

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 19th December, 1941.

The Council met at 10.30 a.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.

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

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

The Hon. E. F. Mc David, M.B.E., Colonial Treasurer.

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

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

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

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

The Hon. N. M. Maclellan, Director of Medical Services.

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

The Hon. G. O. Case, Consulting Engineer.

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. F. A. Mackey (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

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

MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 18th December, 1941, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

COLONY'S CO-OPERATION WITH U.S.A.

THE PRESIDENT: I have here a letter from the American Consul addressed to the Colonial Secretary, which reads as follows:—

American Consulate,
December 18, 1941,

The Hon. Colonial Secretary,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letters of December 14 and 15, 1941, Nos. 140/158 and M.P. 140/158, respectively, forwarding typed and printed copies of Resolution No. 1, which was passed by the Legislative Council at a meeting held on Friday, December 12, 1941, at the Guiana Public Buildings, Georgetown.

Would you be so kind as to inform the Council that it gives me distinct pleasure to transmit this resolution to the Government of the United States of America, and further, convey my appreciation for the personal privilege of attending, at His Excellency's invitation, the Session on Wednesday, December 10, 1941, when the resolution was introduced.

I have, etc.,
(Sgd.) ROBERT C. BATES,
American Vice-Consul.

I may add that my absence yesterday from the Council for a short period was due to my being engaged in following up that maximum degree of co-operation with our new allies in war with the Officers of the United States Government in this Colony.

To-day the Council will sit until 5 o'clock if that is agreeable to hon. Members.

STATEMENT ON COST OF LIVING CONTROL.

THE PRESIDENT: Before we proceed to the Order of the Day I propose, as previously announced, to call upon the Conservator of Forests to make a statement on the question of the cost of living and the machinery and organization we may need to effect further control of it.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): Sir, since I first spoke in this Chamber, a good many years ago now, as a Member of the ancient Court of Policy, I have addressed this Council on many subjects and on very many occasions, but looking back I do not think I have ever risen to speak with a graver sense of responsibility or with a fuller realization that the subject which is to be discussed has a very direct and important bearing on the lives of the people of this Colony. Before I proceed to discuss the question I wish to make one thing very clear. I am not speaking to day as an Official Member of this Council, proposing or suggesting or urging any particular policy which Government has decided upon; or for which Government wishes to get the approval of the Council. I am speaking on behalf of myself and my colleagues as Chairman of the Control Board in this Colony. The members of that Board have been concerned, have been entrusted with the responsibility of applying control in imports, exports, supplies, prices, and other matters which have arisen as a result of the war. They have had day-to-day and hour-to-hour experience since the outbreak of war in those questions which have assumed growing and ever-growing importance. I do not further even propose to urge on this Council that it should adopt any particular line of policy. What I do wish to do, having been in contact with the problems as they have arisen, and having had the experience of endeavouring to find solutions for them, is to put before the Council as frankly and as fairly as I can what the position is; ways in which it might be tackled, what solutions have been suggested and what appears to me to be in favour of those solutions and the arguments which appear to be against them, so that when the question comes up for discussion, and when a policy has to be framed the unofficial section in this Council will have had as clear an exposition of the whole problem as I can give, and Government will have a cross section of unofficial opinion

when that policy has to be framed. Therefore I wish to make it clear at the outset that I do not stand here as an advocate of any policy on which Government has decided, nor do I stand here as an apologist for what has been done in the past, or as one who is urging any particular course in the future. I am merely trying to set out what the problem is and merely trying to make suggestions as to how it should be solved.

The question of the cost of living is more like modern Gaul than ancient Gaul. It is divided into two parts, and those two parts are, first the control of prices which keeps the cost of commodities down or should do so to the greatest extent which is possible. Without that control, which is fundamental to doing anything about the cost of living, it is not possible to fix prices in any way, because it is not possible to safeguard the consumer against unnecessary increases in prices. Therefore control of prices is a fundamental, but control of prices by itself cannot keep prices at any fixed level; so that once we have achieved the object of preventing prices rising unnecessarily we have not achieved the object of holding those prices at any given level in the face of a rise in world costs over which we have no control. So that the second part of the problem consists of what measures can be taken to hold the cost of living at a particular level which has been decided upon. Therefore in the first part of my speech I shall deal with the control of prices and I will go on to the second question later.

I will start by giving a short recapitulation of the history of it up to date. At the beginning of the war this question of control was regulated by two Committees—the Supplies Control Committee, which was charged with the duty of regulating the flow of supplies into the Colony and the flow of exports out of the Colony in accordance with the Imperial war policy, and the Prices Control Committee which was charged with the responsibility of fixing and controlling prices of essential commodities in the Colony. The work of those two Committees was very closely inter-related. Stocks which exist in the Colony have an effect on prices, but they have a very great effect also on the decisions of the body which controls the inflow of commodities. Exports also have a great deal to do in some instances with stocks

which are in existence in the Colony. If we have not got enough for ourselves we have to see that other people do not take what we have. If we have more than we need it is up to us to see that the people who most need it outside are the people who get it. We have allies whom we want to help and we have enemies whom we want to hinder. We must therefore regulate both imports and exports. After this system had worked for some time the Prices Control Committee, with the staff which was available, controlled the prices of some of the essential commodities.

The immediate urgency was foodstuffs. Essential foodstuffs were controlled from a very early date and prices fixed. Other commodities—a few very urgent ones—were controlled, or attempts were made to control them. Others again did not appear to be so urgent then. The control of prices was very difficult and complicated, and with the staff and the knowledge of price control at their disposal, the Committee found that great difficulties arose in controlling prices. I refer particularly to hardware and dry goods, two things which are pretty essential in many ways to the life of the community. The Committee made various attempts to work out a system of controlling those things. Those attempts on the whole were not successful. The question was complicated, the problem was a very wide one, the means available were not adequate, and in some cases, I say quite frankly, the co-operation received from some of the mercantile community was not helpful.

As the difficulties of obtaining supplies increased and continued to increase we were some months ago faced with the necessity of bulk purchasing certain categories of supplies if we were going to obtain any at all. It was not an easy problem to tackle but it was tackled in this way: Those two committees whose work was so closely inter-related were combined into a Control Board, and as that Control Board would be under the necessity to go into foreign markets as a buyer it needed expert advice on buying in different commodities. It was therefore necessary for the Control Board to employ commercial experts in different categories of goods. It was also decided that as the necessity arose Advisory Committees should be appointed in different

classes of goods, and as the immediate problem was iron and steel and metals in general, an Iron and Steel Advisory Committee was appointed. That Committee has been functioning regularly ever since and is, I think I can say very fairly, an outstanding example of the extraordinary value of ready and good co-operation and assistance to a Board like our own which has to deal with a very wide range of problems. We just could not have carried on without it, and I wish to express that now.

The problem of controlling prices of commodities other than foodstuffs, particularly hardware and dry goods, has been assuming greater urgency as the months go by, and the possibility of appointing experts in those subjects has enabled the Control Board to carry out investigations which it could not do with the resources it had before. I can only say in regard to dry goods that the result of investigation has proved that the urgency of control has not been by any means exaggerated, but I would like to put before the Council some of the complexities which are involved. For instance, I will take condensed milk, of which there are a certain number of brands on sale in the Colony. We take a case of each brand, work out what we consider a reasonable profit, and fix the price of condensed milk. Then there are perishable goods of which large stocks cannot be held for a very long time. A man who imports potatoes has to sell them or watch them go bad, but a man who imported cloth in 1930 can keep it on the shelf and hope for a rise in prices.

How are we going to control the prices of dry goods? Many methods have been suggested. I have here a list, 16 sheets long, of the various cotton goods imported into this Colony. There are different qualities, different widths and imported at different times, at different prices. How are we going to control the prices of those different qualities? Are we going to publish a list for the information of the public? It is impossible. If we do control prices in that complicated manner how are we going to enforce the control of those prices? We are in a position of great difficulty. I wish to say that from the very beginning it was the policy of both Committees and of the Control Board to consult the trade and to explain to the trade what

the problems are and what has to be done in accordance with the Imperial war policy—to put to the trade more or less what we have to do and ask them how they considered it should be done, and in a way which would cause the least dislocation and would be the most helpful all round.

We have discussed the problem with them but we have discussed it on one basis—we will not consider a percentage of profit on replacement costs as a basis for fixing present prices. We are not going to do it. Everybody has seen in the Press and most people have had complaints from their women folk that they go into a shop and buy piece of cloth at a certain price, and if they find that they have not bought enough and they return later for more they find that the price has been increased. In that way the public is annoyed, rather justifiably perhaps. The reason is that prices are being based on replacement cost, and in between those two purchases advice had been received from the manufacturer that the price of that particular kind of cloth had been advanced, with the result that the price of cloth already in the Colony and bought and paid for is based on the cost of replacement. We have said that we will not accept that as a basis. We have offered a number of alternatives and we have suggested a sort of imaginary pool in which large quantities would be imported, average prices and profits worked out, and from which everybody takes out until all their needs are satisfied. That is a pretty drastic and complicated method and has obvious drawbacks. A firm might say "We have the best buyer in the Colony who imports our bargains. Why should we be tied to the buyer of another firm when our buyer is efficient and he is not?" There are objections to it, but it is the best possible solution. I am not urging it.

The method adopted in Great Britain is the margin system under which a dealer is allowed to add a certain margin of profit to the cost price, but he is bound to mark those goods for sale to the public at a price representing the cost plus the margin of profit allowance. It has been successful in the United Kingdom but it is a system which a neighbouring Colony, which is always held up against us when they do something that we do not, tried at an early stage, but it was not successful in that Colony, and we have been afraid of it

in consequence. One may well ask why should it not be successful here? There is a reason. If we introduce that method we will have to have Inspectors going around. The Inspector would walk into a shop where the prices of goods are marked and he would ask to be shown the invoice calculations. If he discovers that the price of an article exceeds what is allowed he would say to the proprietor "That price is too high; I am going to run you in." That is quite simple in England, but when our dry goods firms are confined to the narrow range of 10 or 11 dealers in Water Street we have to get an Inspector who understands and knows cloth and who cannot be hoodwinked about prints and qualities. He goes into a shop and says "That is wrong, I have to run you in." The shopman says "Run us in; good luck to you. The war is not going to last forever; you come into the Street and ask for a job after the war." That position can arise in small communities, but it does not arise in large communities like the United Kingdom. That makes the margin system more difficult to apply here than in the United Kingdom, but owing to the very complicated range of materials we have to deal with we cannot see any way out. We have sought the co-operation of the trade and the Sub-Committee of the Chamber of Commerce. We have put all the alternatives we can think of to them and we have asked them to put all they can think of to us in order to find a solution. I do not propose to discuss the reply they put up. There are other Members of the Council who have seen it. In all my experience I have not seen a document to match it. Therefore we have this difficulty which involves the employment of Inspectors.

There is another problem. The fundamental formula for keeping down the cost of living is control of prices, but control of prices is no use unless it is effective. The Control Board has been accused of fixing prices but not controlling them. That is perfectly true to a certain extent, but not entirely. A far more efficient and a far greater organisation exists in Great Britain for controlling prices. They have their black markets there just the same, but an infinitely more fearful one exists in Germany where penalties ranging from imprisonment up to the death penalty are imposed for evasion. Yet evasion is rife.

everywhere. We have certain knowledge of that. Our control has not always been successful. We have to admit that. Control cannot be made effective simply by a Control Board trying to do something about it. The Control Board must have the co-operation of the whole community. The commercial community, very naturally, is inclined to resent control. Control is adopted in order to safeguard the consumer, the bulk of the people, and the dealer must inevitably be inclined to regard it as a method which has been adopted to annoy him and stop him trying to make profit. He is therefore apt to be very suspicious of it some times. Therefore we will need the co-operation of the commercial community. We also need the co-operation of the Police. They have to realize that this is a very important thing in present-day life, and they have to be keen and watchful. We also have to get the co-operation of the Magistracy. It is no good sending cases to a Magistrate if that Magistrate dislikes the idea of control and interference with the liberty of the subject, or anything like that.

After that, and above everything else, we have to have the co-operation of the public. That co-operation we have tried to get in every way we can. The Press, on its own initiative and also at our suggestion, has taken the lead and urged the public what to do and what they should not do, but the public are too willing to submit to breaches of the Prices Control Regulations. I am not being critical of the public about this at all. Let us look at it from their side. A man goes into a shop to buy something and he is charged too high a price. He is annoyed but he is going to avoid going to the Police as long as he possibly can. If he is a retailer going to buy from a wholesaler and he makes a row he is going to find it difficult to get goods in future. He has to think about that. If he is working in the interior and has to ration labourers he has to take what he can get or close down. On the other hand, if he is a member of the general public, what is the position? Suppose he does go to the Police and the Police take up the case, that man would say: "I have not got too big a margin over my wages to live on and I have to give up a day to attend the Magistrate's Court. I am going to lose a day's pay over that and I am going to be cross-examined by an angry lawyer. It is not too nice."

Suppose he goes to Court and there is an adjournment, and he is told to come again to-morrow week, and supposing there is another adjournment. He is going to tell his friends about that. It is too much of a good thing altogether and the public are apt to be discouraged from taking up those cases. That has been considerably altered now, but I say quite frankly that a long time ago we had a case in which judgment was given 365 days after the case was laid. The case was dismissed, and one of the reasons was that the lapse of time was so great that the witnesses could not remember exactly what happened. So that when we ask for the co-operation of the public we have to help the public to co-operate.

Those points I have raised are what the Control Board would like to see brought about. The criticisms I have made are not going to be very helpful unless we can make some suggestions about them. We suggest that first of all we must have Inspectors. I have already explained that they must be experts in their particular subjects. For the present we want two dry goods and two hardware Inspectors. Those Inspectors will work in two ways. They will probably detect a certain number of offences and they may detect none, but they will prevent a great number of offences, because when a man has to price his goods and knows that this afternoon, to-morrow or the next day an Inspector is going to drop in and have a look at them, I will not say it will stop him being dishonest but it makes him more careful with his calculations, so that offences are prevented in that way. Therefore the Control Board is going to ask Government for four Inspectors, and it is asking for the co-operation of the commercial community. We have tried the velvet glove method and it is a question for consideration whether the iron hand is not to be used. We want and invite the co-operation of the commercial community. We want and invite suggestions as to how we should carry these things out. I am sorry to be continually critical but hon. Members will have a chance to criticize me later. We have found that although we have explained the underlying principles which govern these things those underlying principles seem to be forgotten sometimes. We ask for suggestions as to how to carry out some broad principle, but our feeling is

that we do not get those suggestions always, although if it is a question of wanting to import some material that is prohibited there is no difficulty in summoning a special meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. There is no difficulty, if one or two of the big firms come into it, in sending a notice to the Conservator of Forests, who is an honorary member of the Chamber, to be present at a meeting summoned to consider whether the Manager of the Singer Sewing Machine Company should have a new motor-car which the Regulations do not allow him. How are we to overcome that? I have a suggestion to make and it is this: that for the duration of the war the responsible Heads of the big businesses in this Colony should attend the meetings of the Chamber of Commerce themselves and not send their junior Attorneys to sit and vote automatically for them. That is my attempt at a constructive suggestion regarding the co-operation of the commercial community.

With regard to the co-operation of the Police I am going to suggest to Government something which was suggested to me by a Collector in India when I took charge of my first Division. I suggest that the Detective Office should detail one officer to make a special study of these cases and regard his success in dealing with them as a little bit of a step forward in the line of promotion or something of that sort.

As regards the co-operation of the Magistrates, we know that they have a very great many difficulties to contend with. With that we must agree, but again we suggest—it has been suggested on several occasions—that one Magistrate should be detailed to try these cases and to take them first on his list. There are difficulties about that, and that suggestion has not been adopted because of those difficulties. This is war-time and we know that in effect every civilian is in the front line. When matters of urgency occur in the front line they are dealt with in a summary manner by court-martial. I am not suggesting that that should apply to the civilian population here; I am suggesting that that frame of mind should be adopted in respect of cases under the Defence Regulations which should be dealt with as soon as possible, but only really good clear-cut cases should be

brought. That again is a question for special study perhaps by one Inspector and a policeman.

