

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 20th December, 1944.

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 19th December, 1944, were taken as read and confirmed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

INTRODUCION OF BILLS.

The Attorney-General gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills:—

The Bill of Entry Tax Bill, 1944.

The Old Age Pensions (Amendment) Bill, 1944.

The Sugar Experiment Stations (Continuance) Bill, 1944.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

REMOVAL OF PRODUCTION TAX ON
SUGAR.

The PRESIDENT addressed the Council as follows:—

Honourable Members of Council—As I said yesterday, I have been asked by the Attorney-General to bring forward first thing today certain Bills, the taking of which he regards as extremely desirable if we are to finish them off in proper fashion before the end of the year.

I have only to comment on one of the Bills. It is the Expiring Laws Continuation Bill, and my comment is in regard to our proposition not to include in that Bill the continuance of the production tax on sugar.

There is a new factor in the matter. Just at the week-end the sugar producers throughout all those countries which are supplying sugar to the United Kingdom, the purchaser being the Ministry of Food, have been notified that the Ministry is granting a substantially higher price in 1945: a rise of 2/- per cwt. equivalent to \$9.60 per ton. I have now been notified myself for information, but I wish to make it clear that the action is not by the Colonial Office but is independent action by the Ministry of Food.

Now it is explained that the increased price is given after a close examination of the financial position of the sugar industry in all those various countries, many of them not in the West Indian area at all but on the other side of the world, and it is stated that the increase is given in view of a large number of particular factors such as the replacement of machinery, now defective in many places, fertilisers, bags and so on, and it is part of the arrangement that a number of claims

which could properly have been made against the Ministry of Food are to be waived by the sugar producers.

Now I do not think that I should go further into that beyond touching on what immediately concerns our production tax. It is that this very comprehensive review having been made by the Ministry of Food with consideration of all factors, the reason for waiving the existing tax appears to fall. In other words the suggestions were originally made with the objective of to some degree meeting locally the situation which has been much more fully reviewed now by the action of the Ministry from London. I may add that I discussed the situation arising with Mr. Naylor before he left the Colony on Monday, and found that by him and by the executive officers of the Sugar Producers' Association, whom he had consulted and who also saw me, this point is appreciated. With the advice of Executive Council that afternoon it was decided, therefore, to ask the Attorney-General to include the necessary provision in the Bill.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1944.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the following Bill clause by clause:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance, further to amend the Pensions Ordinance, 1933, with respect to the age of retirement and to the rate of pension."

The CHAIRMAN: Members will remember that we passed the second reading and deferred the Committee stage on one point of detail which required discussion between the Attorney-General and the Colonial Treasurer.

Clause 6.—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This is the clause in respect of which I asked that consideration of the Bill should be deferred after the second reading. I have two amendments to move. The first is purely formal—that in the blank space in paragraph (b) the words “the thirty-first day of December, nineteen hundred and forty-five” be inserted.

The CHAIRMAN That will give a full year to public officers to exercise their option.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The second amendment is to paragraph (b) of sub-clause (1). Although a full year is being given officers to exercise their option under this Ordinance, as amended, it is quite possible that those officers on active service in the Far East or Middle East may not receive their notification of this Ordinance in sufficient time to allow them to get their answers back here by the end of the year. Again, it is quite possible that notification may be sent from here to an officer serving in some theatre of war, and he may never receive it. In such a case, of course, he would make no reply, and as the Bill is now worded he loses his option to come under the new conditions. For that reason I beg to move that the full stop at the end of paragraph (b) be amended to a colon, and that the following proviso be added:—

“Provided that in any case where an officer, who was not in the Colony at the date of the commencement of this Ordinance, fails to exercise the option before the date aforesaid, the Governor in Council may, if it appears to him equitable so to do, allow such officer to exercise the option before some date to be specified.”

In short that proviso merely says that where an officer is not in the Colony (it applies to any officer who is not in the Colony) and he can show reasonable grounds that he has not received the notification of the amendment, or that he did in fact reply, the

Governor in Council may extend the time in respect of that individual officer.

Clause 6 as amended, agreed to.

The Council resumed.

The PRESIDENT : Does the Attorney-General wish to proceed further?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As there has been no opposition, and the Bill being purely formal, I beg to move that it be read a third time and passed.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1944.

A Bill intituled “An Ordinance to continue the operation of the Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1944.”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This Bill will require amendment in the Committee stage in view of what Your Excellency said this afternoon in connection with the proposed continuance of the Sugar Duty Ordinance, 1942. As printed, of course, this Bill is only to continue one Ordinance, and that is the Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1944. It will now be necessary to alter the form of the Bill in the Committee stage. A Bill was introduced in this Council and passed last year whereby income tax and the surtax were considerably increased. To meet the wishes of hon. Members on that occasion a clause was added to that Bill to allow it to remain in operation for one year only. Conditions to-day are almost identical with what they were then as far as that matter goes. Government requires the revenue and, of course, it is quite necessary to avoid the danger of inflation.

