off that loan. What I was trying to indicate was that every single opportunity has been taken to do that. To suggest now that we should set about using our surplus funds to pay off public loans is nothing I should take any notice of at all.

The hon. Member has asked a specific question with regard to the financing of the Rice Marketing Board, and the reply will be given in writing.

Mr. JACOB: I realize that I know very little about this matter, but I do know that Government has the right under Ordinances passed in this Council to call in a loan at any time, but Government may not exercise that right. My point is that whenever Government has that right it should exercise it.

Mr. McDAVID: For the last 15 years the policy of the Colonial Treasurer has been to exercise that right when it can be exercised. Members who have followed the finances of the Colony would recollect that we have borrowed money at 6 per cent, and we have gradually effected conversion of those loans to 5, 4 and 3 per cent. We

borrowed this money at 5½ per cent. and we have now reduced it to 5¼ per cent. As soon as we have legal right to effect conversion of loans we do so.

Mr. De AGUIAR: The Treasurer is quite correct, sir.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Isn't this Department living up to its reputation as the "Public Waste Department?"

THE CHAIRMAN: You have beaten the pistol again.

Mr. McDAVID: The Director of Public Works is here, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: With the leave of the Council I think we might now proceed with the estimates of the Public Works Department.

Mr. McDAVID: In the estimates before the Council full effect has been given to the report of the Executive Council Committee which examined very thoroughly the staffing of the Public Works Department. There is a small addition of \$30 recommended by the Finance Committee. All the details were very carefully gone into in Finance Committee.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I cannot understand this Finance Committee which has been inaugurated. I hear that everything was discussed in Finance Committee. There is a star chamber discussion and we come here and say that we must not say anything about it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have never made any such suggestion. I am delighted to hear the hon. Member in Finance Committee, or in this Council.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am not blaming you at all, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: We went out of our way to give Unofficial Members of

the Council every assistance by placing every little detail in front of them in Finance Committee, and if the Member does not care to take advantage of it then that is his loss, possibly also ours, but we are delighted to hear him in full Council.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am not blaming you, sir, because I did not go. I simply would not attend. Members have been complaining here for years that this is a "Public Waste Department," and they are going to improve it by putting ten additional officers on the staff. We began by appointing a Deputy Director and an Executive Engineer. In the first instance we had one Director of Public Works. Now we have two and a Deputy. The result is that everything has gone very much worse. Are these additional men going to improve the position? I hardly think so, but by their fruits we shall know them. Would Your Excellency believe that the Drainage Board which is being carried on under this Department is responsible for all the flooding? The members of the Board should have anticipated long ago that it would occur, because the ordinary villagers have been complaining for some months. A man told me that on the first downpour of rain the village would be flooded, and I brought it to the notice of Mr. Laing. That man was able to prove to me that the work had been neglected. No provision was made to take off the storm water which was expected.

I know that Your Excellency is very keen, and that you have put a lot of personal energy into the Grow-More-Food Campaign, but I told you that things were not running quite according to plan because of the anticipated floods, which we knew we always get, and that nothing was being done in order that when the rain came we would get rid of the storm water. I saw nothing was being done and I mentioned it. Here we have a Department teeming with engineers, and we are

adding more. Are they going to drink up the water? Has Government found that this Department has been so undermanned that we want ten additional officers? The people know that every year some part of the Colony is under water, and once in every seven years we have a heavy drought. I think it was in 1904 when one downpour of rain flooded the whole Colony, but the water was quickly taken off because provision had been made against a possible downpour. Now we are going to be told that the rain fell when nobody expected it.