I now come to the co-operation of the public, and I have some suggestions to make about that. We know that in revenue cases it is very difficult to get information so as to secure convictions, and a system of rewards was brought in, with the result that there was enormous improvement. A man who does not want to lose one or two days attending Court when he knows he is going to lose his day's pay and much time when he does so is far more ready to do so when he knows he is going to get some reward for having done so. Therefore we make the suggestion that a system of reward should be adopted in these cases as in revenue defence cases.

That brings me down to the point that for this particular purpose we feel that we require four Inspectors and we will require some funds for runners if that suggestion is adopted. We will require funds for travelling, because Inspectors have to travel about, and for certain unforeseen items. I do not propose to itemize these at the moment; that can be done later if necessary, but for reasons which will be appreciated I lump them together and ask for \$11,000 only.

Beyond that comes the question of the organization of the office, and in regard to that I want to say this: Since the outbreak of war this work has been carried on particularly by the two Competent Authorities who have borne a very heavy burden indeed. It has been carried on by men who have served out here for a good many years and—I speak with some feeling—have acquired the economy complex. They are terrified at the suggestion of asking for staff or money. They do not like doing it and their staff has not been sufficiently large. The Comptroller of Customs has carried the load since the beginning of the war, and it is astonishing that he has not broken down. He has tried to do without assistance. In the days of Sir John Waddington when the work started it was suggested that he should have someone to assist him, and the point has been reached where he can hardly carry on without assistance. We have already put up to Government that we cannot get on without a full-time Secretary who would

co-ordinate the work of the various branches and take some of the burden off the shoulders of the Competent Authority. We also need two Assistant Secretaries, one for the Supplies Control branch and the other for the Prices Control branch. I cannot give estimates of the cost because it is a question of personnel between Government Departments which will have to be worked out.

We come now to the Supplies Control branch. Complaints have been made about delays about a certain amount of evasion, and so on. There is some truth in that. It is not easy suddenly to start a completely new organization, raking together staff where you can find it, on an entirely new method, and not a peace-time organization but a war-time organization where decisions have to be continually taken and taken quickly under changing circumstances. One difficulty about an import licence is news in the street, splendid news, but dozens of licences about which there is no difficulty is not news at all. We do want to overcome some of those difficulties which have arisen, and further difficulties have arisen during the course of the work of the Customs and our branch in checking the arrival of goods against import licences. For this purpose we want to ask for four junior clerks in that branch at a cost of about \$1,800 a year.

So far, sir, I have dealt with the control of prices. I now come to the cost of living and suggestions which have been made about that. Control of prices is only effective in one particular, and that is to prevent traders exploiting the public by charging more than is necessary. Control of prices does not prevent prices rising on account of the rise in world prices of goods. A word I anticipate using quite a lot in the next few months is "essential," because we have had it rubbed into us that we must only use and import essential things. To the ordinary man in the street "vital" would probably be a better word, but "essential" is the word adopted all over the Empire, and it is defined as being something essential to the war effort, and that includes the maintenance of the life of the civil population on a war-time basis. So that we have to get down to certain fundamentals in the cost of living, and the first fundamental is to do without any imported article which is not essential. That has been

done in Great Britain to reduce spending power. It has been carried to very great lengths so that we have to do without any imported article which is not essential. If an article is essential and you can find a local substitute use it even if it is not as good, and if there is no local substitute try to get a cheaper imported substitute. Therefore, to keep down the cost of living the first essential thing is stop buying what is unessential, and with the money you save you can meet the rise in the cost of essential things. Once that has been done to the maximum possible extent then an increase in world prices must cause an increase in the cost of living no matter how effective price control is. Then if you decide that the cost of living is getting too high you have to find some artificial means of pegging it at some particular point. You are swept by the tide of world events and world prices and the only means that can be adopted is some artificial means.

What are the alternatives if we decide that we are going to peg the cost of living at any point? The first and obvious thing is to increase wages, but that is the inflation spiral, the thing that smashed Germany at the end of the last war and will smash everybody at the end of this war if it is adopted. I am not urging solutions, I am suggesting solutions. That is one. The other obvious method is subsidy, either direct or indirect. They both amount to the same thing. It has been suggested, for instance, that we might remit the import duties on certain essential goods, thereby enabling them to be sold more cheaply. While in effect it is the same as a direct subsidy, instead of imposing taxation and using the money to make good losses in cash we are simply remitting taxation which we have to make good later on in any case. But it has this disadvantage, that the paying over of the cash in a direct subsidy is done in the full view of the taxpayer who realizes what it means, but an indirect subsidy is not so obvious. An indirect subsidy, in my opinion, has this disadvantage that prices to-day are at a certain level. It is all a bit complicated to explain, whereas if the man in the street sees the taxpayers' money being paid out so much to bring prices down to such a point and then when prices begin to rise he sees more of his money having to be paid out he will understand and will be

in a better position to say: "As taxation is getting so heavy let prices go up a little." So that of the two forms of subsidy there is no great difference in them actually in practice, but a direct subsidy is more clearly understood by the people and therefore possibly more advantageous.

We worked out just a few commodities which may or may not be essential according to different people's views, to see what a subsidy is going to cost. It is not a cheap form of amusement by any means. Suppose we take a few items at present prices and decide to put the cost back to pre-war level. That has been suggested in the case of rice, and to peg rice at pre-war level our estimate is a minimum of \$500,000, potatoes \$71,000, flour \$480,000, condensed milk \$208,000. We import two kinds of flour—hard flour with which we bake bread and soft flour with which the East Indian bakes roti. Of course, he does not use that flour for that in India. In this Colony, for perfectly obvious reasons, he uses soft flour and the baker uses hard flour, and we are importing the two kinds in about equal quantities. Before the war they were lumped together in our statistics at one price, but since the war the price of soft flour has risen by half a cent per lb. If we peg both flours back to pre-war price one community can say that the other is getting half a cent per lb. more subsidy, or are we going to peg it back on a half cent differentiation? In that case the community which is buying more can say: "Why should this be done when the East Indians can perfectly well use hard flour for baking roti? The hard flour gives more trouble to knead; it requires kneading the night before. This is war time; do the extra kneading and save half a cent to the taxpayer." I put both arguments; I am not suggesting one or the other. Those arguments will arise and they will have to be decided.

If a subsidy is decided on the first essential is to find some sort of yardstick by which we can measure what the rise in the cost of living actually is. There is a very obvious method of doing that. The yardstick generally used is the Cost of Living Index. It is a very fine servant indeed but a very bad master. It has been worked out with meticulous care both for town and country, and against the rise in prices you can measure the cost of living, but the

Cost of Living Index was worked out for a peace-time population. If you are going to measure the rise in the cost of living after two years of war against times of peace you are going to get serious anomalies, and difficulties are going to arise. In regard to that I propose to take three examples because they illustrate three different phases of the problem. It may be decided to subsidize rice, on the face of it, the easiest thing in the world. We have a single seller and a single buyer. Tell him to buy at a certain rate and sell at a certain rate below that. He suffers loss and the taxpayer hands him over the amount of his loss. Pretty simple on the face of it, but let us look at it from another point of view. There are two lots of people who consume rice; there are consumers of rice who grow rice and consumers who do not grow rice. Leaving out the higher grades of rice which we regard as luxury articles, the consumers who do not grow rice buy 12,000 bags a month, while the consumers who grow rice retain 11,000 bags of their own growing.

I am only giving an illustration of the difficulties which may arise. The man in town buys his rice and consumes it. The man who grows rice takes it to the miller and takes so much of it home—11,000 bags against 12,000 bags, nearly 50-50. Now we come to subsidize rice and the Rice Marketing Board buys rice at \$10 per bag and sells it at \$5. The consumer who grows his own rice goes to the Board with 11,000 bags of rice and says: "You have it at \$10 per bag." He gets his money and says: "Thank you very much; take half of the money back and give me back my rice; I am going to eat it." The consumer who does not grow rice says: "I entirely agree with subsidy and I am thoroughly out to subsidize rice. It is true that I will get my rice at a lower price, but the man who held it up is now able to sell it at a high price and he gets cash down as well. That is not fair." I am not making any suggestions one way or the other. There are consumers of rice who grow it and there are those who do not.

Another thing is salt beef. The cost of living index before the war showed that the price was 12 cents per lb. We are not a Colony of vegetarians, and everybody will agree that salt beef is an essential article of food. In war time it is very

difficult indeed to obtain supplies, a situation which has given rise to great anxiety. The price has been rising sharply and will continue to rise. After a little while the price goes to 14 cents and the housewife grumbles. It goes to 16 cents and she asks her husband for more money. He begins to grumble. The price rises to 18 cents and then 20 cents and he grumbles more, but when it reaches 22 cents per lb. he says: "Give me back that money; I am going to eat fresh beef" He eats fresh beef and it is much better for him too. There we have another instance where people have been compelled, not by a wicked Control Board but by world prices, to use a local substitute which they should have used from the start. It means more than that. We have no control over the world price of salt beef, but the moment the price compels people to switch over to fresh beef in we can come. We can control the price of fresh beef and bring down the cost of living in that way. By a strange coincidence we started making investigations about local beef prices a short while ago and an advertisement appeared in the newspapers a few days later which showed that the price of cheap cuts had come down pretty sharply.

The third example is potatoes but it is an example of something entirely different. Potatoes are largely consumed by East Indians in this Colony for thickening their currie. If you asked people if potatoes are essential about nine out of every ten would say they are. If potatoes are so essential as all that and people cannot do without them, there would have to be a continuous flow of imports coming in all the time. A merchant cannot import a large stock of potatoes because they are perishable, so that they have to be coming in the whole time and the consumer has to be buying the whole time. If he is not buying the whole time then they are not essential. There is not a steady flow of imports of potatoes to the amount people have to consume; imports go up and down. Why? One can spend a very long time trying to work out why. When rain falls the imports of potatoes drop and when there is a drought there is a rise in imports. Is an article really essential which whether you eat it or not depends on rain? The East Indian also thickens his currie with vegetables which grow easily in wet weather. When the dry weather

comes and they are not available he does not bother to water his garden but goes to the shop and buys potatoes. I have not the slightest doubt that I shall be criticized about this: I will be told that I do not know what East Indians eat. I have spent long years in the dihat of India and I have seen what they eat. The position is that 350 million people in India eat their currie without potatoes, but they thicken it with the fresh vegetables which the East Indians eat in this Colony. Once in every 20 years our drought is so severe that the forests are dry enough to burn. In India the forests are like tinder between the 1st of March and the beginning of June each year, yet the people take the trouble to water their plots in the dry weather. It is hard living in India and the people live hard, but they can have those vegetables all the year round. Why can't we?

Another thing the East Indian uses to thicken his currie is dholl. We import dholl from India here. It is brought on ships which are badly wanted in this war, and after a long voyage through the Indian Ocean, through the Japanese submarines and across the South Atlantic we have our dholl which it is essential that we should have. It has travelled half the world and taken a ship weeks to bring it, but when it lands on the wharf we find that it is the good old pigeon peas of British Guiana. Why can't we grow our own? We cannot split them—why can't we split them? They can do it in India, England and the Argentine. If we cannot split them why can't we eat them whole? I think we might very well call the Line of ships that bring these things to us the Nurse Line. We have got to grow more of our food locally. The question is how can we avoid subsidizing imported foodstuffs by growing more food for ourselves? The Control Board suggests that more should be done in that direction. There again the next point of decision arises: are potatoes essential or are they not? I have stated a point of view upon which anybody can argue, but it is a decision which the Control Board has to take. Are we to go to the Food Production Committee and say "Will you let us know when there are enough locally grown vegetables to take the place of potatoes, and when you tell us we will prohibit the importation of potatoes"? Are we to say "Now that we fellows can grow all we want, let us compel them to by pro-

hibiting the import of potatoes?" I am not suggesting that that should be adopted,

That is an obvious but a definitely expensive solution to a subsidy. There are other solutions, some total, some partial, which have been suggested. One solution was suggested to one of the members of the Board. It would not affect everybody but quite a few people perhaps. I will put it in the form in which an employer put it to one member of the Board. He said: "I have a great deal of work to offer but people are not taking it up. I put a notice up in my office that the work on the estate was behind hand and to anybody who lived on the estate I would give six days' work, but I got not a single application." This is war time. In England everybody is working 10 hours a day and 7 days a week, Sundays, holidays and overtime. The limit is industrial fatigue. Where people can get another day's work and thereby help to make up the difference in the cost of living the question might be gone into whether they should do so or not. That is again a solution which I do not put forward as mine, but as one which has been suggested.

When commodities come into short supply further difficulties arise and an obvious suggestion is rationing. I hope we will never come to that in this Colony, and if we do I do hope I will not have anything to do with it. It is different, naturally, in England where everybody eats the same food, but here where we eat different kinds of food I would be sorry for the person who has to do with it. The general position is that supplies are becoming more and more difficult to obtain and world prices are rising. That position was difficult before, but since the 7th of December it has become more difficult still. We have depended in the past very considerably on Hong Kong and Japan for cheap footwear, cheap singlets and cheap cloth of a great many kinds. Japan is our enemy and Hong Kong is in a state of siege. What are we to do when we cannot get cheap cloth? It means that if you have not clothes you must buy dearer cloth, which is going to affect the cost of living. What are we going to do when we cannot get our yachting shoes from Hong Kong? We have to go to Canada for a more expensive but a better article. But what is happening in Canada? Japan is knocking

at the gates of Malaya and Java, and the arsenals of democracy need rubber for war purposes. The export of all shoes containing rubber from Canada has been prohibited. We had that tit bit of news yesterday. So again we may be sure that where we see the cost of living suddenly rise it may suddenly fall because the goods are not obtainable. I want to stress that. It has been said that if the Conservator of Forests and the Comptroller of Customs were abolished everybody would get what they wanted. Let them try to get rubber goods from Hong Kong and cheap cotton from Japan. The position on the contrary is that we have hardly glutted the market with the cheaper class of textiles. People see the restrictions on what are luxury goods and they say they are terrific. They do not realize what a small thing it is in relation to the total imports of the Colony.

As regards dry goods this Colony imports in peace time 7,000,000 square yards a year, and we have fixed with the other Colonies our purchases of a certain line of goods at 1s. 8d. per square yard *c.i.f.* which is essential cotton goods. What is the effect? Of that 7,000,000 square yards imported into the Colony 45,700 square yards appear above the line and the balance below it, and for the quota for this 7,000,000 square yards we have been asked to reduce all we can. These things are extremely difficult to get, and we have said to the importers: "You can take your quota for the whole of 1942; don't wait for the 1st January to get your import licences and cable your orders all over the world." Ask any dry goods man how many orders he has been able to place up to the present. He has to find the goods and they are not easy to find, and it is going to be more difficult yet.

I want to conclude on just one personal note. We have explained and explained what the principles underlying this restriction business are. In many quarters our explanations have been without effect. We are continually being blamed because we have not allowed the importation of some article for which the exporter in England can obtain an export licence. We have explained the reason for that *ad nauseam* but nobody bothers about the reason. I am going to explain it again. The reason is this. At the outbreak of the war Great Britain had the choice of

adopting two policies in regard to goods they exported. One was "You tell us what you want, certify to us that it is essential and we will issue export licences and let you have it." The other policy that they could have adopted was "We will tell you what we will let you have and you can take that or leave it." They adopted the first policy, not the second, very much to our advantage. The policy that they would take our word for it that we would only ask for what we could not do without and issue export licences is the policy the Home Government has adopted. That is the reason why export licences can be obtained very often in the United Kingdom, but we will only issue import licences for what we really need if they are in respect of goods which the Mother Country needs herself.