The second Ordinance which, in the Committee stage, it is proposed to add to this is the Sugar Duty Ordinance with which hon. Members are quite acquainted. It is not for me to explain anything more than what Your Excellency has said. I formally move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Mr. JACOB: I was very glad to hear Your Excellency say that Government has decided not to allow the duty on manufactured sugar to lapse after the end of this year. I was one of the Members, if not the only Member, who year after year asked Government not to collect this sugar duty, but when I requested Government not to do so it was not my intention that it should not be collected from the sugar producers. My idea was that it was not equitable to collect Excise duty on a locally manufactured article, and while Government decided at one time to levy that tax in order to meet the budget deficit, the sugar producers were not actually paying this duty out of their own funds. They had an arrangement, which is still in force, whereby sugar was sold locally at a price far above the export price.

Mr. SEAFORD: To a point of correction. The local price is \$14 per ton below what the export price was in 1944. At the present time it is \$24 per ton less.

Mr. JACOB: I am very glad to hear that again. As a matter of fact these vague statements are made now and again when questions are raised, and we get no further. I have a note on my estimate here that the export value of sugar in 1942 was \$52 per ton; in 1943 it was \$56.40, and in 1944 I have a query. If the debates were available it could be seen. I have not all the figures here that I collected in 1942 and 1943, but it was clearly shown that the local selling price of sugar was far above the export value of sugar. Government is probably not concerned about these matters. It does not know

the export value or the local selling price of sugar. Statements are made here, and one hon. Member gets up and says that the price is so much more or less. I have gone into this matter very carefully. I maintain that the Excise duty was not paid out of the funds of the sugar producers but out of the consumers' money.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not wish to prolong the debate by making a speech myself, but I think it might help if I said that the old Excise duty, not the present duty, was not paid by the sugar producers but partly by the consumer and the sugar producers. It was removed in 1942 in order to enable the price of sugar to the consumer to be brought down. When the hon. Member says that the sugar producers arrange the local price of sugar to suit themselves I do not think that is quite accurate. The price of sugar is controlled by the Commodity Control. It is fixed by Government in relation to what has taken place in regard to the removal of the Excise duty. The present duty is not an Excise duty at all but a new duty introduced for a different purpose.

Mr. JACOB: I do not know if I am out of order, but I was interrupted by the Treasurer who has endeavoured to make a statement which is more vague than the previous statements I have heard. I would like to know what is the export value of sugar and the local selling price so as to let us see what is the difference between them. I am satisfied in my own mind that the local selling price in 1943 was above the export value of sugar. I have not the 1944 figures. Those things are guarded secrets, and Government is a party to keeping these things secret. After all the sugar industry is a highly subsidized industry—subsidized by every inhabitant of this country. That statement is always questioned, but I maintain that it is highly subsidized.

Mr. SEAFORD: It has not been questioned, it has been contradicted.

Mr. JACOB: It enjoys an Imperial preference and all kinds of local preferences, and it has been placed in such a position that it can control almost anything and everybody. I repeat that; it can almost control anything and anybody. I think I have made my point, and I do ask this Government to let us understand clearly what the position is. The point I wish to make is this: If this sugar duty is removed the consumers will benefit by it. Let us get that very clear. I am glad to hear that Government is going to collect this \$145,000. I maintain that it is not proper for the Colony to levy duty on locally manufactured articles, and particularly an article like sugar. I think different arrangements ought to be made so that the consumers, if they are to benefit at all, should pay a somewhat lower price for sugar, because Government is subsidizing flour and other articles, with the result that the countries producing those articles are being benefited. Our money goes to those places and we are suffering by it. Why should we subsidize flour, split peas and such articles which are not produced in this country? In order to protect the consumer and to encourage local industries, several local products, including sugar, should be subsidized and subsidized very heavily.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Numerous amendments will be required in this Bill in view of the fact that another Ordinance is to be continued in operation. The Bill, as drafted, was already introduced in this Council before knowledge of the continuance of that second Ordinance, and I could not change it. I therefore apologize for the number of amendments I have to move. The first is that the word "Laws" be substituted for the word "Law" in clause 1.

Clause 1 as amended put, and agreed to.

Clause 2—

SUGAR DUTY ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move the substitution of a new clause 2. I propose to move that Clause 2 as printed in the Bill be re-numbered clause 3. The new clause 2 reads as follows:—

"2. The Sugar Duty Ordinance, 1942, shall be continued until and including the thirty-first day of December, nineteen hundred and fifty-five."

Mr. JACOB: The hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) gave a figure just now, but I do not remember what it was. I am going to ask him to repeat that figure which showed that the local selling price of sugar was below the export value. When I was speaking just now I did not refer to certain figures I had noted in the Draft Estimate for 1944. I have now got those figures. The price of D.C. sugar to the consumer in 1943 was \$2.55 per 100 lbs, \$57.12 per ton. The price of Y.C. sugar was \$3.25 per 100 lbs, \$72.80 per ton; and white sugar \$4 per 100 lbs, \$89.60 per ton. It is not possible for me to get the quantity of sugar sold, but that information should be easily available.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I hear those figures again?