Government has not suggested a single engineering scheme for next year or for years to come, yet Government wants about six or eight additional engineers. To do what—dig trenches? This country does not want engineers to dig trenches. I have said it before and I am saying it again. The East Indian and African men can dig trenches better than any engineer we have had here. We had a Dutchman, I do not know if you call him an engineer, who did most of the trench work. Your Excellency, there is a recurring drift of mud on this foreshore. That has been from time immemorial. During the drought it comes along. When the rain is expected the Village Authorities, who know their business and who know how to prepare for emergencies, make arrangements to keep their channels open and their internal drainage in order, so that when the rain comes even suddenly the trenches are already dug and they only have to clear the channel with the result that in a day or two the place is free from water. What is happening in the villages today? Neglect, nothing short of neglect. A man spoke to me a week ago and I told the hon. Mr. Laing what transpired. I went to him because I knew he had to do with Local Government. I told him what could be done at a certain place because I knew he had to do with it personally. He told me that so and so had not been done, and when I asked him why he said they had no funds

and they could not do it because the Drainage Board had taken it away from them. That Drainage Board is being run by the Public Works Department, and to crown it all they are going to say "We did not have engineers this year and last year, that is why the work was not done," as if the engineers were going to do the work themselves. They will not take the advice of the people on the spot—the people who know what is to be done. I am not an engineer, only a pettifogging solicitor, and that is why I know beforehand you must get the water off the land before the rains come. Pigs and fowls are dying and the men will not get the water off. That is what their engineering skill teaches them.

I feel strongly and speak strongly, and I can assure Your Excellency that our people are not slow to appreciate the good offices of those who have done them a good turn. They are not slow to appreciate all Your Excellency has done, but they certainly cannot excuse Your Excellency's advisers who have been here long before you, have seen this recurring decimal year after year and have taken away the privilege of looking after it from those who have been doing it in order to do it better but have hopelessly failed. Your Excellency may not be aware of the fact that previous to the Local Government Board coming into existence there was a Central Board of Health and the running of the villages was given over to the people. Then they took it away and made the villages quagmires. The villages could not have been worse and then they made Village Councils and gave the whole thing back to the people. Now that Government has got funds to help them—Welfare money—you are going to bring a drove of engineers to dig trenches. But before that can be done, you have got the whole place under water and a two years' famine threatening you now. This country should not have any famine at all because it is not a thing which comes suddenly,

but a thing which can be avoided. Who can blame anybody for something that cannot be avoided? Previous to the rainfall there was much talk about getting the land in order, and certainly if the people had been looking after their business instead of standing by and twiddling their thumbs, there would not have been this calamity. Take Victoria Village, for years and years that did not need any drainage by machinery. It had natural drainage all the time. Since this Department took over the drainage they have put a pump. The people said to them at the time: "You are putting a pump here but it cannot do the work as the area is too large." But the Department replied: "Oh, if the pump cannot do it we will put another." The other one has not been put up to this day, and the people's lot is worse than before and now it is the worst of all. The pump was too small for the area. The putting down of that pump has made things worse and even with the pump lack of preparation has caused this calamity.

My contention is that this Department is very much to blame and these additional men are not going to make the position better. They cannot prevent the rain from falling. They cannot determine the quantity of rainfall. They cannot take off the water. But they could have dug the trenches and looked after the internal drainage. They could have looked after the koker runs. Why were not the sugar estates flooded to the same extent as the villages? If one Manager had allowed this thing to befall him he would not be there as Manager afterwards. A man, for his own decency and self-respect, will not make that happen. He knows to make preparation beforehand. But instead of that we are only adding engineers. You have a Draughtsman but you want a First Assistant and a Second Assistant, the two at once. Perhaps, you would say the Draughtsman is a little overburdened with work and therefore you must put another one. I would be satisfied with that, but not to put two. But that is how Government does

things, duplicating and sometimes tripling. Government goes into the Finance Committee and says "We want draughtsmen and that is why we have put down so much money on the Estimates," and it is done. What are the Elected Members of this Council to do in such circumstances? If I was present in the Finance Committee I would have said what I am saying now, but that would not have prevented it from passing. To give a reason why you put figures on an estimate does not affect the question at all. It is not the business of hon. Members of this Council to go over a place and tell the Director and his Assistants what to do, but occasionally one may do that. However, when you tell the Director so and so should be done and I see so and so is being neglected and so and so may be the result, he says "I am not looking after that work, it is Mr. So and So." You do not know how to find Mr. So and So. Is that the way Government business is to be carried on? He wants an Assistant to do nothing, then a Second Assistant and a Third Assistant, all at the expense of the poor taxpayer.