That is the policy we have always adopted. It is in conformity with the policy of the Home Government, and I want to say more than that. I am expressing my personal opinion that the Home Government has been much too lenient with us altogether. For instance, quite early in the war, bacon was rationed right down in England. The Mother Country then said: "We will introduce a system of priorities. We will let you have bacon to the same extent that we are using ourselves. We will give you a system of priorities and you can issue import licences to the same extent as we are getting ourselves. You can also issue import licences without priorities, and if we have enough to spare we will let you have what you want." The Mother Country never once applied those priorities, gave us what we asked for and merely took our word for it that we really needed it. After Dunkirk, England was in a bad way, expecting invasion at any time, and every particle of food in the U.K. was wanted, but we were told even in those circumstances "Get your supplies elsewhere if you can, if you cannot, then come to us and we will try to let you have some, but don't forget that at any moment we may be in a state of siege and not able to send any." Under those conditions the responsibility is placed upon the Board, of which I am Chairman, to play the game by the Mother Country and not ask for things which she is willing to give if we say we really need them, unless we do really need them. That has been our policy all along and must continue

to be our policy. That is the reason why there are times when people in England say "We can get an export licence for that if you can get an import licence." The Mother Country has relied upon us not to give that import licence unless we are sincerely convinced that those goods are essential. (Applause).

THE PRESIDENT: I suspended the Order of the Day in order that the Conservator of Forests should make his statement. I therefore propose now to proceed with the Order of the Day and give an opportunity later on for any discussion that hon. Members may desire. I regard this matter as one of most vital importance, and what we want is action and decision. Therefore any further discussion of the matter must come forward on a motion of some practical merit. I think the best thing would be if I asked the Unofficial Members to select three of their number to meet the Control Board with a view to putting a motion before the Council for such practical proposals of organization and expenditure as may be necessary. I therefore call on the Senior Unofficial Member (Mr. Dias) to be good enough to have his colleagues choose three of their number to meet the Board. I withhold any remarks of my own on the general matter, except to say that I think the Colony, as a whole, has a long way to go to realize the effects of economic warfare which is going to become a great deal more grim than it is, and there is going to be a great deal more doing without if we are going to carry on at all.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESTIMATES, 1942.

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, 1942.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Item 1—Commissioner of Local Government, \$4,800.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I do not intend to enter into a discussion on the question of the Franchise Commission, nor do I intend to say whether adult suffrage

should be introduced into this Colony, or whether it should be introduced immediately or at some future date. I hope the Council will be given an opportunity to discuss the findings of the Commission when its report has been presented. I also do not intend to make any comment on the unjustifiable and ill-informed attacks made by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) on the Local Government Board. Some of those ill-informed attacks have been ably dealt with by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. DeAguiar), but what I would like to examine is the claim of the hon. Member that he represents 95 per cent. of the people of the Colony.

The hon. Member has said in this Council that he has visited every constituency in this Colony and has had resolutions passed in each of them. I would like to examine the resolution which was passed and the circumstances under which it was passed in Western Berbice, the constituency which I have the honour to represent. I did receive a circular letter from the hon. Member, dated July 30 last, informing me that he had been invited to hold one or more meetings in my constituency. Of course he took the precaution not to state by whom he had been invited. On August 13 I received another communication from him enclosing five resolutions which he said had been passed at duly constituted meetings in Western Berbice, one at a society's hall at Rosignol and the other at Hopetown. He took good care not to mention by whom the resolutions were moved and seconded, but he ended up by saying that they were unanimously passed. I intend to refer to Resolution No. 5 and with your permission, sir, I will read it. It states:—

“Be it further resolved that each Department of the Government shall be administered by a Committee, the Chairman of which shall be nominated by the Governor from the Elected Members of the Legislative Council, in collaboration with the Head of the said Department and two other Members nominated by the said Governor.”

Those resolutions are supposed to have been passed on a Sunday before August 13, about August 11, but for the information of the Council I will say that as the representative of the district I have held no less than four meetings throughout my district prior to those held by the hon.

Member. I make bold to say that voters who attended the hon. Member's meetings were also present at my meetings and, of course, there can be no doubt that they were fully aware that I had consulted the views of my constituents long before the hon. Member went into that district to hold his two meetings. Yet we find that the resolution I have read is said to have been passed unanimously, and to express the feelings of the people in Western Berbice. Prior to going there and holding those meetings the hon. Member sent handbills which stated that resolutions similar to those passed at public meetings held at Bartica, Leguan, and Mabaruma, reported in detail in the *Daily Chronicle* of July 22, would be submitted to the meetings. A meeting was held by me at Hopetown on July 14, nearly one month previously, yet it is said that Members of this Council do not find it convenient to consult their constituents. I have brought the matter to the notice of this Council in order that it might be aware of the manner in which those resolutions were passed, and of the hon. Member's claim to represent 95 per cent. of the villagers. I think he is very much mistaken.

So far as adult suffrage is concerned I, as a member of this Council, was the only one who in my memorandum asked the Royal Commission that it should be considered for this Colony.

Mr. LEE: I would like to correct any misapprehension that Members may have on this matter, and to lay before them the facts which led to the meetings being held throughout the Colony.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I rise to a point of order. The subject under discussion is Local Government. I have listened to personal explanations by Members about resolutions moved in their constituencies and methods of reprisal that might very well take place in the future against visits to their constituencies by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) and the Member who has just sat down. Is the Council interested in this? I do not feel that I should sit here until 5 o'clock in the afternoon when nine-tenths of the day we are considering personal matters, or whether adult suffrage, which I am certain some of them do not understand, is to be adopted *in futuro*. I ask that

the subject under discussion be proceeded with.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I wish to join in that request. It seems that the Council—

Mr. WOOLFORD: I have risen to ask the Chair to rule one way or the other and I am not aware that even if the hon. Member agrees with that he can be allowed to speak until the Chair rules.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was about to raise the point when the hon. Member got up and asked that the subject be dropped. I did allow the Member who last spoke to go on and I realized that he was going very long and that considerable latitude had already been allowed the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob). I rule that this question be dropped.

Mr. LEE: In all my speeches here I have never departed from the subject. The subject before us is Local Government and I have taken the trouble, after consideration with the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob), to go to my constituents and point out to them what is the intention of Government. That is what I was about to place before the Council, and I am going to do so, sir, even if you have to rule me out of order. I must bring it to your notice that the people in my constituency have accepted a resolution for Local Government, and that subject is under discussion now. I am going to read part of the resolution, which was accepted throughout the Colony, requesting Government to accept the principle of the creation of a separate Committee or Commission to ascertain the views of the people in the villages on the question of adult suffrage in the villages. It is necessary that I should inform Government of the views of the people in my constituency as expressed at public meetings I have attended. I do not think that is outside the subject under discussion. Some Members of the Council are afraid because they have not done their duty to the people.

THE CHAIRMAN: Read your resolution if you wish, but get on with the subject.

Mr. LEE: If I cannot speak for the constituencies of other Members I will speak for mine. The resolution I referred to states:—

RESOLUTION No. 1.

WHEREAS we, the Electors and Residents of Electoral District No. 12, Essequibo River, are aware of the urgent need for changes in the Constitution, and we are dissatisfied with the manner in which it is proposed to effect such changes;

AND WHEREAS we are certain that if fuller representation and responsibility are afforded us and the Elected Members of both the Executive and Legislative Councils, better progress in the Colony's life would be achieved;

AND WHEREAS the proposed changes in the Constitution, as enunciated by His Excellency Sir Wilfrid Jackson, K.C.M.G., in his message No. 9, dated June 9th, 1941, and in his speech to the Legislative Council on June 11th, 1941, will not meet the wishes of the people;

AND WHEREAS the present terms of reference of the Franchise Commission are not wide enough to enable us to express our opinion as to the kind of Constitution we require;

AND WHEREAS the terms of reference of the Commission are inconsistent, when compared with His Excellency's message No. 9, dated June 9th, 1941, paragraphs 3 and 4, and delivered to the Legislative Council on June 11th, 1941, as follows:—

“As Honourable Members are aware a representative Franchise Commission has been set up as recommended by the Royal Commission to review the position in this Colony and to make recommendations. The Commission is also empowered to advise on the qualifications which should be required for election to membership of the Legislative Council and as to any alterations which may be desirable in the boundaries of the existing electoral districts.”

“4. It is hoped that the Commission will proceed with its enquiries with all possible despatch, but as some time must necessarily elapse before its report can be presented and new electoral rolls can be compiled, it has also been proposed that in the meantime the composition of the Legislative Council should be modified on the lines recommended by the Royal Commission.”

AND WHEREAS the dissatisfaction felt by us and others has had no effect on the administration of the Colony, under its present form of Government;

(1) *Be it Resolved* that the Official Members of the New Legislative Council, viz.—The Colonial Secretary, Attorney-General, and Colonial Treasurer, should remain as Members of the new Council for a period not exceeding five years, from the date of the Constitution of the new Council; thereafter, all the Members of the Legislative Council should be elected by the people, on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage;

(2) *Be it further Resolved* that the composition of the Executive Council of British Guiana be restricted to Members of the Legislative Council only, the Elected Members to the Executive Council being elected and chosen by the Elected Members themselves, who shall be in the majority in the said Executive Council;

(3) *Be it further Resolved* that in the proposed interim change of the said Legislative Council that the number of Nominated Unofficial Members should be increased from five to seven; that there should be a new nomination for these seven seats, and that the different interests and organisations should be entitled to send in a panel of names from which His Excellency can choose, provided that where there are no recognised bodies, His Excellency the Governor shall have the right of nominating any member of the public to serve those interests or organisations;

(4) *Be it further Resolved* that the reserve powers vested in the Governor of British Guiana, under Article 62 of the Order-in-Council, should be withdrawn and the privilege of exercising those reserve powers shall only be exercised by the Governor with the advice of the new Executive Council;

(5) *Be it further Resolved* that each department of the Government shall be administered by a Committee, the Chairman of which shall be nominated by the Governor from the Elected Members of the Legislative Council, in collaboration with the head of the said Department and two other members nominated by the said Governor;

(6) *Be it further Resolved* that a Committee of the Franchise Commission should confer with the Franchise Commissions of Trinidad and Jamaica and the other West Indian Islands, with the object of obtaining unanimity in regard to the composition of the Executive Councils, Legislative Councils, and the qualifications of voters and the compilation of Electoral Rolls, so as to facilitate early federation of British Guiana and the British West Indies.

(7) *Be it further Resolved* that the Franchise Commission should request the Governor to widen its scope of enquiry to include: (a) the qualifications of voters and Members of the Georgetown and New Amsterdam Town Councils, and of voters and Members of the Village Councils, on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage; and (b) the number of Members to compose the Legislative and Executive Councils of British Guiana.

That is a part of Resolution No. 1 which was passed and accepted as a principle at ten meetings held in my constituency, and I am inviting Government's attention to the fact that the terms of reference of the Franchise Commission are inadequate and do not meet the wishes of the people of this Colony and of my constituency. I therefore ask Government to appoint a Commission as early as possible to enquire whether the people in the villages desire adult suffrage in this Colony. I feel sure that when the evidence is taken Government will find that they do desire it, and many of the Elected Members of this Council will have something to answer at the next General Election.

I would like to draw Your Excellency's attention to one or two facts in respect

of my constituency. I have always tried my best to confine my remarks to my constituency because other Members can look after theirs. I am only responsible for mine. I contend that a District Commissioner should be a sort of father to the people in his district, but I find that that is not so. The District Administration Scheme was a laudable one. There is no doubt about that, but we find that Government has pitchforked men who had no experience and no knowledge of District Administration. The result is that the people are disgruntled with the Administration in my constituency. On a certain occasion when the Commissioner was investigating complaints some of the people followed him and he asked "Why are you following me like crows?" Their patience was tested that day and they left him as a crow leaves a bone. (laughter). I am suggesting that there should be some contact between the Local Government Board and the several Country Districts.

I received a complaint from my district that a koker had been blown away and the water was destroying the crops of the farmers. When I appealed to the Secretary of the Board in Georgetown he referred me to the District Commissioner who was at Bartica and the people suffered for several days. I am respectfully suggesting that the Board should have some power to spend money in cases of emergency. If the Local Government Board is to control the Country Districts then let it have power to do certain things in those districts.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. DeAguiar) says that members of Country Authorities appointed by Government are always carefully examined. I would like to know by whom are they examined? My experience is that they are examined by the District Commissioner who makes recommendations. But what do we find? Certain men who cannot agree with the District Commissioner are not appointed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The examination is held by the Chairman and the members of the Local Government Board. The qualifications of candidates are carefully scrutinized by the members of the Board; no favouritism is shown. The hon. Member said that the District Commissioner had the final say and that men whom he wanted were appointed.

Mr. LEE: I never said that. I said that he recommended men to the Board. Who are the members of the Board? Do they know the people? They have to rely on the District Commissioner's recommendation, and what do we find? If the Commissioner likes Mr. A he will recommend him highly. If Government is going to continue the system of Country Districts instead of giving them village status I would ask if it is not possible to amend the law so as to give them the right to elect members of the Country Authorities. I do not suggest that Government should not have a majority on those Authorities because the members have to be trained. The Royal Commission has recommended that the people should be given an opportunity to learn to govern themselves, and Government should adopt methods to meet the wishes of the people in that respect. I know that a petition was sent to the Local Government Board for the appointment of certain persons as councillors, but the people's wishes were not listened to because they have not the power to vote. If Government desires to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission some means might be adopted whereby Country Districts would be given the right to elect members of the Country Authorities.

There is another matter to which I would like to draw attention. Under the old Ordinance there was an implied contract between a landlord and a tenant that the dwelling rented would be kept in a habitable condition. I have approached Government several years to have an amendment made in the present Ordinance but promises made to do so have not been carried into effect. Many cases have been dismissed because that provision does not exist in the present law. I am appealing to Government in the interest of the poorer classes to introduce an amendment as early as possible.

I have received a complaint that there is a great deal of illegal branding of cattle in the Rupununi district but no action has been taken by Government. I am asking that steps be taken to put a stop to it.

In reply to the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) I would say that the Kitty Country Authority has

on more than one occasion petitioned to Government asking that the status of the district be raised to that of a Village District. What has Government done? Nothing. Can anyone say that there are not men at Kitty sufficiently intelligent to govern their own affairs? I would like the hon. Member to answer that question. I am sure that if the hon. Member had demanded a change of the status of Kitty the Local Government Board would have granted it.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I would like to express my personal regret that the hon. Member never seems to find it convenient to be present when important debates of this kind begin. If he were here at the beginning I think that most of the statements he has made might not have fallen from his lips, because he would have had the advantage of hearing the answers given to the hon. Member of North-Western District (Mr. Jacob). When Members persist in making statements it becomes necessary for other Members to reply to them, especially one who has the misfortune or good fortune of being a member of the Board referred to.

I have been asked a specific question by the hon. Member with regard to the petition which was sent to the Board by the people of the Kitty district. I will begin by asking the hon. Member if he is aware of the counter-petition which was also sent to the Board asking that the status of the district should remain as it is. Perhaps he is aware of it, but as most hon. Members do in making representations to the Council, he has presented only one side of the picture. The hon. Member has refrained from referring to the counter petition which was sent in by a large number of residents of Kitty, and I submit with confidence that a larger number of the responsible residents of Kitty are against the raising of the status of the district.

The Council resumed and adjourned for the luncheon recess until 2 p.m.

2 p.m.—

The Council resumed.

COST OF LIVING.

THE PRESIDENT: I would just like to announce that I have gathered that the

Unofficial Members would like to appoint five of their number to meet the Control Board and discuss the cost of living and other matters this morning. I am perfectly agreeable to that. The names submitted are Messrs. Woolford, De Aguiar, Jacob, Mackey and C.V. Wight. I understand they will meet the hon. Conservator of Forests to-morrow morning.