Mr. JACOB: If you got the quantity of sugar sold and multiplied that by the value per ton you would get the total value of dark, yellow and white sugar, and if you took the total tonnage and divided it by the total sum you would get the value per ton of sugar sold in the Colony. My information is that the export value of sugar in 1942 was \$52 per ton, and in 1943 it was \$56.40 per ton.

I have no information about 1944, and I ask this Government to supply that information for the benefit

of this Council. His Excellency told us that from next year the price would be increased by 2/- per cwt. or \$9.60 per ton. That would mean that the value of sugar in 1945 would be \$66 per ton, if that \$9.60 is added to the 1943 value. I am not concerned with the value for next year because a different arrangement may be made, but I maintain my point that the local value of sugar in 1942 and 1943 was above the export value and therefore the consumers were paying the duty to the producers who in turn were paying it to the Government. I go further. It is true the price of sugar is controlled in a way, the figure being agreed to by the producers and the Competent Authority. It is being controlled in co-operation with those who manufacture the product. I maintain that since the local price is more than the export market's you are benefiting by selling sugar locally. Whatever may be the duty the producers are not paying it themselves; they collect it from the consumers and pay it to Government. I do not think I am so ignorant as not to understand that, and I cannot believe Government does not understand that. I am saying again that the Sugar Producers are assisted—subsidised and given all kinds of assistance—and it is time that other industries get some assistance too. What is the state of the other industries? Sugar production is to be increased. I have said it already, let it be increased but for God's sake let the other people's industries be increased too. Do not allow one to run away with 100 per cent increase and the others go down 50 per cent. When a suitable opportunity affords me I am going to say something more about it.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member very carefully avoided the year 1944 and would not make a distinction between the local price and the export price. I took care to tell him and he knows the figure. There is a difference of \$14 between the local and the export price of sugar. He pleads

ignorance to this Council and so I am pleased to help him. As regards the other industries, as hon. Members know, we in the sugar industry have done all we could to help the other industries. I will only refer to his pet subject—rice. As he knows very well, the producers get more than 100 per cent. on what they got in pre-war days. He also knows that other productions also had their prices fixed by Government which gave them very handsome increases on what they got in pre-war days. All that was for the good of the Colony and the people in it. When an honourable Member gets up here and makes the statement that Government has done nothing for the industries other than sugar, I cannot sit here and allow it to go unchallenged.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to recall an interview given by the hon. Member to the Representative of the "Sunday Graphic" and published in that paper on the 19th March, 1944. He was reported to have said:

"Still I would not yet encourage an extremely high acreage of rice. Rice pre-war days grossed something like \$20 per acre; sugar was \$150 per acre."

That is the view of the hon. Member who is the mouthpiece of the Sugar industry in this Council. I have taken some trouble to go into these figures. I do not know if Your Excellency would permit me at this stage to give the figures I have calculated. I hope you would so that we could have this thing threshed out. Government accepts the advice of this gentleman who has made it perfectly clear that he will not encourage a high production of rice or an increase of the area under rice.

Mr. SEAFORD: That statement is absolutely incorrect. I have done everything in my power to increase rice production in this Colony. Every one knows that, but the hon. Member has tried to put obstacles in the way of our doing it.

Mr. JACOB: I have the hon. Member's figures on this paper before me. I will pass it around. He said many things but the most important thing was "Still I would not yet encourage an extremely high acreage of rice." What is the acreage of rice today? What is the production of rice? The export this year may be 22,000 tons on the average.

Mr. de AGUIAR: It may be more.

Mr. JACOB: It may be 100 as far as the hon. Member is concerned. The average export of rice up to 1943 was 15,000 tons for a period of ten years, and the export of sugar has risen by 100 per cent. I supplied the hon. the Second Nominated Member with a statement showing how the production has more than doubled itself during the last 15 years.

Mr. SEAFORD: That statement is again incorrect.

Mr. JACOB: I have the statement here and I am willing to pass it around. In 1926 the production was 98,152 tons and in 1936 it was 195,944 tons.

Mr. SEAFORD: Will the hon. Member state what the production of sugar is this year? He knows as perfectly well as I do that it is 145,000 tons.

Mr. JACOB: This year?

Mr. SEAFORD: Yes.

Mr. JACOB: The books of the Sugar Producers must be available to me in order to know that. Last year I knew what it was when 35,000 tons were thrown away. There is no doubt about it that Government is encouraging the production of sugar so as to increase it to 250,000 tons. My hon. friend is not going to dispute that fact. The production of sugar is to be

increased and the production of rice is to be increased also, and when my hon. friend begins by telling the public that the gross value of an acre of rice is \$20 as against \$150 for an acre of sugar, I must ask permission to refer to some figures I have collected.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of order! Is the hon. Member supporting this particular measure? I suggest that we get on and debate those points in more general terms when the opportunity arises.