This Department was once given the appellation of the "Public Waste Department" by a person who observed what it was doing long before my time, and I can endorse it with all the energy I have. You are getting all these new Officials here, but what special work is there to be done? I see "Calamity" written over the door-post of the East Coast Villages. I do not know what is to prevent it now. What is the good of going to see the place when it is flooded? I have passed and seen it myself. I claim to know all about the Drainage of the East Coast. I have seen villages three or four feet under water over and over. I have had the experience of being in the water myself trying to check it. There can be a thousand engineers but they cannot prevent the water from rotting all the tannias and cassava, or the plantain trees from falling down. Your Excellency, I have

said all this because every reasonable man under the sun knows that if a sudden downpour of rain comes and the place is flooded no one is to blame. You call it "An Act of God." When it is something that we foresee and something that can be foreseen and ought to be attended to and is not done, you say it is neglect. Neglect will ruin anything. That is what has ruined the people's farms on the East Coast, and this Department is to blame. I know that if I speak from now to doomsday Government is going to have all these additional men. I begin to feel ashamed of myself having always to say "I told you so." I am hoping to be here and that Your Excellency will also be here long enough for me to say to you "I told you so."

Mr. De AGUIAR: I am in perfect agreement with the hon. Member for Berbice River when he referred to the Department as the Public Waste Department, but I do not agree with the reasons he has advanced in arriving at that conclusion. I would suggest or rather I would invite hon. Members' attention to paragraph 7 of the report of the Committee which sat for the purpose of examining and reporting on the re-organisation of this Department, and with your permission, sir, as it deals with what I am about to say, I would like to read it for the benefit of the Members of Council who may not have a copy at their disposal at the moment. Paragraph 7 says:

"The Committee desires to emphasize that, in their opinion, the staff of the Public Works Department has at no time within the last ten years been adequate to perform its functions. It is clear to the Committee that the Department has suffered from defective organization and lack of the necessary staff to carry out the proper degree of supervision. I emphasize particularly the word 'supervision'.

Then it goes on:

"It is also obvious to the Committee that in order to meet its enlarged responsibilities the technical staff of the Department must be remodelled and augmented."

As one who has been a very severe critic of this Department ever since I became a Member of this Council, my complaint has always been the lack of supervision and, I think, that since Your Excellency has been with us here you have had occasion to listen to several complaints from me on that score. It is in this respect that I entirely agree with the hon. Member that this Department may be styled the "Public Waste Department." Obviously, if there is this lack of supervision—with which I entirely agree—then there must be waste and nothing else. I am inclined to feel that criticism at this stage is somewhat premature. I would prefer to let the Department have the staff it requires—I have said so in another place—because I am exceedingly anxious to see that every penny of public money that is voted by this Council for this Department, and for any other Department for that matter, is properly spent. You cannot do that unless you have the organization to do it and, I may say, I know what I am talking about. Owing to the lack of supervision this Department has suffered considerably. I have time and time again criticized the amount that is spent on a particular contract with respect to the section of a particular building. The hon. Member for Central Georgetown (Mr. Percy C. Wight once drew the attention of the Council to the cost of a particular building erected by the Department in the City, and the hon. Member was justified in his criticism. The whole thing was purely due to shortage of staff as proper supervision could not be given. It must be remembered that these posts are not yet in being. They are suggested to commence next year. As I had said at the beginning, I am going to reserve to myself the right of criticizing or possibly speaking in the same trend as the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) if I find the present state of affairs is allowed to continue. But I have every hope I will be spared the

effort of criticizing that Department with the staff that is now being made available to it. I quite agree that there has been a fairly large increase in the Estimates as the result of the additions to the staff, but in my view it is likely to be a very profitable investment in the long run. That is how I look at it. I think I have already used the phrase in this Council "I expect it to pay handsome dividends", and I have every hope that will be so.