ESTIMATES, 1942.

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, 1942, which have been laid on the table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: When the Council adjourned I was replying to the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) in regard to the complaint made about the petition sent to the Local Government Board for the raising of the status of the Kitty Local Authority. Unfortunately the hon. Member is not again in his seat and I do not know to whom I must address my reply. I see one of his colleagues here and, perhaps, he may be good enough to tell him the nature of the reply I am about to give. I have said enough on this petition to convince even his honourable colleague that not only the petition he referred to but the counter-petition were both carefully considered before a decision was arrived at. Apart from the question of these petitions, what I would like to impress upon the hon. Member for Essequibo River particularly is that other factors were taken into consideration. When a matter of such importance is before a Board, whether it be the Local Government Board or any other Board, one does not take a one-sided view of it, but it is considered from all angles. In this particular instance several important factors outside the petition were also considered by the Board, and the decision was made that it was in the best interest of that village that the Authority should carry on as at present for some further period at any rate. If that is not a reasonable position to take, I do not know. Of course, unreasonable men will always consider a reasonable decision unreasonable. It does not matter how well one tries to be, when they make representa-

tions it seems that they always endeavour to put forward one side of the picture—that which makes it appear that their argument is sound. That is the sort of representation we are accustomed to in this Council. I regret to say that hon. Members before talking on a subject, although they preface their remarks with “I have visited the District. I know the people. The people come to me,” on examination it is always found that they have selected the side of the picture which suits their argument. That is no argument at all, I submit.

There is one other point I wish to make. I would not have referred to it except that I happen to be a member of the Board. We do not want to hear so much about putting this on record. I do not want things put on record and not refuted, especially when they are not true and are only a fabrication of the truth. It is said that the members of the Board accept the recommendations of the District Commissioners in the various districts *ad nauseum*. The Local Authorities put names up and those names are accepted. That is not true. I submit that if that is the procedure then there is no need to have a Board; all the District Commissioners have to do is to send in names to the Government and they will be accepted.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to correct the hon. Member. My hon. colleague, the Member for Essequibo River, is not here, but he had explained on a subsequent occasion that several names are sent in and one of those names is selected by the Board.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I understood him to say that the names submitted by the District Commissioners are the names of those appointed. He said so, definitely. I maintain that statement is wrong. Whilst it is true that the names are submitted by the District Commissioners, those names are gone into by the Board. The hon. Member accused the members of the Board of not having a knowledge of the people of the districts. I would like to ask the hon. Member himself whether he can claim to have a knowledge of the several peoples of the several districts of the Colony. Unless he is a walking encyclopædia, I do not know that he can. Some people profess to have a knowledge of nothing good and honest, I have no

doubt that if the hon. Member was put to the test he would be found wanting in many respects. What is the real position in regard to the nomination of these people? The names are put up and after consideration they are published. I agree that very often the persons nominated do not find favour with everybody. I go further and say that even the names of persons submitted by the hon. Member for Essequibo River do not find favour in the districts, and the reason for that is obvious. I have no desire to dilate on that at all. I only mention that to show that there is no merit in the argument put forward by the hon. Member for Essequibo River that because "A," a person who is wanted as a member of the Local Authority for certain reasons, was not nominated by the Board it does not necessarily follow that if nominated he would have found favour even in his own district.

Mr. JACKSON: I would just like for a few moments to refer to one or two matters in connection with this debate. It would have been exceedingly surprising if criticisms in connection with the Local Government Board had not been so incisive and so virile, for I know as a matter of fact that the Local Government Board is to some Members of this Council like a red rag to a bull. The reason for it, I take it, is because the Local Government Board does not carry out their suggestions or does not see eye to eye with them. The hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) referred to the Board as a hindrance to village administration, but I think he has shot wide of the mark. The Local Government Board performs a distinct duty in connection with these villages, and, as a matter of fact, we have to save the people from themselves sometimes. I have no doubt that if the guiding and restraining influence of the Local Government Board was withdrawn from the villages chaos would be the order of the day. Reference was made also to the number of complaints received by the hon. Member for North-Western District and his colleague. I want to say that it is the ordinary way of things. The supply creates the demand, and when the people realize fully that there are certain individuals who are ready and anxious to hear complaints, whether they have grounds for complaint or not, they will run to them and pester them with any amount of complaints. I was very glad,

sir, that you made the remark that we should leave aside those meetings which are supposed to have been held by the hon. Member for North-Western District and his colleague. I am very glad for that. I have some remarks to make on the question, but I prefer to let the whole thing fall with its own weight. I do think the time has really come when a period ought to be put to the useless reiterations of the hon. Member about his influence in the community and in the various districts of the Colony. I do feel, sir, that instead of the people going to him and his colleague and asking them to go to their various districts, it is they who are forcing themselves upon the people and are trading on the credulity of some of the less informed people in those districts.

With reference to the matter of the Canals Polder, I do not intend to say anything because I think the answer given by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) quite meets the case, but it is extremely regrettable that these matters are brought up over and over again when the answers to them, satisfactory answers, have been given. I remember speaking on this question when it was raised previously by the hon. Member for North-Western District, and I thought then that the answer he got would have silenced him forever in connection with that matter, but he has brought it up again and I will not worry with it as the hon. Member for Central Demerara has already done so, and, possibly the Commissioner of Local Government may have something to say on it.

I would like to refer to certain remarks made by my hon. friend, the Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar). We have been closely associated with Village Administration for a number of years, a longer number of years than I would like to mention. As far as I am concerned I have been born in one of the villages. I have lived my whole life in the villages and I know everything in connection with the villages, and villagers and village administration, and I do not feel that the remarks made by the hon. Member for Berbice River with regard to the District Commissioners were well chosen. He referred to the District Commissioners as not being necessary where you have Village Councils and stated that you cannot have the District Commissioners and the Village Dis-

districts working together. I am sorry he is not here. I think his memory is very short. The time was when the villages had direct communication with the Local Government Board and, as a matter of fact, it took a longer time then to get through with matters in connection with village administration. I had remarked at the time the scheme was brought about, that it should prove very useful and village matters should be expedited because of the men on the spot. I say now without fear of contradiction that the District Commissioners have done very good work in connection with village administration. They have by their timely aid and assistance and kind counsel averted many a disaster, and because they can be had at a moment's notice many things have been done or averted, as the case may be, good on the one hand for the Council and detrimental on the other hand to the work of the Council in general. I do say I am not a special pleader for these District Commissioners, but I know their worth. I know the immensity of their duties, and I know the hardship which they themselves have to endure. Very frequently I have had to offer them what I thought was some encouragement in order that they may not be downhearted but may proceed with their work.

Reference, too, was made to the cost of Local Government, but it must be borne in mind that a good deal of work that did not fall to the Local Government Board has been taken on by the District Commissioners. Our whole fiscal system in the country is practically in their hands. The Immigration Agents who at one time resided in the various districts do not reside there now, because their work has been taken over by the District Commissioners. The District Commissioners and their officers are all Immigration Agents now, and a whole department has been closed down and its work handed over to the District Commissioners. I am satisfied that the District Administration Scheme is being carried out in a capable manner. We cannot have all that we want. Nobody can be regarded as a superman, and there must be mistakes. At times we may not come up to what we hope to be. Why decry a useful organization because, perhaps, of some pique on the part of any individual?

Reference was made to Kitty and to the

petition for the raising of its status. What right have we to demand that every petition we send up anywhere should be granted? Why ought we to cry like little children when we do not get what we want? I think the remarks made in connection with these matters by the hon. Members to whom reference has been already made were not to the point and could not be relied upon. I support the item under discussion now, and I do sincerely hope that we shall never have a repetition of the propaganda work that is being carried out for a purpose—I say so because I know it was carried out for a purpose—and I do hope we shall hear less about this propaganda work by the two hon. Members of this Council, one of whom openly stated that they are the only two representatives of the people who do their work. I hope a period will be put to all this useless and idle talk.

Mr. LAING (Commissioner of Labour and Local Government): Some misunderstanding is likely to creep into our discussion on the affairs of my department for the reason that the label that has been attached to it is somewhat misleading. The scheme for District Administration was introduced on the instructions of the late Sir Edward Denham, who in his minute to this Council referred to the matter as "Local Administration." The Committee who considered that instruction and drew up the scheme also referred to it as "Local Administration" and to the proposed Head of the Department as "Secretary for Local Affairs." It seems that both Government and Committee referred to a Department of Local Administration but somebody, I don't know who it was, decided to attach the label of "Local Government" to the Department. It may be understood, therefore, that the Department deals only with matters concerning the Village Districts, and it may also be considered that the Department deals with matters which affect the two Municipalities. That, of course, is not so. While the duty of the District Commissioners in connection with village affairs is the most important part of their duties, it is by no means the whole of the duties which they have to perform. This brings us to the question of the cost of the Department, which has been raised by one or two hon. Members of this Council.

The Department was inaugurated in 1932. Although the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) who, I know, pays particular attention to the Estimates of Expenditure of Government, has referred to a sum of \$8,000 being voted in 1930. I have tried to trace that item but have been unable to find it. As he stated it does exist, it must be somewhere in the Estimates of that year. The District Administration Scheme was introduced in 1932, and it took over the duties of several departments, including the Excise Department (which is known locally as the Commissaries' Department), the Immigration Department, the Lands and Mines Department (a portion) and the duties of the Local Government Board. Prior to the introduction of this scheme the Heads of those Departments had in all districts their own representatives—those Departments which had outdoor duties to perform. There was in the districts an officer representing the Lands and Mines and the Commissaries' Departments, one representing the Local Government Board and one representing the Immigration Department, which in those days undertook labour work. It was thought that all those officers really did not have sufficient duties to keep them fully employed and also there was considerable duplication of travelling and useless duplication of allowances. It was decided to co-ordinate all those services in one officer known as a District Commissioner.

The current estimate of Expenditure which was absorbed by the Department in 1932 amounted to \$84,456. During the two years following there was a sum of \$22,259 which was transferred from other Departments to the Head "Local Government," which increased the expenditure of the Department to nearly \$103,000. In later years there was attached to the Department a section to deal particularly with labour. The expenditure on the officer was approved in this Council, and that considerably increased the expenditure under that Head. In addition to that, there were increments and such things as war bonus, which brought the total of the Department to \$148,224. Whether there was district administration or not it would have very little or no effect on the current estimates of expenditure. My hon. friend, the Member for Berbice River, (Mr. Eleazar) is not here but he has always

opposed this system of administration in the districts. He has come here for the past eight years that I know about, and told us frightening stories of paramount chiefs. I have no knowledge of the system of administration in the African Colonies, but I have read extensively books on the subject and a recent book by Sir Donald Cameron in which he gives his experiences in those Colonies and his experiences of indirect rule. I have been unable to trace any resemblance in the African system to our system which is based on conditions in this Colony and not conditions in the African Possessions.

The hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) has referred to the Local Government Board and its functions, particularly in regard to the appointment of members of Local Authorities. I am pleased that this discussion has taken place because it does point to one thing and that is, there is a very lively interest in Local Government affairs and in the affairs of Local Authorities. We have been presented from time to time on the Local Government Board with petitions for and against the appointment of certain members. The members of these Local Authorities are very carefully selected, and I would like it to be known that their re-appointment is not automatic. We have a record of these gentlemen who give services to Local Authorities, and when those Authorities are visited by my officers a very careful note is taken of their attendance, their general behaviour on the Council and their suitability for appointment. Their names are submitted to the Local Government Board for final selection and appointment. This must lead to some disappointment for the reason that in their village there are two factions. I do not say it is detrimental to the village. I think it is a healthy sign that there should be some opposition. There is no doubt that when one member is appointed who does not belong to one or the other faction there is some discontent in the village. That, I am afraid, is inevitable. I want it to be clearly understood that appointment to these Authorities is not automatic but is given to the gentlemen who are best suited for the appointment.

Several hon. Members have referred to the question of the Franchise Commission

I do not think that is a matter that comes under discussion here to-day. Whether Your Excellency's Government is going to appoint a Commission to consider the question of Village Franchise I do not know; but I would like to say that as recently as 1934 the franchise of the villages was carefully revised and considered and I had the honour to introduce in this Council a Bill to improve the status of Villages and Village Councils. The hon. Member for the North-Western District was told by me on the last occasion that there had been great improvement in the composition of these Village Councils and that the Bill to which I referred just now gave to these villages power to elect two-thirds of their Councillors. In the Country Districts the members of the Authority are all elected by the Local Government Board.

Mr. JACOB: Nominated!

Mr. LAING: Appointed by the Local Government Board. The hon. Member for North-Western District also raised the question of the status of the Canals Polder, and the hon. Member for Essequibo River referred to the petition in regard to the status of Kitty Village. The hon. Member for Central Demerara adequately replied to my hon. friend in regard to the reasons why Government is unable to grant the petition. With respect to the Canals Polder I am quite certain that when the Authority gets under way and is better organised its status will be improved, if it is the desire of the inhabitants that that should be so. The hon. Member for Central Demerara and the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Jackson), who sits on the left of the hon. Member for North-Western District, have replied to the comment made in regard to the elevation of Kitty Village, and so I need not speak further on that. The hon. Member for Central Demerara also referred to the question of loans to Local Authorities, and the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) referred to a distressing story in respect of a village in his constituency, which he did not name, where a koker was blown out and the inhabitants suffered as the result of flooding. I may say that on these Estimates which are before the Council to-day it will be noticed there is the sum of \$10,717 which will provide the

means of making short term loans to Local Authorities. If the distressing incident to which my hon. friend referred does occur it will be possible to obtain short term loans to put the position right.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara asked a question in regard to duty allowances for Distillery Officers. The Distillery Officers are in charge of the Rum Distilleries which are all under revenue lock. Their duties are particularly important. It needs special knowledge and special training to supervise these distilleries. It has been found in many instances that Junior Officers are required owing to the exigencies of the Service to undertake these responsible duties, and Government feels, and that rightly, that they should get a certain allowance to compensate for it. The staff has been slightly increased and these allowances also increased in order to take charge of a certain situation which has arisen in connection with the storage of rum over the capacity of the Colonial Bonded Warehouse. These clerks will be engaged to carry out the complete duties in connection with these rum stores which, it is proposed, should be under revenue lock and, therefore, the Department will be entirely responsible at all times for these conditions. I may say that while the expenditure of this Department may appear high, the revenue collected by this Department has increased 78.6 per cent. Naturally, where there is considerable increase in revenue additional officers are required, and that is the reason why the staff has been added to slightly from time to time.

Mr. JACOB: I think I should clear up one or two points that have been raised by two—

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has spoken several times on this subject.

Mr. JACOB: I have only spoken once. The debate having taken the turn it did yesterday I think I am right—

THE CHAIRMAN: We are in Committee and a Member can speak several times provided he speaks to the point. I asked hon. Members if they had anything to say and no one got up. If the hon. Member has a point of extreme importance and relevant he may proceed.

Mr. MACKEY: I beg to move that the Head "Local Government" be now put.

Mr. JACOB: I am not going to delay the Committee very long. While I was speaking yesterday, I said a Royal Commission was appointed on account of public demand, and Your Excellency asked me to give some reference to it. In addition to the reference handed to you by the hon. Member for Essequibo River —

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is reiterating a point we have already had. If he has anything new touching the question let us have it.

Mr. JACOB: For instance, the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) raised a point in regard to what I stated about meetings and left it in the air. I think I should correct that statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. Member to keep to the point. To go on reiterating arguments will take up much time.

Mr. JACOB: Is it fair that these inaccurate statements should remain on record?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member may take some other method of bringing it to the Council. We are on the Estimates and must keep to the point.