Mr. JACOB: I think that will be better as I have not the figures at my finger-tips.

The CHAIRMAN: As I gather, this suggested clause is generally accepted. I therefore put the amendment "That the new clause 2 be inserted.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 2—Ordinance No. 9 of 1944 to be operative in respect of the year of assessment, 1945.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the old clause 2 be re-numbered clause 3.

Question put, and agreed to.

Preamble to Bill and enacting clause.—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The preamble has to be revised in view of the fact that there are now two Bills. I move that the preamble to the Bill be deleted and the following substituted therefor:—

"Whereas the Sugar Duty Ordinance, 1942, was temporary in its duration and limited to expire on the thirty-first day of December, nineteen hundred and forty-two;

And whereas the operation of the Ordinance aforesaid has been extended

from year to year until the thirty-first day of December, nineteen hundred and forty-four;

And whereas the Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1944, was also temporary in its duration and applied to the year of assessment nineteen hundred and forty-four only;

And whereas it is expedient to extend the Ordinances aforesaid:"

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I would like to enquire whether any steps have been taken to implement the recommendations which have been made by the Committee appointed by Your Excellency with respect to the collection of Income Tax from those persons who we thought were not paying any. I have heard nothing about them. I would like to know whether Government has accepted the Committee's recommendations and, if so, whether anything has been done to implement them.

The CHAIRMAN: As you know there is an Income Tax expert at present in the Colony. I propose to call an informal meeting of the Legislative Council with him. It is a question of time. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer may be prepared to say something more specific.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That report was sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for his consideration and advice, as many new points were raised and the recommendations had certain new features in regard to income tax legislation. The Secretary of State's advice has now been received. As Your Excellency has stated, in the meantime the Income Tax Adviser has arrived in the Colony and that is one of the points engaging his attention.

As regards the general position, he has been asked to cover the whole scope of Income tax in this Colony. I saw Mr. Howie this morning and he told me that the report is under consideration and will shortly be in hand. The hon.

Member who spoke was not here when the Head "Income Tax Office" was reached. I intimated then to Members that they were doing their utmost in that office in order to strengthen the staff and meet the criticisms and suggestions put forward not only in this Council. The staff was augmented for the very purpose. I think the whole matter will be placed shortly before this Council

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I am quite satisfied with the explanation given.

Question put, and agreed to.

New preamble to the Bill substituted.

TITLE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL A new long title is required. I beg to move that the title as presented to Council be deleted, and the following substituted therefor:—

"An Ordinance to continue certain Expiring Laws."

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill passed as amended.

The Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As the Bill has been materially amended, I would not ask that the third reading be taken today, but if hon. Members are agreeable it would be of great assistance to the Council.

The PRESIDENT: It is a matter of practical convenience, and with the concurrence of Members I ask the hon. Attorney-General to continue with the third reading.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL I move that the following Bill be read a third time and passed:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to continue certain Expiring Laws."

Dr. Dias seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL OF ENTRY TAX BILL, 1944.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I would like to take the Bill of Entry Tax Bill, 1944, through all its stages today. I ask leave to introduce and have read a first time the following Bill:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to consolidate and amend the Law relating to Bill of Entry Tax."

Mr J. A. LUCKHOO seconded

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I give notice of the second reading of the Bill and also of my intention to take it through all its stages today.

Question put, and agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In moving the second reading of the Bill I may state that it is purely a matter of consolidation. There is no new provision in the Bill whatsoever. The old Bill of Entry Tax Ordinance had several errors in drafting, and added to that is a great number of exemptions from the Bill of Entry Tax. Those exemptions are set out in full in the present Bill at clause 3. I can assure hon. Members that apart from verbal alterations the provisions in this Bill are identical in every respect with the existing law with but this one change made—the old Bill of Entry Tax Ordinance contained one more section, that section which says the Ordinance shall remain in force for one year. That has been omitted, because it has been mentioned in this

Council several times that a good many laws on the Statute Books have to come up every December to be extended for a further period of one year. This is introducing to the Council a Bill to revoke an Ordinance more so than it is to extend an Ordinance. I have one amendment to make. Hon. Members will notice there is no difference between this and the other Ordinance which was in operation until last year, save one clause making the Ordinance continuous until the next year.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Clause 3—*Exemptions from payment of Bill of Entry Tax.*

Mr. ROTH: I would like it to go on record that I have approached the hon. the Attorney-General with a request to include oils and similar substances. The Attorney-General replied.

"There would be no objection to making any desirable amendment on some future occasion. If an entirely new exemption be inserted at this stage it will necessitate adding additional clauses to the Bill to make provision, e.g., for goods already in the Colony which have not been cleared from Customs. Such provisions, which are invariably inserted in amending Bills dealing with this subject, are undesirable in the Principal Ordinance, as after the lapse of a short space of time they become spent and thereafter serve no useful purpose."