I am not going to make any reference to the flood conditions that are existing at the present time because I shall leave that to those who are more competent to express an opinion on the subject. I do agree, however, that in this country we suffer year in and year out from flood water. Some of it may be due to natural conditions. The land on our seacoast is low. Whereas the land in the Interior is high. It is not that we get a great deal of storm water flooding the land but it is because the land is low. It is rather unfortunate that most, if not all, of our crops or cultivation is situated on the coast and, therefore, must be damaged. I leave it to the experts to see what they can do in order to remedy that state of affairs. It is almost an impossible task to take off 13 inches of water in 24 hours, whatever the quantity of rainfall has been in the last two or three days. I think I am right in saying that at the present moment they are only able to take off 2 or three inches during the same period. It stands to reason, therefore, that if we have a heavy rainfall as we have had during the last few days, there must necessarily be floods. I leave it to the experts—those technical officers of the Government—to see what can be done to remedy the position and, I have every reason to believe, the matter is already receiving attention. I do urge on my colleagues in this Council to afford this Department an opportunity to justify its existence, if I may use that term. Certainly the Department could not within recent years as

the result of the shortage of staff, carry out the work that was expected of it especially now that the works are on the increase. As I say, the money spent on supervision is money well spent. So far as I am concerned I would say at once that I am prepared to support the Estimates of the Department as they stand, reserving the right of coming here on another occasion and criticizing it very severely if I find that what I expect of these Officers is not accomplished.

Mr. JACOB: I have listened with considerable interest to the speeches of the hon. Members for Berbice River and Central Demerara. In not a few words, the hon. Member for Berbice River says neglect has caused the recent floods, but the hon. Member for Central Demerara says lack of supervision is the cause and he knows what he is talking about.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I am not fond of interrupting any speaker at any time, but I never said that lack of supervision was responsible for the floods. I do wish the hon. Member would pay more attention to the remarks made by his colleagues. I never attributed to lack of supervision as responsible for the floods.

Mr. JACOB: While the hon. Member was talking I made a note of what he said. It reads: "I know what I am talking about. I know lack of supervision is responsible for everything. The Department is responsible for."

Mr. De AGUIAR: For the purpose of record I wish to repeat that I never stated in this Council—and I am sure hon. Members can bear me out—that lack of supervision was responsible for the floods.

THE PRESIDENT: That is recorded.

Mr. JACOB: Nevertheless I think there is something definitely wrong

somewhere. Year after year we are told we must put an end to floods, we must put an end to droughts, we must adopt means to combat those evils, but I find as we go along those things repeat themselves with regularity year after year. I am not going to oppose the provision in these Estimates for additional engineers and draughtsmen. I think they ought to do well, but what I do feel is that something more than that is required. We want better supervision. Certainly we want better supervision of the Boards that are looking after these various schemes in the Colony. I am going to suggest a change of the personnel of the Drainage and Irrigation Board. I think that Board should be composed almost entirely of Elected Members of this Council. I am going to refer to one case, and that is the case of Craig Village adjoining Pn. Diamond. That village is in the constituency of my hon. friend, the Member for Demerara River (Mr. King). I don't think I have seen him around this table during the whole of this Session. I am sorry to say it. When I look around and see the number of absentees in this Council I wonder if something is wrong. I am beseeched all the time by people to do certain things, and I do not know why I should, but I find I am compelled to do some of those things. A few of the farmers of Craig Village saw me on Tuesday morning and said the whole cultivation area was flooded. The hon. Member for Central Demerara never said a word about the flooding of his constituency, but someone also came to me and told me about it.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I would ask the hon. Member not to interfere with constituencies other than his own. I happen to know more about it than he thinks and representation has already been made to Government. I pass on the information to the hon. Member as he happens to be a voter in my constituency.

Mr. JACOB: I think the hon. Member is making a second speech. I cannot understand his uneasiness. I was hoping to hear that certain damage that had been done to something I own at Buxton had been repaired, but I have not heard of that. I saw the very skilful way in which the hon. Member for Central Demerara had been trying to boost up this Department and, as a voter in his Constituency, that is what struck me. I wish to goodness all the voters in that constituency will look at it in that light. As a voter of Central Demerara I feel that way. I have taken, Your Excellency, a keen interest in irrigation and drainage matters. I am not an expert; I am not an engineer. In fact I know very little about it. I am sorry the hon. Member, the Consulting Engineer to Government, is not in his place. I think it is necessary that he should be here.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggested that we should not deal with the Head now, but it seems the general feelings of Members that we should proceed and I followed. I am quite prepared to defer consideration at any moment.