Mr. JACOB: All right, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before putting the question there are one or two questions put which I must answer. The Commissioner of Local Government has already explained that his Department covers a great many things as well as village administration. The question has been put to me whether Village Administration will occupy much of my attention. To that I make a sympathetic response. The whole of my training has been based on the belief that the basis of successful representative administration in a tropical agricultural Colony is a sound village administration, and a Colony has its institution, a Legislative Council, on that broad and sound basis. I have heard it said that the Colony whose chief institution is its Legislative Council is like a pyramid with its base upside down on its apex and somewhat wobbling. My own experience for many

years has been directly connected with village district administration and what the hon. Member for Berbice River fears for this Colony—tyrannical paramount chiefs. I have been one of those administrative officers and I differ from him there. I would like to assure hon. Members that in actual effect that is wrong. The whole object and aim of administration in Africa has been a democratic representative administration. It has as its basis the most democratic of all such institutions. What I shall make it my business to look for is the basis of a successful village administration which must initiate community spirit and some definite place in the burden of administrative work whether by taxation or not.

What I am accustomed to is a village community where every individual householder pays its tax. That does not hold here. It may be by way of rates. That is what I am accustomed to and what I believe is the consensus of opinion, and yet I find this Colony has a very high low limit for its Income Tax, £150 per annum, while in other parts of the West Indies the limit is only £50. Personally, I believe in a system where every household takes a share of direct taxation. In the West Indies I have had two interesting experiences. In one Island where they insisted to establish village administration, I pointed out there must be some basis of difference and it was a question whether those people were going to take on the contribution of anything to their own administration. The Legislative Council had made a grave mistake some years ago in abolishing a certain land tax, and I pointed out there would have been an opportunity of levying that land tax on any village community and the money spent by it, as direct taxation contributed locally would be spent by the Local Authority. They did the next best thing. Those communities wanted to take on a voluntary tax themselves on the understanding that the Government contributed an equal sum. In another Island they were anxious to act on the same principle. They appointed a large committee to go into the matter with the usual result that the Government was called upon to put up a very large sum of money, a very large capital expenditure, but the villagers were to contribute precisely nothing. As a result the scheme was dropped.

I have listened to this debate with a lot of interest and a certain amount of concern when I heard of the things mentioned which do not seem to make for a successful village administration, but I was a good deal relieved to hear much better account by the hon. Member for Central Demerara. I was particularly glad to hear what the hon. Nominated Member had to say on this subject, and it has led me to feel with him that there is much good in village administration in British Guiana. I think British Guiana is fortunate in having a system of administration which goes beyond anything I have heard of in the West Indies or in this part of the world. What I would say is that there is bound to be imperfection. It is a form of taxing the people right from the bottom in the administration of their own affairs. We must expect imperfection, corruption, graft. All that is meritable and it has got to be the business of the department to guide and lead in the hope that something good will come from it. If I can help in any way during my term of service in this Colony I will be glad to do so.

Mr. JACOB: I am very grateful for the explanation and statement, but the facts remain.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must put the question. The hon. Member has had an opportunity to present his views. I will proceed to put the question.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item 13—10 Runners, \$2,878.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: It seems to be an anomaly. We have 10 Revenue Runners—2 at \$288 by \$24 to \$480, 1 at \$240 by \$24 to \$360, 7 at \$180 by \$24 to \$240. Something is wrong about these figures. I notice that the Civil List repeats those figures. Perhaps the hon. Commissioner can tell us how that appears—7 at \$180 by \$24 to \$240. Does it mean they only get \$15 per month?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is the scale. If the hon. Member turns to page 48 of the Estimates he would see that the lowest scale is \$180 x \$24—\$240. Items 16 and 20 show the same salary scale, which appears in the 1941 Estimates.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I am raising the question for the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus), who, I am sorry, is not here. He said it appeared to him that there was some anomaly. I do not know what he meant unless he meant to make this point that it seemed to him peculiar to have three grades for ten Revenue Runners. It does seem peculiar.

THE CHAIRMAN: These are the ordinary grades of the Unclassified Service.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: There are ten men carrying out the same duties, and you have three grades of pay for them.

Mr. LAING: The hon. Member for Western Berbice really refers to the Revenue Runner stationed in the West Coast Berbice District. He thinks he should be entitled to some form of promotion, I have tried to explain to him the grades under which these Runners fall. I will undertake to make enquiry into the service of the officer to whom he refers.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: Very well.

Item 18—Loans to Local Authorities, \$10,717.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I would like to hear the hon. Colonial Treasurer on that, sir.

Mr. JACOB: Before the hon. Colonial Treasurer replies I would like to enquire whether in addition to this \$10,717, the Local Authorities owe a large sum of money and what is the total?

Mr. DEAGUIAR: Also before the hon. Colonial Treasurer replies may I invite his attention to this point, whether it will be practical for him to adopt the suggestion put forward that loans of this kind, not only those to village districts but other loans, be grouped under one head—Miscellaneous.

THE CHAIRMAN: I agree subject to what the hon. Colonial Treasurer says. I am not anxious to upset the printed Estimates for this year. I am willing to accept a resolution of the Council on the subject and to try to get it in a simple form.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I sympathize very fully with what the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr.

DeAguiar) and the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) say. They complain not only of the introduction of an item for loans in the Budget, but the hon. Member for Central Demerara also complains of its introduction in these particular Estimates. I have already dealt with the first point. I have explained that under the new accounting procedure introduced by the Colonial Office in 1937, all the Colonial Governments were recommended to place this item on their Budget. The instructions were that these non-service items should appear under the expenditure head of the administering Department.

THE CHAIRMAN: I know that may be advised or suggested, but I am quite prepared to argue against it.

Mr. McDAVID: Under my own head, "Treasury", two items for refunds, \$40,000, appear. Under "Customs" there appears an item—Refunds of Revenue \$50,000—and under this very Head there are such items as "Charges" on Colony Lands, \$10,547," and so on. Under the Department of Agriculture there are loans to Co-operative Credit Banks, \$15,000. All Departments naturally feel that their estimates should not be swollen by non-service expenditure, but this is where what I term the Instructions come in. If I had any method by which I could have disobeyed I would have done so.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will try!

Mr. Mc DAVID: I will raise the question again. The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) referred to this question. I would like to remind the Council that loans were made under Combined Court Resolution of 1920, which authorized Government to lend up to \$30,000 per annum to the various districts as they needed it, but when our circumstances became stringent we ceased lending this money altogether. We have written off the balance of the then loans outstanding as final expenditure. I will now answer the question asked by the hon. Member for North-Western District. The loans outstanding are approximately \$28,000. If further money is lent it would probably go up.

One last point. The hon. Mr. Laing in

speaking of this particular item used the term "short term loans." The real object of the vote is not to make short term loans but to make long term loans. The Government has got power to advance a small sum of money during the year against rates and will not charge it in the Estimates, but this money is to provide, if a village wants to borrow money for specific work, the necessary fund to be repaid over say 10 years. So it is not quite correct to say they are short term loans. I am very glad to hear Your Excellency will undertake to listen to representation on the subject, as I feel very strongly on it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the most helpful way is for the Unofficial Members to put up a resolution in some form or other. The matter has been already argued and I will put up a despatch. I tried in my last Colony. The Colonial Office had a gentleman from the Treasury of the United Kingdom Exchequer brought into the office full with rigid theoretical ideas as to accounts. It was he who passed all these forms of estimates on to us. I do not know how many Colonies have succeeded. I have tried and I am prepared to have another go at it strengthened by a resolution or any representation made by the Members of the Legislative Council.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am very glad to hear that, because from various points of view I myself am opposed to adopt it. On the Sea Defence Board it is impossible to estimate what we have got. What we have to do is to pay for it with revenue paid to Government. If you are successful I offer you our greatest thanks.

Mr. JACOB: Am I to understand that the amount owing by the Local Authorities is \$28,000 in addition to the \$10,000 placed on the Estimates for future loans? When these amounts are paid what will happen? Will it be credited to this Head?

Mr. Mc DAVID: When it comes to revenue the hon. Member will see that \$5,717 of this \$10,000 is not new loans but repaid loans which were made from a private fund called the Districts Guarantee Fund. If a further sum is required Government would come back to the Council. Repayments are credited to revenue.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before concluding this Head there is one little comment I would like to put to the Commissioner from what I saw in the outer districts of the Colony, the North-West and Rupununi Districts. I find that the Department has not got funds of its own to carry out quite minor works of a temporary character but has to apply to the Public Works Department for an allocation, which in a sense puts responsibility on the Director of Public Works which he cannot effectively carry. Take the extremely good example of the Rupununi District. I found the station in a disreputable condition. I was ashamed to see it especially on an international frontier. I went to the District Commissioner's house and found the witness-box in his dining-room. I did not open the door but only succeeded in pushing it eighteen inches. I tried to get into another room; a policeman pulled me aside and said that no one was allowed to enter it as it was dangerous to do so. I do think that station should be put in decent order. It requires practically no materials at all as it can be done by the District Commissioner with local material at not much cost. If we are going forward with development and welfare schemes for the benefit of the Aboriginal Indians, we should endeavour to put our house in order before they come about. I know the necessary fund is there, and I think the funds for that kind of thing should be administered by the Department and not go on the Public Works vote. I would just like to ask the hon. Commissioner of Local Government if he feels he can handle the vote easily if it is put on his Department's estimates.

Mr. LAING: I think the money can be handled more easily and effectively by the man on the spot.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not want to press any change in the Estimates. At some future opportunity we can do it that way.

MEDICAL

Dr. SINGH: I desire to make one or two observations under this Head. I feel that the number of Medical Officers now employed in the Service is insufficient to cope with the work at the present moment. Two or three decades ago there were about 30 Medical Officers. On the West

Bank, Demerara there were two Medical Officers—one at LaRetraite and the other at Vreed-en-Hoop. On the West Coast there were two—one at Leonora and the other at Tuschen. There were two other officers—one at Leguan and the other at Wakenaam. In that whole area at present there are only two Medical Officers carrying on the work, except in Leguan and Wakenaam where there is a weekly visit by one Medical Officer. It may be argued that in those days there were more estates or sugar plantations and naturally the employment of more medical men was necessary. That may be true; but the people in those days received first-aid because they lived near the estates and simply had to go the Estate Hospital and receive first-aid treatment. To-day it is quite different. The Estate Hospitals have been demolished, most of them, and the people who are centralized around those estates which have been abandoned are now scattered and can be seen all over the district, hence involving more work for the Medical Officers. Take our premier institution, the Georgetown Public Hospital. I feel it is very much understaffed at the present time. If one Medical Officer is taken away for relief work in case of an emergency, you find that the work of the whole institution is dislocated. I must compliment the Resident Surgeon for the way he is carrying on. Further, too many beds are attached to a Medical Officer if he is to carry on his work thoroughly, and he is also faced with floor beds which make it impossible to keep the ward clean. It is impossible for the nurses to attend to patients properly, and it becomes utterly impossible for any medical investigation.

This is an age in which we are trying in every form to bring up healthy women and healthy men. We have ante-natal clinics. We are trying to assist expectant mothers and to ensure that the children unborn are healthy. These clinics in the country are trying to bring up generations healthy and strong. When, however, they come to matured age and need thorough medical aid and treatment they are denied it on account of the increased number of floor beds and the number of wards attached to an officer. About the surgical side, I say nothing, and also about the paying wards. But the paupers wards I am referring to. Take the other branch—the Out-

Patient department—and the minimum number of patients treated. What is considered the minimum to-day was the maximum ten years ago. I used to be in charge of about 120 patients, but that number is considered the minimum to-day. The Medical Officer who, is in charge of the Out-Patient work, does duty for 4 to 5 hours during which he has to attend to 200 patients. Of course, there may be cases going to repeat their treatment and that will not take up much time. The question to be considered is this: Is it possible for one Medical Officer to attend to a minimum number of 150 patients in the space of time of 300 minutes? That means he has to attend to minor surgical cases and Police cases and can be called upon to treat cases from the Electric Company or some Water Street firm. I do not know how the Medical Department is able to take on work from private sources. These are my observations and I would like to make certain suggestions.

We must put prejudice aside. I think the work can be carried on efficiently if private Medical Practitioners from Georgetown be asked to do some special work at the institution *gratis*. I believe many will be willing to serve. This will not be the only Colony where this will obtain. In England, private Medical Practitioners give an hour or two in the hospitals. The practice is very much extended in India, and in Jamaica it is also observed. That will relieve the situation to a great extent. If you cannot afford to employ more Medical Officers then ask private practitioners in the City, who are willing, to give one or two hours a day service in the Public Hospital. There should be two Medical Officers in the Out-Door department, as we have people going there from all over the country. It costs them some money and they have to stick to a routine way of travelling, very often they have to abandon seeing the Doctor at that department so as to catch the only conveyance back to their homes. I feel that much would be gained if you ask private Medical Practitioners to co-operate in the work of the institution especially at this time.

Mr. JACOB: I just want to make a few comments. During the last Session I raised the question of accommodation at the Public Hospital at Georgetown and

other places. I have no doubt that the matter is receiving consideration, but I urge that on that portion of the building that is not yet repaired the work be expeditiously carried out. Accommodation for paying patients seems to be very limited. I did not raise that at the last meeting, but I do so now. Patients who desire to go to the hospital on payment of \$1.50 and \$2.00 per day cannot obtain accommodation there. I think Government is losing revenue in that respect and, therefore, I am asking that something be done. That is in addition to the accommodation for pauper patients and those paying 50 cents per day.

I notice that provision has been made here for equipment and supplies—\$900. I trust it is sufficient; if it is not, I urge on Government not to hesitate in asking this Council to provide the necessary equipment and other necessaries for sick people in the institution. I do not think this Council grudges voting the additional money so as to make the sick a little comfortable.

In addition to this observation I have written Government with regard to a nurse for the North-Western District. I do not know whether a decision has been arrived at as yet, but I strongly urge that in view of the size of the district and the number of people residing along the banks of the several rivers and creeks in that district a nurse be stationed at Morawhanna, if even Government has to pay a little bit more. Two or three cases have been reported to the hon. Director of Medical Services and, I have no doubt, a very strong case was made out for a nurse to be stationed at Morawhanna. I think a nurse should be put there for economical reasons. It looks rather inhuman that because you have to spend another \$180 per annum you must decline to do that and allow expectant mothers and infants to die. I think a strong case has been made out and I will be glad to hear whether a nurse will be stationed there.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I would like to make a few remarks under this Head, and in that connection I may say that the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh), who seems always at home on this subject, has rather touched some of the points I intended to make. I was hoping when he was dealing with the Public

Hospital, Georgetown, he would have gone a little farther than he did. There can be no doubt that there are a number of complaints in regard to a matter which I will deal with at the moment, and that is with respect to the food. I think it will be agreed that nourishment of the sick is a very important point. As a matter of fact, in the old days—though I am not so old—very often the Doctor came in and said: "What the patient needs is a little bit of kitchen medicine." If you are going to have that prescribed by the Doctor when he goes on his rounds and that medicine which is to come from the kitchen is not up to standard, then there is some justification for complaint. From enquires I have made, this complaint in regard to the food does not cast any reflection on any particular individual. Not so long ago a Committee sat and made certain recommendations, and I have no doubt that the time is fast approaching when most of those recommendations will be put into effect. Those recommendations embrace proper preparation, proper supervision and proper distribution of food in the institution. I think that is a matter which may well be enquired into by the hon. Director of Medical Services, because food plays an important part in the life of an hospital and I am sure that he will agree with me that it is not the correct thing to do for food to be carried in to patients from outside. As a matter of fact, I venture the opinion it may be somewhat dangerous. A relative not aware of the danger of the patient eating certain foods may take into the institution to him something detrimental to him. It therefore seems that the importance of supplying food that is palatable should not be easily overlooked.