Clause 6—*Commencement.*

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that a new clause (6) be inserted to read as follows:—

"6. This Ordinance shall come into operation on the first day of January, nineteen hundred and forty-five."

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill passed as amended.

The Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL:
beg to move that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

Mr. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

OLD AGE PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL
1944.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move the suspension of Standing Rule and Order No. 36 to enable the following Bill to be read a second time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Old Age Pensions Ordinance 1944, by varying the area within which pensions at the higher rate are to be paid."

Mr. LUCKHOO seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In moving the second reading of the Bill I will only remind hon. Members that in the principal Ordinance the rate of pension payable in the City of Georgetown is different from that payable elsewhere in the Colony. Then the Ordinance provided that Old Age Pensions in the city of Georgetown be paid by the Board of the Poor Law Commissioners and that elsewhere than in the City of Georgetown they be paid by the Local Boards of Guardians. I was not quite aware of the fact until it came to my notice recently that the administration of the Board of Poor Law Commissioners extended up to as

far as Plantation Sophia and that the boundary of the next district Board, that is the Plaisance Board of Guardians, ended at Liliendaal and, therefore under the Ordinance there was no one appointed to pay pensions between Sophia and Liliendaal. The sole object of this Bill is to fill in that gap so that the Poor Law Commissioners will pay in that area. I must warn hon. Members that it means the higher rate of pensions payable in Georgetown will go as far as the boundary described in the Bill. I do not know the exact figure as to what the expenditure will mean, but I am informed it will not be serious. I will also remind hon. Members that the principal Ordinance itself is experimental. When I introduced it, I said that owing to conditions in the Colony it could only be experimental in the early stages and thereafter as the result of practical experience amendments can be made. Therefore if it is found that this in effect adds to the expense of the Bill, hon. Members will have an opportunity to suggest our going back to the other boundary and appointing someone to pay in that area. With that amendment made every other amendment is a consequential change of the title to "Georgetown area". I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I would like to complete the passage of the Bill, and I move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

The Bill passed the Committee stage without discussion.

The Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

The PRESIDENT: I am greatly obliged to Members. We have got through a good deal of business by 3 o'clock. I will now ask the Treasurer to move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Estimates. We will then take the estimates of the Public Works Department and I will call upon the Chairman of the Advisory Committee to initiate the discussion.

ESTIMATES, 1945.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1945.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I consider it only fair to Members of the Council and to the Members of the Committee to survey as briefly as possible the work which has been done by the Public Works Department under the surveillance of the Advisory Committee. The Committee held 23 meetings during the period from the 4th November, 1943, to the 7th December, 1944. We sat regularly every fortnight with very little omission. It may be an interesting fact that we took into consideration the budget for 1943. A total expenditure of \$1,703,505.79 on the total year's appropriation of \$2,307,014.87 disclosed a saving on the year's work of \$603,509.08.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to a point of explanation. Will the hon. Member repeat the extent of the saving?

Mr. WIGHT: A sum of \$606,509.08. The Colonial Treasurer's Budget Statement says:—

"The items under Public Works Departmental and Works Votes have been sub-divided so as to show under separate heads all items referring to drainage, irrigation and sea defences as the initial stage of the establishment, subject to the approval of Council, of the proposed new Drainage and Irrigation Department. Council Paper No. 4 of 1944 sets out a despatch dated 27th November, 1943, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on this matter, and notification has since been received that a free grant under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act has been approved, which will cover part of the total expenditure involved over a period of five years. A Message setting out the proposals in detail will be presented to Council, and Council will be invited to give formal approval of the establishment of the proposed new Department to be established in due course on the terms stated. The total provision made in the estimates for expenditure to be undertaken in 1945 from Colony funds on public work (including drainage, irrigation and sea defences) is \$1,748,395, of which \$931,505 represents extraordinary works and \$816,890 maintenance."

Members will see on the estimate that provision has been made temporarily, and a staff has been taken off and put under a separate head. I do not know whether the Chairman of the Drainage Board will have anything to say on that. The provision made in the estimate for the expenditure in 1945 from Colony funds on drainage, irrigation and sea defences will give hon. Members some idea of the work entailed by the Public Works Department, and the necessary surveillance which will be observed and has been observed throughout the year by the members of the Advisory Committee.

I shall just deal generally with what has transpired during the year. I will deal first with the technical staff. First of all the Deputy Director of Public Works was on many Committees, and the Committee thought, and Government agreed, that he should be relieved of some of these Committees so as to give better attention to the

administration. That was done. It will also be observed that the engineering staff was so short throughout the year that the Executive Engineer for Buildings and Roads had to devote a considerable amount of his time to the supervision of works, such as the construction of an airport at Mackenzie, because no engineer was available. The technical staff has been added to by the appointment of a Building Superintendent and a Road Superintendent, and the Surveyor has now returned to his substantive duties. There is one important office to be filled, and that is the post of a Quantity Surveyor. We have made efforts and we hope that that office will be filled as soon as possible. The Committee feel, and I feel sure the Council will agree, that the districts are far too large, and the activities of the Department far too scattered to allow of proper supervision by one Engineer, and recommendations have been made, and no doubt will be implemented, for the appointment of an Assistant Engineer for the East Coast district as soon as possible. Members will appreciate the difficulty in obtaining technical staff from England and elsewhere. The West Coast district has an Assistant Engineer who has been transferred to urgent sea defence work.