Mr. JACOB: I would just go on making my point. I recollect going with the Consulting Engineer to Craig Village over two years ago and looking at the design of the reconditioning works there. I must say that the whole design was faulty. The work was not properly done. I am glad to be able to say now that I hold in my hand a letter signed by the hon. Colonial Secretary, dated 2nd October, admitting it at this stage. I am going to read that letter so that it remains on record, and I am going to read the letter I wrote that called forth that reply. My hon. friend, the Member for Central Demerara, was at pains to say that lack of supervision was responsible to some extent for the flooded state of the Colony at the moment. I am satisfied in my own mind that lack of supervi-

sion was not responsible for the faulty design. There is something definitely wrong.

I would like a survey to be made immediately these floods are over, to see to what extent Pln. Diamond which adjoins Craig Village has suffered and to what extent Craig Village has suffered. That will give us something to think about. Here we have the farmers of Craig Village continuously and persistently complaining during the last three years. I have gone there maybe a dozen times and have looked at those things myself. I am not an expert. I know nothing about a sluice and a four-foot trench. If a sluice is shown to me I would not think it is a sluice. But for record purposes I would like with Your Excellency's permission to read a letter of the 17th July addressed to the hon. Colonial Secretary and his reply of the 2nd October, so that there can be something on record for our masters in the Colonial Office when they look through the debates to see what is wrong with this Colony. We laymen, we farmers, go on talking year after year for nearly a century and still find ourselves in the same position. The position is going to get very alarming if the war continues and if the rains continue. I foresee that there will be a great shortage of food. I do not know how Government looks at it, but it looks very peculiar and very bad indeed to me. My letter is very short. It reads:

"I have the honour to forward herewith original letter dated July 9, 1942, from 88 proprietors and farmers of Craig Village regarding the drainage of that village for the information of the Governor.

"For over two years I have endeavoured, at the request of nearly all the proprietors of Craig Village, to point out by letters and speeches in the Legislative Council that the design of the drainage scheme at Craig was faulty, but the 'EXPERTS' of Government continue to pursue a policy which appears clear to

me to be against the interest of the farmers and proprietors of that village.

"I regret to state that the conditions existing at Craig Village exist in several other parts in this Colony within my personal knowledge and I wonder when the 'EXPERTS' of the Government will begin to remedy them.

"I am, however, requested to enclose herewith a copy of proceedings of a public meeting held at Agricola Village on July 10, 1942, for the information and attention of Government."

The Colonial Secretary's reply, 33/15/2 is as follows:—

"Referring to previous correspondence ending with my letter of even number dated 28th July, 1942, regarding the drainage of Craig Village, I am directed to say that the Central Drainage and Irrigation Board appointed a Committee to investigate this matter. The Committee met representatives of residents and farmers of the district at the Village Council's office on the 10th instant and heard their suggestions for improving the drainage of the area.

"The various points raised at the meeting will require considerable investigation, survey work and the preparation of estimates before the Drainage and Irrigation Board can consider them. Some time must necessarily elapse, therefore, before any decision is taken.

"I shall be glad if you will inform the petitioners mentioned in your letter dated 17th July, 1942, accordingly.

(Sgd.) G. D. OWEN,
Colonial Secretary."

It is clear to my mind that here you have 88 proprietors and farmers petitioning the Government and pointing out that this thing had been going on and something ought to be done. Government goes into the matter and admits that until the whole place is re-surveyed and estimates are prepared nothing can be done. Every time we come to this Council we are told "We want additional staff. We have got to get out this and that." This has been going on perpetually. Is there not go-

ing to be a stop to this kind of business? I hope there will be. Let someone go immediately the flood is over and investigate the damage it is causing. One section is controlled and managed by the people themselves and the other section is controlled and managed by several people who profess and pretend to be experts and friends of the other people. That is how I put it. Pln. Diamond is managed and controlled by the proprietors and the management of that estate. Craig Village is controlled by the experts of this Government and a Board. When you go to the District Commissioner he tells you plainly "I am not responsible for the works. I know nothing about them." In fact he states that the works have not been handed over to him. You can fix the responsibility nowhere, but the farmers continue to lose year by year.