So far as the nursing staff is concerned, I would like to say something about that. There are complaints and the chief one is: that there are not sufficient nurses to go around: The fear has been expressed, I speak subject to correction, that with the opening of the Best Hospital, which has necessitated the transfer of some nurses from the institution in Georgetown, the shortage of staff will be increased. Care of the sick necessitates nursing and I am sure this Council will agree with me that if there is a shortage in the nursing staff it should be remedied, and that as soon as possible. Not so long ago the hon. Mem-

ber for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) referred to "floor beds." That is something unfortunately existing for quite a number of years. The hospital is overcrowded and we cannot help ourselves until better days come. I do not know whether Your Excellency has read a letter which appeared some time ago in the Press. What was stated there was true. In the pauper wards there is not even a table to rest a cup on or a chair near the patient's bed. Some people in walking through those wards have had the unfortunate experience of seeing plates with food on the beds because there was nothing to rest them on. We have Handicraft Schools making tables. It will not take much money to ask them to make a couple of dozens of small tables to be put into the wards of the hospitals and thus afford some measure of comfort and relief to those people who have to go there. That is a general remark about the institution, but I would like to ask one or two questions so as to save time when we are going through the Estimates, and, if necessary, as far as I am concerned, take the whole *en bloc*.

I see you are going to appoint a Senior Clerk. I would like to know whether he is going to be stationed at one of the institutions or at the office of the Director of Medical Services, and whether it is proposed to abolish any other post and create the post of Senior Clerk.

The next question I would like to ask is—I may say I am not too familiar with the activities of the Department—whether item 14, "Approved Sanitary Works and Village Sanitation, \$3,000", on page 34 of the Estimates is a new item appearing for the second time. I take it that is a token vote and I would really like to know what it is for, although I have an idea that when there is an insanitary condition of a village application is made to the Director of Medical Services for some assistance to improve that condition. I wonder if that is so. The same remarks refer to item 15, "Government Lands and Compounds, \$2,000."

THE CHAIRMAN: I should like to take the Personal Emoluments section first, and then the hon. Member can raise his point on these other charges as they come along.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I was only asking for information. If the answers are satisfactory, as I believe they would be, as far as I am concerned you can take the whole Head *en bloc*.

Mr. SEAFORD: It is not often that any Head of Department gets any praise in this Council, but on this occasion I would like to congratulate the Head of this Department on the progress they have been able to achieve. In and out of season we have preached in this Council that far too much money is spent on curing and not enough on preventing disease. I see that steps are now being taken, which I consider though not a medical man, in the right direction. I see that money is to be spent on additional posts or health centres or clinics and for increased travelling by Health Officers. Any money spent on rural sanitation or on any health work of that kind is, I feel, money well invested. It is a much better investment to spend money on the prevention rather than the cure of disease. It is for that reason, I feel, that Government ought to be congratulated on taking the right aspect of the position at the present time.

Once again I would like it to be put on record, I am sure I will get the backing of the whole Council, our thanks to the Rockefeller Institute and their officers for the wonderful and good work they are doing in this Colony. We in this Colony feel that the benefits to be derived from their work are considerable and far-reaching, and we all appreciate it and would like to see that work extended to the country districts, but we know the time will come when that work must cease. It is therefore only meet and right that Government should spend money on training men to carry on that work which is so generously provided for us at this stage.

Mr. GONSALVES: The question of medical institutions has been raised here for many years. Some years ago a Committee was appointed to go into the question of our medical services. That report has been submitted some years ago and the difficulty all along has been one of money. Since then we have had several visits up to quite recently by Sir Frank Stockdale and Sir Rupert Briercliffe and they have submitted a report in connection with the Medical Services in this Colony. That

report or memorandum by Sir Rupert has been circulated and hon. Members of Council have had it. I think it must be regarded as very interesting so far as it deals with Medical Services in the Colony. There is no doubt that at one time the Hospital in Georgetown was anything but in a good condition. What is now proudly referred to as "Lady Thomson" Ward was known as the Seaman's Ward and its exterior might be compared with the building Your Excellency saw in the Rupununi District. The Seaman's Block was in a very bad condition.

I would like to refer to paragraph 38 of Sir Rupert's memorandum in which he says: "Some of the buildings of the Georgetown Public Hospital are in good condition (e.g. the new maternity wing, X-ray department and Laboratory) while others are fairly good (Seaman's Ward Lady Thomson Ward, V.D. Clinic) but many are very poor and will need early replacement (e.g. casualty rooms, out-patient department, mortuary, kitchen, laundry, isolation ward, children's ward). They are in a very bad condition and I wondered as I read the paragraph what he would have written if he had seen the one which had represented the old Seaman's Ward. I notice in that same report on page 16, paragraph 43, it has been made the subject of recommendation and one of the matters which will be attended to and will obtain the support of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. Conditions at the hospital have been fairly correctly stated. There is a lack of accommodation existing at the present time. While it is true the T. B. section of the hospital with the new institution opened at Best will provide a fair amount of accommodation, still quite recently I have been informed that there are still a good many patients who are kept in hospital in Georgetown. I do not know if the old complaint of having T. B. patients scattered about the hospital in Georgetown still continues. If that is so, then there should be some way of keeping those patients together and not have them scattered about the different wards. There again the question of a T. B. hospital is one which requires immediate attention, and I believe the money is being provided for that work. That is one of the things which should be proceeded with as early as possible. I know the hon. Director of Medical Services is very keen

and interested in this section of work and will give it his prompt attention.

With regard to the shortage of medical men in the hospital, in that report of the Medical Advisory to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies it will be found on reference to it that very full recommendations were made to supplement the existing services with more medical men. On the whole I think the report is one which will receive Your Excellency's kind support, and I am sure Your Excellency will do all you can to see those recommendations through.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to say that the hon. Member who has just taken his seat has referred to one or two passages in that report to which I had intended to make reference. We have heard of overcrowding in the hospital, I would like to hear from the hon. Director of Medical Services if some of that overcrowding is not caused by the intake from the Alms House. I speak subject to correction. I do not think anything was said in Sir Rupert Briercliffe's memorandum in relation to the Alms House. I would also like to hear from the hon. Director of Medical Services whether he considers the Alms House is situated in the best site at the present moment in Georgetown. We have been told it cannot be removed because of the expense involved. If that institution is in any way interfering with the functions of the Public Hospital and it is felt that some other means should be placed at the disposal of the Medical Authorities, or it is felt that the system of Poor Relief should be changed and the Alms House be kept for those persons with permanent incurable diseases, or whether it is time to adopt a system of Working-House, it does seem to me—I have been told so repeatedly and I have been told so here by the hon. Director of Medical Services—that part of the congestion at the Georgetown Hospital is caused by the cases from the Alms House. I would just like to say *en passant* that while in this Colony we are always apt to be self derogatory, Sir Rupert has stated in his report that as regards urban housing, conditions in this Colony are not as acute as in most towns of the West Indian Colonies. Although I am sure that the matter will receive attention I am asking that

it receives urgent attention in view of the fact that housing condition in the City particularly is circumscribed by a halo of building regulations which were put into force the other day. That is in regard to legislation copied from other parts without consideration of local convenience. One appreciates the fact that corrugated iron cannot be used, but have we not local woods and a certain amount of intelligence in this Colony? Why not make it all-embracing and use local wood?

THE CHAIRMAN: The regulations only apply to imported materials.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am glad to hear that. I am speaking subject to correction. If I remember correctly it is the purchase of new wood that should be exempted. I am going to ask when matters of that kind are going to be considered by Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not want to interrupt the hon. Member. We are considering the Medical Estimates. Is it necessary to bring in housing in Georgetown? I do not want to stop the hon. Member bringing it before the Council, but I want him to keep on the immediate point.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I have only mentioned it because it was mentioned in the Medical Adviser's report. I have discussed it with the hon. Colonial Secretary and certain amendments are to be made.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Amendments for the reduction of \$320 to \$120 in respect of imported materials are coming in to-morrow.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: As that paragraph came into the report, if any of those things are going to be considered, some consideration should be paid to those who may have to control that. There is another point. I am glad to see that Sir Rupert Briercliffe appreciates the fact that a piped pure water supply for the towns and well water supply for the rural areas are very essential. I hope attention will be given to that.

Dr. MACLENNAN (Director of Medical Services): Sir, I think most of the criticisms that have been levelled were against the Public Hospital, Georgetown, and most of the criticisms were to some

extent justifiable. This hospital Your Excellency has not yet seen, and I am afraid that when you do you will be very greatly disappointed. It has been built up piecemeal over a great number of years and actually has a public road running through the institution compound. The whole compound is so far taken up with buildings and there is at the moment no room to put any new buildings. Most of the trouble lies in the administration of the hospital. Nurses going from one end of the compound to the other have to cross the public road and the same thing happens in the case of Medical Officers. Food and other necessities have to be carried across the public road, as the kitchen, laundry and other essential services are not centrally situated. It simply cannot be helped because the hospital has grown up in that manner.

As you know, sir, we have a recommendation from Sir Rupert Briercliffe that we should get here an architect, a very distinguished member of a firm of hospital architects in England, who incidentally built the St. George's Hospital and is at present in Trinidad planning and designing a new hospital for Port of Spain. I was fortunate in seeing the new plans for that hospital and also in seeing the work on the new plans for housing conditions in Trinidad being carried out. I was very greatly impressed with the programme which is being carried out there. It is an extremely well designed hospital on modern lines. I was able to persuade Sir Frank Stockdale to secure the services of that architect to come here and plan for a new hospital because I feel that things have come to an impasse. Even if the money is provided for the erection of a new kitchen in the compound you cannot do it as there is nowhere to build it. We are going to have that architect here shortly, and I hope that he will be able to plan for us a new hospital which will have to be built over a period of years. We will also have to acquire new land for the purpose. It may not come about until after the war, but we will have the plans and know where we are.

As regards the points raised by hon. Members about shortage of staff, food supplies, etc., occasionally, I think, there is a shortage of medical staff at the public hospital. When they are all there it is all right, but from time to time an officer has

to go out either to relieve someone on sick leave or on a special mission. I feel that sometimes they are a little hard pressed. Since I came here three years ago, we have increased the medical staff by four Assistant Medical Officers, two of whom are stationed at the Public Hospital Georgetown, but unfortunately at the moment we have fewer on account of illness. The Government Bacteriologist is also absent on leave and he has had to be relieved. The hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) made the suggestion that private practitioners in Georgetown might assist in the hospital. I have not actually discussed that point with the Resident Surgeon of the hospital, but I think it will be a little difficult to carry out because of the difficulty of hours and organization in respect of hospital wards. It is possible that they might assist in the Out-Patient department because that has got completely out of hand. I shall certainly give that matter consideration and let the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo know what possibility there is of obtaining the services of some of the private practitioners in the town. Some time ago we had a part-time appointment made to be put on the Estimates for an Assistant Venereal Disease Officer at the hospital. The practitioner had to go in for a few hours, but we could not arrange it satisfactorily. I shall give the matter further consideration.

As regards overcrowding at the hospital this was a problem long before I came here and it is still here. The great trouble is that we have a great number of indigent cases, which are really Alms House cases. The Alms House is overcrowded and they come to the hospital at night and have to be taken in, and as a result very often we unfortunately have to put them on "floor" beds since no beds are available. The only way we can deal with that is to provide extra accommodation, and that comes down to the question of a new hospital again. Unless, as the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) suggested, you make some addition to the Alms House or build some other accommodation, I am afraid we cannot give the matter any consideration.

As regards food for the patients in the hospital, I think that the food that is purchased is all right and that the question

must be one of cooking and transport in the hospital. The kitchen is unfortunately in an old antiquated building which we have tried to renovate but it is not sufficiently good for modern cooking. I honestly feel that the equipment is not up-to-date and I would like to see modern equipment in a big hospital like that. When I came to the Colony I had many complaints about the food in the hospital, and I had appointed a local young woman trained in Domestic Science in America to the staff. She has been dealing up to now with the food for the nursing staff. I propose, in reply to the hon. Member, asking her to devote her activities to the food for the patients. I give the assurance that I will go into the question myself and see if some improvement cannot be effected.

In reply to the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob), at the last session of the Legislature he drew attention to many defects at the hospital, particularly in regard to the shortage of beds, overcrowding and equipment. I have dealt with some of those, but for his information I may say that the Public Works Department has resumed work on the southern block and very shortly the whole of that block will be occupied. That will relieve the overcrowding, and the removal of fifteen Tuberculosis cases to the Best Sanatorium will further relieve the hospital to some extent. I hope shortly to be in a position to say that the hospital is not unduly overcrowded. No one can foresee, but if we get an epidemic we will be in a very bad way. I however, hope for the best.

As regards the other question raised by the hon. Member for North-Western District—the question of a nurse in his constituency—I am sorry the one who was there as a subsidised midwife decided not to remain there. These women depend on private practice, and very little of that is there for her to obtain at the moment. I am getting the clinic of the Infant Welfare and Maternity League at Mabaruma to see if they cannot find a nurse in the district. I would like to see the nurse travelling on the river in the dispenser's launch. I promise the hon. Member to give the matter every attention.

The point was raised by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. DeAguiar)

as to whether the nursing staff at the Best Sanatorium had not caused a decrease in the staff at the Georgetown Public Hospital. That is not so. The complete staff of the Best Sanatorium was appointed before and had been at the Public Hospital undergoing training. In answer to the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) I hope we will be able to get all our existing T. B. cases conveniently into the Best Sanatorium, but it must be remembered that the Best Sanatorium cannot house all the Tuberculosis cases in the Colony. From time to time cases from the districts are brought into the Public Hospital, Georgetown, which have not been diagnosed as such and it takes some time to do so. We will have from time to time suspect cases in the Public Hospital, Georgetown, until we know they are Tuberculosis cases. We do our best to segregate such cases in the hospital in Georgetown.

I would like to thank the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) for his very helpful remarks, and I should like to make a few general remarks before I close. It may be considered that the expenditure side of this Department has been expanding at a terrific rate during the last six years, but there are one or two reasons for that. I shall try to explain briefly what they are. The first cause of the increase is on the preventive side of medicine. As you know, it is the policy in the British Empire to develop that side. When I came to the Colony first I found the Health Department on its own and run by an officer called "Government Medical Officer of Health" I found that things were not altogether satisfactory, as the hon. Member for Central Demerara said. The amalgamation of the departments for better administration was carried out and the Government Medical Officer of Health became Deputy Director of Medical Services. That has unquestionably improved the administration. The first cause is an increase under preventive services, and that increase may be briefly summarised as follows—

- (a) A new Health Officer for Tuberculosis;
- (b) One additional County Sanitary Inspector (Essequebo);
- (c) Ten District Sanitary Inspectors;
- (d) Two Inspectors of Midwives;

(e) Eight Health Visitors for Health Centres.

In addition a Malaria Investigation Unit costing approximately \$15,000 per annum and an Anti-malaria Campaign costing approximately \$43,000 per annum, for which originally we got a Colonial Development Fund grant but we are now paying for ourselves. Incidentally one of the recommendations of Sir Rupert Briercliffe is a grant under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act towards Yellow Fever Prevention Services during a period of a few years.

On the curative side there have been also considerable increases by the following appointments:—

- 1 Mental Specialist ;
- 1 Senior Physician ;
- 1 Assistant Surgeon & Gynaecologist ;
- 1 Venereal Diseases Officer ;
- 1 Ear, Nose & Throat Officer.

These were existing appointments in the Service made Specialist Officers because they are specialists in their particular sphere. In addition the medical staff has been augmented by the addition of four Assistant Medical Officers. An important increase has been due to amelioration of the conditions of service for nurses and subordinate hospital staffs. New salary scales were introduced from January, 1939, involving increased expenditure of some \$50,000, and in addition we have war bonus averaging \$20,000 per annum.

I just want to refer to some of the instances which fall on the Public Works budget and which do require staff and equipment, as they do show how the Department has been developed. In the last few years we have had a new Sanatorium at Best; a new Maternity Wing, a new Venereal Diseases Ward, and a new Mental Observation Ward at the Public Hospital, Georgetown, a new Casualty Post at Charity, Pomeroy; a new Dispensary at No. 1 Canal Polder, a Dispensary Station at Kurupukari, Rupununi; Hospital extensions (including electric lighting) at Bartica; Maternity Home at Ida Sabina; improved Nurses' Hostels at Suddie, Bartica and Mabaruma; staffing the Leprosy Hospital with Religious Sisters; and minor improvements at most institutions. A lot of these buildings and works are new and require new equipment and increased staff.