In regard to the clerical and accounting staff generally, the Department has been strengthened recently by the addition of six junior clerks and a store-keeper for the purpose of unallocated stores. We feel some concern, however, over the general question of the staffing of the districts. Provision has been made, and there is a letter from the Colonial Secretary dealing with the general question of staffing which will come before the Committee for consideration at an early date. That letter completely sets out the position and the difficulties of Government on the question of staffing. We hope, however, to overcome that by training officers and sending them to the districts.

The position of the Paymaster and the system of payments also engaged the attention of the Committee, and the actual payments were observed by members of the Committee who visited certain districts. One matter of internal administration which may or may not receive some consideration is the question of leave pay to the employees of the Public Works Department, which formerly and still is generally charged to the works on which they are engaged. We hope that will be set right and put on a proper basis.

Another matter is the question of the inauguration of a school for the training of artisans, which also concerns the Education Department of which the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. J. A. Luckhoo) is Chairman of the Advisory Committee.

I feel sure that hon. Members will be interested to learn that throughout the year the Department has been carrying out a survey of the public roads of the Colony with a view to the preparation of a scheme for the reconstruction of the coastal roads generally, and it is proposed to pursue that matter when the staff becomes available. There is also the question of the establishment of a Road Research Department which was held up because the expert attached to the Colonial Development and Welfare Organization was unable to return to the Colony. Some experiments have been made by one of the officers concerned, a local man, which we hope will prove successful and much more economical to the Colony, perhaps obviating the use of burnt earth which cannot stand up to the heavy and fast motor traffic.

The question of roadside trenches has been persistently raised by one hon. Member from time to time. The Executive Government has notified the Committee of the decision arrived at in respect of that matter, which the Committee is still pursuing. The Committee proposed to consider at an early date the reconstruction of the East Coast road

and would welcome constructive criticism. We have also considered the question of the co-ordination of the road transport service of the Colony generally.

With regard to building construction we have a large programme with an estimate for construction. Hon. Members will appreciate that it is essentially a question of obtaining materials, and especially of priority for timber, and in each case of maintenance or essential works the programme will be approved by the Committee before it is put into effect.

The construction of the airport at Mackenzie is another project which is engaging the attention of the Department, and has drawn largely on its staff. We have had visits by two members of the staff of the Colonial Development and Welfare Organization in connection with town planning, which will also put a large burden on the Department.

Members of the Committee have visited various districts, and the Committee generally feel that all the ills of the Department will not be cured at once. We feel that Advisory Committees of this sort will be of some assistance to the Departments and will tend to more effective work in the future.

As indicated by Your Excellency, some additions will have to be made to the estimates of the Public Works Department in respect of certain Departments whose votes have been deleted with respect to furniture and other items which will be transferred to the Public Works vote. There is a large block vote of \$567,100 which includes buildings, roads and bridges and general works, the details of which are fully set out in Appendix F. I do not think there is anything more to say on the estimates. Hon. Members will find that they have been slightly reduced. In fact one may almost say that they have been considerably reduced as compared with last year's estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: I am greatly obliged to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee for his explanation of the position of the estimates.

Mr. DIAS: I would like to make a few brief remarks. I have heard on more than one occasion that this Committee is useless. I am very sorry to hear that said of a Committee of which I am a member, and the members of which I know do their very best to advance the working of the Public Works Department. The Committee has met with a good many obstacles, not created by the Head of the Department but by recent events—obstacles which we have to try to overcome in the future.

I wish to refer first of all to that notorious case we had quite recently when I spent several days in Court listening to it in order to acquire knowledge which might be beneficial to the Department. I learned quite a lot, and the result was that the Committee paid a visit on pay day to the office at Beterverwagting where we saw how payments were made. What I saw made me incline to the opinion that the Paymaster was a mere figure-head in the discharge of his duties. Your Excellency would be surprised to know that he does not know the labourers, or whether the amounts put down on the pay-sheets are correct. He does not know whether the men earn the money they are put down for, or what work they do. He sits at a table and an overseer or driver calls the name of "John Brown", but he does not know "John Brown" from the "man in the moon." In some cases somebody comes forward with an authorization to draw the money of another person, and the authorization is signed by a witness also unknown to the Paymaster. I took the liberty of telling the Paymaster not to pay the money in such cases, except the authorizations are signed by the Sergeant in charge of the Beterverwagting station, and there are witnesses to the signatures on the document. I learned that some people got away with it.