What is the idea of continuing this state of affairs. Is the Drainage and Irrigation Board competent? I say definitely that it is not competent. I say definitely the Board is most unsuited. I would like to see no representatives of other interests on these Boards, particularly when farming areas are affected. Here you have a Grow More Food Campaign. I think I can definitely refer to that under this Head. What was the position? The Manager of Pln. Diamond was on that Committee, the Secretary of a Pawnbroking Company and an employee of the Public Works Department who happens to be the Chairman of the Village, both not concerned with growing any food, also on that Committee, and the farmers complain and complain with absolutely no redress. I do appeal to Your Excellency to have a complete change of these methods. They have gone on for nearly a century and the position of the farmers is not improving. It is time that there be a definite radical, if not ruthless, change.

Mr. AUSTIN: When this Committee was appointed by Sir Wilfred Jackson to examine and report on the organization of the Public Works Department we did not know who would be the new Director and where he was coming from. Therefore, we opened the examination with a very free mind, and we undertook this job realizing the responsibilities to Government that fell on us. We visualized, that we would have to write off such losses that had already been incurred and start with a fresh sheet. I personally hope that will be done. I regret that Members of this Council do not try and consider it from that point of view. Undoubtedly the Department had been very much understaffed and there had been certain irregularities which gave the Department a bad name but the time has come to make a fresh start. I do hope the hon. Member for Berbice River will consider and try to envisage the future of the younger generation, not himself or myself or those of our age but the younger generation who are likely to follow on and keep this Colony going, perhaps, more happily than it has been in the past, although it is not so bad as you may think it is. Why do we have no confidence in the employees of this Department? It is said that there has been loss of materials and loss of money through men being paid from the wrong pay-list, and that the cost of buildings had been very grossly exceeded. All that has been borne out by actual facts, I am sorry to say, but as I have said before, those things should be a matter of history. Let us forget them and start afresh. The new Director is on his job and we should give him the opportunity of another start. He cannot have another start unless he has officers to help him out in curing all these ills of the past, and we cannot do it unless we accept the recommendations made by the Committee. There may be one or two recommendations which in the opinion of certain members might be eased off a bit, but as a whole the

Committee thought we should put them in this report and we support them.

I think it was the hon. Member for Berbice River who talked about the rainfall. This rainfall has been a sudden cloudburst. Fifteen inches of rainfall in ten days is unusual for the month of December. As a rule, the rain starts about the middle of November and carries on to the middle of December, and if we get 20 inches in that period we consider it very unfortunate, but 15 inches in 10 days is something appalling. Is it to be wondered that the East Coast was flooded as a result of that acute downfall? The sugar estates on that Coast are suffering from too much water and their pumps cannot take it off. The Front lands of all the estates are also under water, and that means that quite a lot of the cultivation aback is still under water and will remain so for some days. I hope the debate will be continued to-morrow because I think the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford), who took a very keen interest in this report and put in a tremendous lot of work, and the hon. Mr. Case may be here then to explain further matters which, perhaps, I have left out. For this Department to get a fair deal and for Government to get a fair deal, I think this report should be accepted.

Mr. GONSALVES: I desire to say a few words in connection with this matter. We have in the past—

THE CHAIRMAN: I desire to ask hon. Members to excuse me for five minutes as I have got an urgent matter to attend to.

His Excellency retires and the Colonial Secretary takes the Chair.

Mr. GONSALVES: We have in the past always had criticisms in regard to the working of this Depart-

ment. The criticisms were very often justified. As the result of those frequent criticisms a Committee was appointed to go into the matter of the working of the Department and, as we see from the report, that Committee consisted of a combination of Members of this Council, who, I think, were well selected, and quite capable of investigating matters in connection with this very important part of the Service of Government. As has been referred to by the hon. Member for Central Demerara, the Department has been for a period of ten years inadequately staffed and, therefore, unable to carry through its work properly. I observe from the remarks of certain hon. Members who have stressed the question of drainage that there was the necessity for some work or better work being done, and I would like to invite their attention to paragraph 9 of the report because whilst we are emphasizing these necessities we must also look at the other side of the picture, as when the time comes for carrying them out a vote will be requested for the increased expenditure. Paragraph 9 of the report seems very clear on the point. It says:

“The proposals in this report aim at reorganizing the Department so as to make it capable of dealing with its present responsibilities based on the existing scale of expenditure.....”