But the greatest increases are caused by increased prices due to war conditions and greatly increased numbers applying for treatment at all institutions. Dietary has gone up; we cannot control it and it is completely out of our hands unless something is done to control prices. Clothing and Bedding have gone up in price, also Drugs and Medical Appliances of which we have to send supplies to various stations in the Interior. The price of X-ray films has gone up and also laboratory equipment, and we have also taken over the payment of doles to discharged inmates of the Leprosy Hospital, which usually fell on the Poor Law vote. With increased personnel and extended services the travelling done by Officers in the course of their duties is greatly increased involving considerable increase in expenditure. The increase in expenditure while it appears great is reflected in the work done by the Department.

There is one other matter I would like to state which may interest hon. Members of Council, and that is, in the last two years, 1939-1940, from the medical statistics available—the medical statistics go back to the year 1869—we have the lowest death rate and infantile mortality rate ever recorded in the history of the Colony. I will not say it is due to the activities of my Department as there are other factors, but I think the Department and my predecessor should be given some credit for bringing the rate down. I also think this Legislative Council has some say in the matter, because it has been so generous in the way it supported the Medical vote.

Mr. LEE: I know it cannot be done now as I have discussed it with a Medical Officer, but I am asking Government to consider whether at some future date the Medical Officer who is being sent to Leguan and Wakenaan can be made permanent at Leguan or Wakenaan as early as possible, and whether there can be a further extension of the Bartica Hospital, one side of which has been extended and the other side left undone. I am asking Government to consider these two things as early as possible and that the hon. Director of Medical Services take note of them.

Dr. MACLENNAN: Government had considered very carefully the question of a Medical Officer for Leguan and found that it could not be managed this year. I intend going into the question carefully this year and I promise the hon. Member to do so. The hon. Member had asked me about certain clinics and I do intend to make a survey. I think the hon. Member will get a Medical Officer there eventually. The question of the extra wing for the Bartica Hospital has unfortunately to be cut out as it is felt that it will be very expensive and Government cannot afford it at the moment. It will, however, be first on the estimates for 1943.

THE CHAIRMAN: I endorse the remarks of the hon. Member for Georgetown North that the money spent on preventive work is money well spent, and I thank the hon. Director of Medical Services for his answers to the various questions raised.

Lead passed without amendment.

MEDICAL—HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.

Item (3)—Warden, Leprosy Hospital (\$912 by \$48 to \$1,200)—\$980.

Mr. LEE: I have asked certain questions about this Warden's qualification. There is this discontent about it—this man has been pitch-forked into this post above others in the Service who are entitled and more qualified.

Dr. MACLENNAN: The hon. Member had put forward some questions at the recent session of the Legislature. I think the answers given were very full on that point.

Mr. LEE: The question was not fully answered.

THE CHAIRMAN: Put another question.

Item—Warden, Mental Hospital (\$1,140 x \$60—\$1,440),—\$1,140.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move the insertion of a new sub-item in the Estimate—“(a) Warden, Mental Hospital, \$1,140—the scale being \$1,140 by \$60 to \$1,440. A Departmental Committee recently reported in regard to

one or two questions raised concerning the Mental Hospital, and one of the recommendations submitted to Government was that there should be a Warden attached to that institution just as there is a warden attached to the Mahaica Hospital. I hope the hon. Members will see their way to support the insertion of this item.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-items (4) to (23) as printed were renumbered (5) to (24).

Item 1 (8)—Matron and Assistant Matrons, \$6,480.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) desires to call the attention of the Council to the fact that this item is placed above the line. From the explanatory note it will be seen that there is no necessity for the continuance of their contracts of engagement, and placing their posts above the line they will be subjected to pension rights in lieu of return passages under their contract.

Dr. MACLENNAN: The explanation is given in the Explanatory Memorandum on the Estimates. I think that to read it will be better than trying to explain. I will therefore read it for the benefit of those hon. Members who have not done so:

As from the 1st January, 1940, a unified Colonial Nursing Service was brought into existence. This service aims at establishing a system of intercolonial transfers of experienced Nursing Sisters in place of the existing system of engagement on agreement for three years of Nursing Sisters without, in many instances, any experience in the Colonies. Nursing Sisters are at present eligible for pensions by virtue of section 63 of the Medical Services (Consolidation) Ordinance, Chapter 186. This special Ordinance was enacted, as under the provisions of the then current Pensions Ordinance (Chapter 204) these Sisters could not secure any superannuation benefits in respect of their limited periods of service in the Colony, but with the enactment of the Pensions Ordinance, 1933, which specially provides for “continuous service” pensions, this difficulty has disappeared, and it is proposed that in future Nursing Sisters—to be styled Matrons, the designation more generally applied to such posts—shall come under the provisions of this Ordinance. The benefits of the Pensions Ordinance, 1933, in certain cases prove less generous than those afforded by Chapter 186 which fixed an arbitrary rate of pension for all ranks of Nursing Sisters not in any way related to the amount of the individual's salary.

It is proposed that the salaries of the

Matron and Assistant Matrons be increased by \$120 per annum to compensate them for loss of return passages to the United Kingdom at Government's expense, to which they are entitled under the existing system.

The position is this : Under the Medical Services (Consolidation) Ordinance, they are entitled to pension and consequently they have to be put above the line. A very slight increase is given them in salary, as under the terms of their contract they are entitled to passages and they will be losing that right now coming under the Colonial Nursing Service system. Actually it is costing nothing to the Colony at all. It is the request of the Secretary of State for the Colonies and I do not feel that British Guiana should refuse it.

THE CHAIRMAN : The explanation seems very full.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I take it that when they are going on leave no passages will be paid.

Dr. MACLENNAN : No.

Item 20—Rent of buildings, \$600.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I move that the amount be increased by \$240 and carried out at \$840. The additional £50 is required to cover the rental of a building at Plantation Mara, East Bank, Berbice, at present used as a hospital. The rental is for one year on the clear understanding that Government will not be responsible for repairs and maintenance of the building. Government proposes to offer a rental of £50 per year for the use of the building in 1942.

Question put, and agreed to.

MILITIA.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I would like to call Government's attention to an anomaly that has just struck me. I do not like to be personal and I hope it is not going to be thought that I am making any plea for any particular officer. What strikes me as rather peculiar is that the Bandmaster gets a salary of \$1,680 per annum and under "Police" the Warrant Officers get the same emolument. The one holds the higher rank of a Captain as a member of

the Local Forces. It does seem to me an anomaly, and I suggest that Government appoint a small committee of Electives or Officials for the purpose of going into cases of anomalies of this kind. You will appreciate that it is peculiar to have a Captain in your Militia and Warrant Officers in your Police Force being paid the same emolument and in some cases the latter get more.

THE CHAIRMAN : That is a special term of appointment, but he gets fees out of the engagements of the Band in addition to his substantive salary.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : Negligible amount ! I doubt whether he gets \$40 a year. I would ask you, sir, to consider that.

THE CHAIRMAN : It is a new point to me and I promise to look into the matter.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : And perhaps see that the salaries be graded according to rank.

THE CHAIRMAN : I will have it looked into.

MINISTERS OF RELIGION.

Grants to Missions.

THE CHAIRMAN : There is a proposal to make grants to Missions dealing with Aboriginal Indians. I suggest that we take it under the Head "Miscellaneous" and leave this Head as it stands.

Head passed without amendment.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 3—Public Printing regulated by Contract, \$41,400.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I move that the amount be increased by \$1,200 and carried out at \$42,600. The increase is due to the increased cost of paper, the additional number of forms to be provided under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance and Firearms Ordinance, the printing of statistics in connection with the Education Department and the additional number of copies of the *Official Gazette*

and bound copies of Ordinances which had to be included in the contract for 1942. Only one firm has tendered and, I think, we are lucky if we escape with an increase of only \$1,200 over this year's figure.

Mr. JACOB: We have heard of increases but not of the reduction of the various reports etc., printed. I think they have been very definitely curtailed, and I was hoping that with the curtailment of printing of those reports, less paper being used and less time spent in setting them up in print, there would have been a reduction in this vote.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Some of the reports are not being printed and others have been reduced, but in spite of that, the cost of paper having gone up considerably, the vote cannot be reduced as we cannot continue to cut down the reports any further. It will be noticed that the approved estimate for 1941 is less than the actual expenditure for 1940. Some reports have to be printed as the result of instructions from the other side. I can give the hon. Member figures if he will call at my office.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest that we do not print the debates of this Council. Nine-tenths of our debates are not constructive.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I was going to suggest to the hon. Member for North-Western District, who is so anxious about curtailing facts, that much time is wasted in his voluminous references to various resolutions passed by 99 per cent. of the community,

THE CHAIRMAN: Do not let us get on to that subject.

Mr. JACOB: That is not a very fair comment. I am not an interested party in this matter. I am looking at it from the public point of view. A circular was sent around and I was there called upon to say whether certain reports should not be printed and others curtailed. I was therefore looking forward to a reduction of the vote.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item 4—Additional Printing not under Contract, \$725.

Mr. JACOB: No explanation has been given. What additional work is referred to?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Additional work not under the Contract has to be paid for. We are not asking for an increase of the vote.

Mr. SEAFORD: That includes replies to questions asked in this Council. Definitely the cost of printing answers to questions in 1941 had increased as the result of the volume.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is under contract?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes!

Mr. SEAFORD: If the hon. Colonial Secretary is given an undertaking by the hon. Member that he will cut down his questions by 99 per cent., that will cut down the estimate considerably.

Mr. LEE: If we get polite answers to our letters we will not ask questions.

Item 15—Wakenaam—Leguan Launch Service Subsidy, \$300.

Mr. LEE: The launch service between Wakenaam and Leguan is very useful. This subsidy was granted some years ago. What I am suggesting is that the Government having given a 10 per cent. War Bonus may see its way to give it on that subsidy.

Mr. JACOB: I beg to support that application. There is no other service there in the event that one has to travel early in the morning or late at night. The cost of supplies and other things has gone up and, I think, it is a very reasonable request.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am afraid Government will have to consider the other subsidies at the same time.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Speaking from memory this is a contract entered into with the Transport Board of Commissioners. Government has only

increased wages by 10 per cent. not contracts, and as far as I know no question was raised by Contractors.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: What the hon. Member is speaking about is the increased cost of petrol. There are small contractors who are unable to bear the increased cost of materials.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is so, but I cannot remember any application having been made in respect of this contract. There are other members of the Transport Board here and they, I think, can say that this is the first we have heard of this suggestion.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no reason why Government should move an increase without a recommendation from the Board.

Mr. MACKEY: The hon. Colonial Secretary is Chairman of the Board and he says that no application was made to the Board by the Contractor for a 10 per cent. increase. In the ordinary course of events if he finds that supplies have gone up in price he can apply to the Board and they will deal with it. In my opinion this is not a matter for this Council as the contract is between the person running the service and the Transport Department.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am not prepared to accept a motion for an increase.

Mr. JACOB: To a point of order! We have not reached the Transport and Harbours Department as yet.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am prepared not to accept an amendment to increase the amount at the moment. It may come up later in another way.

Item 23—Tourist Bureau and advertisement of the Colony in Canada and elsewhere, \$4,800.

Mr. JACOB: Last year I raised the point as to whether this whole item should not be deleted, and a strong case was made out that it was necessary to spend \$2,880. I see now the amount has been increased to \$4,800. I think that under existing conditions the previous amount should be made to suffice. I feel that at the most only \$2,880 should be voted this year.

Dr. SINGH: I am asking for the deletion of this item. No tourists are coming to this country now. In Trinidad they have suspended it altogether, as far as I have heard.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: This vote is necessary. It was carefully gone into by the Tourist Committee. I am a member of that Committee, and while we reluctantly had to ask for the increase we felt it might be necessary in the circumstances from representations made by us and certain requests made from New York for information. We have nothing to supply them with, and people abroad are keen to know where this place is. This amount is hardly sufficient to supply the needs and requirements of the requests for information about this Colony. I do not know if hon. Members move around enough instead of going about their own constituencies to pass resolutions. If they do they must hear what those people who come to this Colony have to say about this Colony and the ignorance shown about this Colony. One person to whom I was talking said that when he got to Trinidad and referred to this Colony they wondered what he is coming here for and told him he should not give up three days to come here as this place is only full of crocodiles. That is the kind of information given. There is much demand for information in New York.

Mr. SEAFORD: I have been in the past rather against this Bureau and when this vote was increased I took the trouble to find out why. I have been informed that it is not really an increase. It is only putting the vote back to where it was before. It used to be \$4,800 and the Tourist Committee thought it might be cut down. They are having great demands for information of this Colony, more than before, and one reason as far as that is concerned is the friendly invasion which is going on at the present moment. The Colony has become much more known and spoken about, and a good many people are enquiring for information. It is to meet that demand the extra amount is required.

Mr. GONSALVES: This representation for an increase of the vote was made some time ago. I have not heard the hon. Member say whether the Committee has

considered it in the light of recent events. I know that when I was a member of the Committee there was not enough money to spend in connection with this work, but conditions were different then. I do not think the hon. Member said what the Committee's views are. I suggest that the Committee accept the original amount of \$2,880 for this year. If and when conditions improve we can then see what may be done.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: For the information of the hon. Member I may say that the Committee had taken into consideration all angles of the subject and, as the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) said, it was at our own request that the amount was reduced because we felt we could have carried on with a lesser amount. We now find that it is impossible to carry on with that sum without closing down everything. I would like to add that both of our agents in New York and Canada have been very good to us as regards their own emoluments and, I think, we have to thank them considerably in relation to that. It means closing down the whole thing entirely if this increase is not given.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to intervene in this discussion because I have information from the New York end more than any hon. Member here has. I do not think the matter should be judged merely in the light of tourist traffic at the moment. That happens to be the name, but I take it from a wider angle. As the hon. Member for Georgetown North has said, through the Anglo-American co-operation we have come enormously in the American eye in the United States of America particularly and a good deal in Canada, this last year. I have been in New York ten days in July and for another ten days in October and can testify to the amount of work that is being done there at the British Guiana Bureau, which is housed incidentally in the Consul-General's Office. I know that a great deal of work is being done and from what the Consulate is giving and getting British Guiana is getting a lot of service which, if reckoned in exact dollars, I would not like to say. There is a big demand for information of all kinds from Military Contractors, Mining Companies and individuals. A good deal is hoped for the future of the

Colony, so I should myself think that it is not anything which turns on evaluation in dollars and we should support the vote as it stands. I think a good deal is being done and that a good deal will be got out of it.

Mr. LEE: We accept Your Excellency's assurance.

Item 24—Labour Registration Bureau, \$540.

Mr. JACOB: I beg to move the deletion of this item. When we were considering the Lands and Mines Department estimates an explanation was given and as a result an amount of \$900 was allowed to remain for the payment of a Registering Officer under that Department's vote. I do not know whether Government will insist that this \$540 remain. I think it is the same officer performing the two duties, and I urge very strongly, if for no other reason than that labour should be under one head, that this item be deleted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope that the item will be accepted especially by the hon. Members who represent Georgetown. If this item is deleted the Registration Bureau will be closed down. Unemployed people who are registered there and get employment on public works will not be able to do so. I realize that the hon. Member's constituency is not affected. If this vote is deleted the Registration Bureau will be closed.

Mr. JACOB: I do not like the trend of those remarks. You have just instituted a Labour Department. Let the registration of labourers be confined to that Department. Let this Bureau be closed. I think it is a wise thing to do.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I admit that sometimes the hon. Member's remarks may be quite good and to which no one may take umbrage.