I raised the question before the Committee, but I cannot say whether all the members were in agreement with me or not. I have not seen any reason to change my opinion that the post of Paymaster should be abolished, and that the Engineer in charge of the district should do the paying. I quite realize that the duties of the Engineer on the East Coast are very onerous, and that there is too much work for one officer to perform efficiently, but that must not stand in the way of improving the other side of the picture. He should be given an assistant, so that he can himself take charge of the payments. I think I am right in saying that on the day of our visit to Beterverwagting the payments amounted to something like \$3,000. One can quite appreciate how much of that money finds its way into wrong channels when it is paid out in the manner I have described. I will not be satisfied until a change is made. The Paymaster admitted to the Committee that he did not know the people and that he relied on the overseer. That is very undesirable.

Although I have not heard officially what is the total amount of the shortage or loss of money to the Government, I have certainly heard outside that it is a colossal sum. The amount has not been made public, and very wisely too. We must correct this unfortunate position if we are not going to land ourselves into similar difficulties in the future. The Paymaster is not to blame at all. I happen to know him, and I know that he is a very efficient officer, but the fact remains that as he visits these districts periodically, merely to pay money according to paysheets presented to him, he has no opportunity to become acquainted with the people. I suggest respectfully that it would be inviting trouble on our own shoulders if this system were allowed to continue. We should adopt means to rectify the position and see that Government funds are

not thrown away in this manner. During the recent trial I heard that the Engineer of the district, who lives in the compound where payments are made, was never at home when he was wanted on pay days. If he has work to do in other districts he cannot be there, but if he had an assistant one could be present on pay days. We will never achieve what we are seeking to obtain unless the Department is strengthened by the appointment of more Engineers. Government must take a serious view of the matter and rectify the position so that there should not be a repetition of these unfortunate incidents in our time.

Mr. EDUN: I shall defer my criticisms of this Department because I consider it imperative to proceed with the estimates. You will see, sir, that I have to prepare a case, and I think I shall make out a very strong case indeed against the administration of the Public Works Department, the Sea Defence Department, the Pure Water Supply, and the Drainage and Irrigation. I have listened to the very apologetic review by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. Not having the material in his hand I did not expect him to tell us something very reassuring. I have tabled a motion in order that there should be a clean service so far as the administration of the Public Works Department is concerned, and when the time comes I shall endeavour to relate the kind of irregularities that have been committed, and perhaps are being committed even today in these Departments. With these few remarks I agree with Your Excellency that we should proceed with the estimates and get on with the business of the Council.

Mr. JACOB: I look upon this as the only opportunity Members have to make the officers of this Government, and indeed the officers of the Public Works Department realize that they have an obligation to this Council and the taxpayers of the Colony. This is

the time to pass estimates for the payment of salaries and other amounts as from the 1st January, and after all the information I have gathered and the investigations I have made covering a period of five or six years, the persistent enquiries I have made, I think the only way to deal effectively with this matter—that is if Members of this Council wish to deal with it effectively—is not to pass the vote for the Fixed Establishment, and let there be a general enquiry before the officers on the Fixed Establishment are paid their salaries as from the 1st January, 1945. I realize how hopeless that is, but I feel that with a differently constituted Council that would have been possible. It is not possible that this Council constituted as it is, with the set up it has got during the last 10 or 12 years, can do very much. We have heard the Chairman of the Advisory Committee reviewing the whole Department. We have had one Member of the Advisory Committee painting a picture that does not look well at all. He tells us—I have gathered from his speech—there is not a definite decision by the Committee itself as to what should be done and how the work of the Committee should be carried on. I realize that the Committee has been in existence only one year, and that with the volume of work it is very difficult to get things put right. And more than that, most of the Members are busy with their own affairs and sometimes when they have the time the Officers concerned have not the time. The result is, while the meetings might have been frequent, I do not think any real progress has been made by the Members of the Advisory Committee. The Chairman has given us some figures. Immediately he began giving them I tried to follow them up and, I must say, I have not been able to follow the figures he has been good enough to quote. He made one particular point, that there was a saving of \$603,000 on the 1943 workings. My hon.

friend, the Chairman, I do not think, is very pleased with the figures and I do not know what he means by the word "saving." Perhaps the Financial expert would tell us something about that and maybe that saving accounted for the kind of service we have been getting year after year. When he put the figures on the Estimates he knew fully well that he could not do the work. He might explain what he calls "saving."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I rise to a point of correction! The hon. Member is not quite correct. If the hon. Member look at the printed Budget Speech, he would see that whenever I use the word "saving" that it means "unexpended balance."

Mr. JACOB: I do not know why the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has intervened at this stage. I was referring to the saving referred to by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo. He said the Public Works Department has done wonderfully well; it has saved \$603,905. I repeat that is accountable partly for the huge surplus we got during the last three or four years, although we had budgeted every time for a deficit. That is the kind of accounting we get and the kind of figures we have submitted to us at meetings of this Council.