His Excellency returns and takes the Chair.

Mr. GONSALVES: It seems that is a recommendation one would expect to find in a report after an investigation such as they have made. There are two other paragraphs of the report I would like to refer to. One on which I hope to get an expression of opinion from Government is the recommendation in paragraph 17 under the Head “Engineering Apprentices.” It reads:

“The Committee recommends the creation of two posts on the scale \$240—

\$450 for engineering apprentices to which youths who have matriculated and who desire to take up the profession of civil engineering may be appointed and given opportunities for obtaining practical experience while pursuing studies. The Committee feels that the apprentice trained under local conditions should, when he eventually qualifies and has worked through the intermediate posts in the Department, prove very valuable for filling the higher posts."

If Government accepts that recommendation—and I have no doubt it has accepted it—it would bear in mind the question of appointments, later on in regard to this Department and not let us have what we hear in connection with the Agricultural Department. We have been told that young men go and qualify in agriculture and when they return they cannot get appointments. This recommendation provides the possibility of youths of the Colony qualifying as engineers through this Department with the hope of securing appointments in the Department when such appointments arise, and I invite a reply to the question as to whether Government endorses that recommendation and whether it is the intention of Government to carry out the purpose.

I was disappointed slightly by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) not referring to a particular paragraph of this report which is of some benefit and advantage to his constituents. I refer to paragraph 28 which says:

"The Committee recommends that two additional resident carpenters be appointed on the scale \$450—\$600, one for the Public Hospital, Georgetown, and the other for Mabaruma, North-West District. The latter while stationed in the North-West District should be paid a station allowance of \$180 per annum."

By the way, that is the amount paid the Bailiff in that particular district. In addition to his usual salary this carpenter will be given \$15 per

month as a Station Allowance. I think the hon. Member has rather missed it in the report, because he has always said he reads all these things very carefully. He has disappointed me in not having made particular reference to it.

The other matter I would like to refer to—and I do not think any Member of this Council would object to it—is the recommendation in paragraph 32 in regard to the Paymaster. I think we all agree it is too big a job and too much to expect of one man to be Paymaster throughout the whole Colony from the Corentyne Coast to the Essequibo Coast and, therefore, the appointment of an additional officer to discharge the duties of Assistant Paymaster is to my mind a very necessary recommendation. I would like to suggest as regards the appointment of the Paymasters that they should not be kept on in any particular area for an indefinite period of time. There should be some means of an interchange of districts. No one man should be kept for years working in one particular district and not to have a change. Paragraph 23 clearly says:

"The present clerical staff in the Chief Accountant's Office is insufficient in number to enable proper detailed cost accounting records of works in progress to be kept....."

The hon. Mr. Austin said not a word in regard to that matter and, I think, anyone who has had a conversation or dealings with the Engineers would deem it very essential for a system of costing in regard to any engineering department to be instituted. I know the Georgetown Town Council, I must confess, had not that system for many years but in recent times the City Engineer insisted that it should be and it is in operation there now. If it is required in the Town Council it is far more necessary to have it in the Public Works Department of the Colony.

I hope when these recommendations are carried out and the appointments made, as has been suggested by the hon. Member for Central Demerara, the appellation which has been given to the Department—the Public Waste Department—will not continue and that the working of the Department during the regime of the new Director of Public Works will prove successful. I wish before taking my seat to express for myself and the other Members who endorse what I say, appreciation of the work done by this Committee in regard to this particular matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have almost reached the time for the adjournment and I take this opportunity

to say that this particular debate on the Public Works Department will not be continued the first thing in the morning. I may be absent then as I have a conference with the Attorney-General. I prefer to start with the Georgetown Rating Bill to-morrow at noon, if that is agreeable to hon. Members. The resolution standing in the name of the hon. Member for Berbice River will be taken at 2 o'clock and in that case it is improbable we will get back to the Estimates to-morrow. I suggest, particularly in view of the absence of Members, that we resume this debate on Wednesday next.

The Council resumed and adjourned to the following day at 12 noon.