Mr. JACOB (interrupting): To a point of order! I object to these kinds of remarks.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: What I am suggesting is that the hon. Member means not that the item should be deleted but that it be transferred to the Labour Department vote as it is in respect of labour.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think Government is quite prepared to do that when we

have the Labour Department going. In the meantime the Department of Lands Mines who is running it will continue to do so until the Labour Department is formed.

Mr. JACOB: You have under Labour Department three Inspectors of Labour apart from the Commissioner of Labour and the Assistant Commissioner of Labour and a Clerical Establishment. Cannot those people who will be employed keep the register of labourers?

THE CHAIRMAN: We are prepared to do that when the Department is formed.

Mr. JACOB: This vote is from January and the Labour Department is coming into effect from January.

THE CHAIRMAN: It will not be coming into operation for some months in next year. When the new officers come out they will have to be given time to turn around before saddling them with the functions of the Department.

Item 26—Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, \$1,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$550, the excess to cover compensation previously charged under the head of the Department in which the workmen were employed when the accident occurred. We have been advised that this item should now appear under Miscellaneous.

Mr. LEE: When a workman desires a certificate to show his employer he has to pay for that certificate, which of course is very wrong, and when he brings his case in the Magistrate's Court and he summons a Government medical officer as a witness he has to pay that officer. Government medical officers insist on payment of a fee of \$5 before their evidence is given. I am asking Government to direct that all medical certificates given to workmen under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, which have to be submitted to their employers and tendered in Court, should be free.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not know if the hon. Member desires to confine his remarks to workmen's compensation cases. He knows that it is a common occurrence in the Magistrate's Court that a litigant has to pay for a medical certificate.

Mr. LEE: I confine my remarks to workmen's compensation cases.

THE CHAIRMAN: In my last Colony the medical officer was made to do the work without fee.

Dr. MACLENAN (Director of Medical Services): Government medical officers are fully employed and I do not think it is fair to ask them to do without their fees when they attend Court to give evidence.

THE CHAIRMAN: I heard exactly the same argument in another Colony when it was put upon them. They grumbled, but it was done.

Mr. WIGHT: Government medical officers are allowed private practice and fees are part of their perquisites, especially in the outlying districts. I think the question of abolishing private practice should be gone into.

THE CHAIRMAN: A Government medical officer is employed primarily as a Government servant and may be allowed private practice where it does not interfere with his work.

Dr. MACLENAN: Is it Government work, sir? Some of these cases occur at Mackenzie where there is no Government medical officer. One must be consistent about these things. I cannot give an answer to-day. Perhaps the hon. Member must suggest that lawyers' fees might be waived too. (laughter).

Mr. LEE: A workman has not the means to pay a medical officer to give evidence and he may lose the compensation he is entitled to. Is Government going to allow a workman to lose his compensation because of the lack of medical evidence? Government has made provision in the Ordinance that process should be free, and if a case is defended the lawyer is awarded a fee which the opposite party has to pay. I am asking that Government medical officers should not be allowed to charge fees for certificates and giving evidence.

Mr. SEAFORD: Is the hon. Member referring to Government employees or all employees?

Mr. GONSALVES: To start proceedings the workman has to pay a filing fee which is taxed as costs afterwards.

Mr. LEE: The commencement of proceedings in the Magistrate's Court is free, but the workman has to cite witnesses in support of his claim for compensation. A medical officer has to be cited as a witness, and he demands a fee of \$5 to give evidence.

Mr. WIGHT: Sometimes.

Mr. GONSAIVES: Then in one case I had Government obtained money from me by fraud because I paid a fee at the Magistrate's Office. When the hon. Member says that process is free he is not well informed.

THE CHAIRMAN: I take it that if the workman succeeds he gets his costs.

Mr. LEE: Yes, sir, when costs are taxed the Magistrate can award costs. I have two cases now before the Magistrate's Court in which there was free process.

Mr. MACKEY: I hold no brief whatever for the medical officers although I owed my life to a medical officer on more than one occasion. I fail to see why a person who is claiming compensation and wants a certificate should not pay for it just as any employee of a commercial firm who has to send a medical certificate to show why he is absent from work.

Mr. JACOB: I think I understand the position. A workman is injured and has to produce evidence before a Magistrate in order to get compensation. In the presentation of that evidence he has to get a medical certificate from a medical officer. My hon. friend is pleading that that certificate be granted free in the first instance. When the case is decided the medical officer would get his fee from the Court unless the workman loses his case. In the first instance the injured man has not \$5 to pay for the certificate. I think it is a reasonable request. All it amounts to is that the medical officer would have to wait a little time for his fee. In some cases I know that the medical officer refused to give evidence unless a fee of \$5 was presented. The assistance of the Director of Medical Services is being asked in the matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will have the matter taken up. In the meantime we

cannot very well say anything about the figure, so I propose to put the item as amended and have the point taken up separately.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

COST OF LIVING SURVEY.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new sub-head 28—Cost of living survey in Georgetown and its suburbs, \$5,200. It is proposed to appoint a Committee comprised of representatives of the Mayor and Town Council, the Medical Department, and the Trade Unions, to consider the details of a scheme for carrying out a cost of living survey among working class families in Georgetown and its suburbs. It is proposed:—

(a) that 1,500 families be paid 60 cents each for keeping the necessary records of expenditure—\$900; (b) 500 families to be paid 60 cents each for supplying additional information regarding expenditure on clothing—\$300; (c) remuneration of investigators (6) for supervising and assisting in the preparation of the records of expenditure during a period of 4 months—\$1,200; (d) remuneration of investigators for supervising and assisting in the preparation of the records of expenditure on clothing—\$300; (e) printing of forms—\$120; (f) supervision (Statistical Officer)—\$600; (g) miscellaneous expenditure (*i.e.* Clerical Assistance etc.)—\$580.

Item put, and agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS— (a) SUBVENTIONS, ETC., MUNICIPAL.

Item 1—Estimated rates on Government properties, \$59,452.

Mr. JACOB: Last year I raised the question of the rates on Government properties in Georgetown. I do not wish to repeat what I said, but the position is very unsatisfactory in regard to the entire rating system. I see that a Bill is to be brought forward shortly, but whether it is going to remedy the anomalies which are bringing great benefits to certain individuals and firms I do not know. The fact remains that certain individuals and firms have benefited tremendously—to the extent of thousands of dollars—owing to the system in operation now. It seems impossible to get through certain things in this Council, but I am looking forward to the day when that impossibility will be removed forever.

I do not know what impression Your

Excellency formed on the occasion of your visit to New Amsterdam, but I am distressed to think of the insanitary condition of the town. It is unfortunate that no Member representing Berbice is present to-day. The water system in the town is a disgrace. The water has an abominable smell and the same applies to the drains which are in a filthy condition. I do not know what goes on in that town. I think if the members of the Municipality took an example from Georgetown the town of New Amsterdam would benefit tremendously. I had a chat with residents of the town who told me that the water system was really a disgrace. When a tap is turned the water comes out with an abominable smell and it is used for domestic purposes. I cannot understand how such a state of affairs can be allowed to exist.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: With regard to the hon. Member's remarks about the Town Council's rating system the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) who happens to be an ex-Mayor will hear me out when I say that we are endeavouring to create a new system. I do not subscribe to the hon. Member's view that certain people are benefiting as against others because they are privileged. So far the citizens of Georgetown have shown a great deal of wisdom in not allowing the hon. Member to get on the Town Council.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member should read Sir Rupert Briercliffe's report. There are earth drains in New Amsterdam and in a flat country like this it is almost impossible to keep them free of water. The result is that sanitation is bound to be bad. It is only fair to the New Amsterdam Town Council to say that they have not the money to help themselves at present.

Mr. GONSALVES: With reference to the question of the rating system in Georgetown and the Bill dealing with it I would like to mention that that Bill has been published for general information with the hope that members of the community who have any views on the subject might express them to Government so that Government would have an opportunity to consider them when the Bill is under consideration. It is not an unusual

thing in this Colony to have Bills published and to hear of opposition to them after they have been passed. I do hope for the sake of the citizens of Georgetown and property-owners that that will not be the experience in this instance. Those persons who feel that the method of assessment suggested in the Bill is unworkable or unsuitable, and that the other system is preferable, should not wait until the Bill is passed to say so. There have been many complain's about the inequity of the rates, and so far as I have known myself there have been inequalities. In some cases properties have been assessed far higher than their values while in other cases they are under assessed. All sorts of suggestions have been made which are not uncommon in matters of that kind, but I do hope that the method of assessment is receiving attention.

With regard to conditions in New Amsterdam I understood the hon. Member to suggest that if the members of New Amsterdam Town Council saw conditions in Georgetown they would be able to make some improvement in their town. It is at any rate some satisfaction to members of the Georgetown Town Council at least to hear that the Municipality has done some good for the citizens of Georgetown.

Mr. JACOB: I made no comment as regards the Bill which has been published. My remarks referred to the existing rating system, and I was glad to hear the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) agreeing with what I said.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 4—Contribution towards King George V. Municipal Welfare Centre, \$2,500.

Mr. LEE: What portion of this amount is allotted to milk distribution?

Dr. MACLENNAN: The amount is \$1,000.

Item put, and agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS—(b) SUBVENTIONS, etc., OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL.

Item 24—Recruitment and Training of Officers for Colonial Agricultural Departments, \$1,372.

Mr. C.V. WIGHT: I would like to draw attention to the fact that there is an officer now in the employ of the Town Council who went away for studies, secured a diploma and returned to the Colony, but it was impossible to find him a job. When he came back the Department of Agriculture could not find him a job, but he eventually obtained a part-time job with the Town Council who have been able to increase his emoluments to a small extent. If this Colony is sending its sons away to secure diplomas some provision should be made for them to secure jobs of some sort on their return. The Department of Agriculture is increasing daily, yet young men who go away and qualify are unable to obtain employment.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do they enter into any contract to serve the Government on their return?

Mr. McDAVID: No, sir.

Mr. WIGHT: The young man I refer to left the Colony on the recommendation of a highly placed Government official and he met one of Your Excellency's predecessors in Trinidad who spoke to him very encouragingly. He continued his studies but on his return he was only able to secure a part-time job with the Town Council at \$40 per month, but recently we were able to give him a small increase.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If Government has to guarantee employment and there is no vacancy nobody would benefit by the scheme.

Dr. SINGH: There are several other students who qualified in Trinidad and returned to the Colony but could not get employment although nominated by Government. Yet we find that qualified men from the neighbouring Islands come here and obtain employment. That is a sore question which was debated here some time ago when the Hon. Mr. Austin took a prominent part in the debate.

Mr. SEAFORD: This recommendation was made at the request of the student; Government did not undertake to find him employment. I do not see how it could.

Mr. WIGHT: This man came back some years ago and applied to Government for employment. I defy the Colonial Secretary or the Director of Agriculture to say that within the last seven or eight years no vacancy has occurred in the Department of Agriculture at \$40 per

month to which he could have been appointed. The hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) is right in saying that there are several other cases of this kind.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If Government has to guarantee that a person who qualifies would receive an appointment and no vacancy can be foreseen it might be that no recommendation would be made to Government to send a student away. I do not know who is the individual referred to.

Mr. LEE: When local boys go away at Government expense and get diplomas they should be given preference when they return.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would be going too far to guarantee them jobs.

Mr. LEE: I say they should be given preference.

THE CHAIRMAN: I agree with that. I will go into the matter with the Director of Agriculture.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 61—Contribution towards expenses of Aggrey House, \$240.

Mr. JACOB: I observe that the explanatory note says: "Increased contribution was made for a period of three years only." I do not know whether the parties concerned have been informed that it will not be continued. I am not acquainted with all the facts but I want to say that this place has been doing very good service to young men from British Guiana, especially during war time. It has acted as a sort of headquarters. I wonder whether any special request has been made to Government—

THE CHAIRMAN: No special request has been made, and as far as we know they are carrying on all right, but the Colonial Secretary will communicate to the Council the substance of a telegram received within the last few days.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A telegram was received on December 9 by Your Excellency from the Secretary of State which states:—

"The question of the reorganization of Aggrey House and of its future after the expiry of the lease of the present house in March, 1943, has been considered by a Colonial Office Committee, but it has been found necessary to defer consideration of their recommendations. Meanwhile Aggrey House continues to serve as

useful purpose. A Treasury grant of £1,000 enabled the Trustees to adapt a nearby house as a hostel for the accommodation of African and West Indian Servicemen and war workers. A small canteen has also been opened on the premises and provides cheap meals. The facilities provided are widely appreciated by numbers of Colonial people such as recruits for the Royal Air Force, munition workers on holiday, and others who need temporary accommodation while in London. The number of students in London has decreased but the main building and the club is open to such students as remain in London and is well used by them."

"Mr. L. A. V. Gobin, B.A., Oxon., a West Indian barrister from Trinidad, who was invalided from the Royal Air Force, has been appointed Warden of the House in succession to Mr. Cummings who is now Assistant Welfare Officer in the Colonial Office. Mr. Gobin and the Trustees would be grateful if it could be made widely known that Aggrey House extends welcome to all colonial visitors, and that inexpensive accommodation is available for them in the Club House and Hostel at 15 and 47, Doughty Street, London, W.C. 1."

Mr. LEE: I propose that the amount be restored to \$480.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no request for funds. They have accepted what we promised them and have not asked for more. It would be premature to vote more money before we are asked to.

Mr. LEE: I made the suggestion in view of the purpose it is serving.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why offer them more than they have asked for? I think we can leave it to them to ask for more. They have the sympathies of all of us, I am sure.

Mr. JACOB: The only point is whether they know that the amount has been reduced.

THE CHAIRMAN: They know that. It must be in the correspondence.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 64—Subsidy to British Guiana United Broadcasting Co., Ltd., \$3,000.

Mr. LEE: This is a subsidized company and I feel there should be some report from the company or by some Government officer to show that the money is being properly spent. My reason for suggesting that is that there was a gentleman who sacrificed his broadcasting station in order to amalgamate with the other station to form one British Guiana Broadcasting Co., but because the shares

in the company are controlled by certain people here that gentleman has been kicked out of his job.

Mr. MACKAY: The hon. Member has raised the point—

THE CHAIRMAN: There seem to be several Members who desire to speak on this subject but I think we should adjourn now.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir, I wish to make a correction with regard to the item dealing with the cost of living survey. I opened the file dealing with the estimate and overlooked the fact that that was an estimate which was prepared early in the year. I would therefore like to correct the figures I gave earlier. The following is an up-to-date estimate:—

Total number of budgets to be collected, 1,500; a) printing of forms, \$140; (b) remuneration of investigators for distributing forms to householders and for supervising and assisting in the preparation of the records of expenditure—60 cents to be paid to investigator for each completed budget received, \$900; (c) remuneration to 1,500 householders for keeping the necessary records, of expenditure—60 cents to be paid for each completed budget received, \$900; (d) remuneration to 500 householders for supplying additional information regarding expenditure on clothing during a period of 6 months—\$1 to be paid for each completed budget received, \$500; (e) remuneration to investigators for supervising and assisting in the preparation of the necessary records of expenditure on clothing during a period of 6 months—\$1 to be paid for each completed budget received, \$500; (f) clerical assistance—3 clerical assistants to be paid \$30 each per month for a period of 10 months to assist in the tabulation and correlation of statistics, \$900; (g) supervision (Statistical Officer) 10 months at \$100—\$1,000; (h) miscellaneous expenses, \$360, Total \$5,200.

The Council resumed.

Mr. LEE: I do not know whether Your Excellency proposes to sit on Monday.

THE PRESIDENT: I personally have a large number of engagements on Monday, the only day I have to do anything. I propose that the Council resume on Tuesday and sit for the rest of the week. I propose that we meet at 12 o'clock on Tuesday and sit until 5 o'clock.

Mr. GONSALVES: I suggest that we wait until Tuesday and decide what we will do after that.

The Council was adjourned until Tuesday, December 23, at 11 a.m.