Mr. FERREIRA: To a point of order! It is made quite clear in a statement issued by the Chairman of the Public Works Advisory Committee that \$600,000 was not spent because of lack of materials.

Mr. JACOB: My hon. friend was not present. I do not think he listened to the debate. I can quite understand that the money was not spent, but the hon. gentleman stated clearly that it was a saving. However, I am not pressing the point. I think I know what I am saying when I talk about accounts, savings, etc. I was trying to

find out what was the actual expenditure, what was the estimated expenditure for 1945 as placed in this book before us,

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I think I quoted it. If the hon. Member would refer to the Budget Statement by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer he would see there that the amount for 1945 was quoted by him. It was also quoted by me.

Mr. JACOB: Will the hon. Member give the figure again, please?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: \$1,748,395.

Mr. JACOB: The hon. gentleman did give that figure, but I have taken the trouble to look over this Estimate book before me and found on page vii against Head XXXV — Public Works Department—the sum of \$160,786 given in the Abstract of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1945. Head XXXVA—Public Works (Drainage, Irrigation and Sea Defences)—\$87,667. Head XXXVI—Public Works (Annually Recurrent)—\$612,990. Head XXXVIA — Public Works (Drainage, Irrigation and Sea Defences, Annually Recurrent) \$203,900. Those four figures added together give you \$1,065,343. Then when you turn over to page viii you find Head XLV—Public Works Extraordinary—\$567,100 and Public Works (Drainage, Irrigation and Sea Defences Extraordinary)—\$364,405. I find that those also added give a total of \$1,996,848. That is what I find in this book before me. That is the estimate for 1945. I took the Revised Estimates for 1944 and found that the figures are \$1,425,459. I would not be too sure those figures are correct, but that is what I have got after putting them together and adding them up. Since there has been stated there was a saving in 1943 as compared with 1944, I see according to these figures a difference of \$571,389. That means this Council is asked to vote \$571,389 more in 1945.

I am not very familiar with the method of administrative checking that is used in regard to these votes, but I did get some very startling information as to how the amounts voted under a particular Head were manipulated resulting in enormous loss. It is very essential that when monies are put against a particular item under a particular Head that a strict supervision be exercised to see that they are properly expended. It is abundantly clear to me from what I have heard and from the very information I have got from good sources both private and public and from what has appeared in the newspapers, that in order to carry on certain arrangements that may be made by several Officers the votes are mixed up and confused, and any kind of pay-sheet is put forward, certified and the amounts paid. This Department will have to handle roughly \$2,000,000 in 1945. I am wondering whether the Advisory Committee is prepared to spend the necessary time to go into all these matters and to see that this money is properly spent. I cannot resist the temptation to mention that the hon. Member for Essequibo River and myself saw Your Excellency on one occasion and expressed grave concern over the personnel of this Committee. I am casting no reflection on the Members of the Committee, but if we were to take the general attendance at meetings of this Council and other Committees we would clearly see that some of the Members of this Committee are not in a position to give the service that is demanded of them by virtue of their appointment there and by virtue of their position as Members of this Council. That is a matter for Government to consider.

I am satisfied in my own mind that Members of this Council can offer very great assistance, and arrangements should be made in such a way as to give those Members the opportunity and encouragement to give that

service. It is, perhaps, not in the best interest of those who are actually controlling things as they are at the present time, but if we are to have progress in this country, if we are to have schemes to be carried out properly and the money properly spent, it is time that Government review the whole position and make a change. I stated it would be well not to oppose the amounts on the Fixed Establishment. I am going to have a test of it. I am going to see how many Members vote for it. Government will have an opportunity of seeing whether the Officers should have the opportunity of carrying on as they do or amending it our way. Not only is this Department to be blamed for the grave irregularities that have gone on and, I venture to say, are still going on. I would like to know what is the Audit Department doing, what is the Treasury doing and what is the Secretariat doing. I know the hon. the Colonial Treasurer is taking a keen interest and has advised as to the form of keeping the accounts and, I think, he was instrumental in getting the present Accountant appointed, who is a fully qualified man he said. But if results are to show anything, I am satisfied there is something wrong in the accounting system. I have in mind the Auditor's Report in which at paragraph 11 he states:

"Eleven employees of the Public Works Department are on trial at the Assizes at the present time and are indicted with having on divers days between the 1st April and 15th October, 1943, conspired together to defraud the Government of British Guiana by false representation that they had rendered services for which they were entitled to be paid by the Government."

That is all the Auditor gives to the Government, and that is all the information I, as a Member of this Council, can get. I think, I have mentioned it before and I repeat it again: I endeavoured to get the Auditor to say something on the general principle and he declined to have any conversa-

tion or communication with a Member of this Council. Maybe he is right. That is the system, and that is what I am complaining about. I can get no information there. I went to the Colonial Secretariat and the result was nil. I went to the Department itself, although it is willing to do this and that, but the result was also nil. I then went to the Police with the same result. I also went to His Excellency Sir Wilfrid Jackson and the result was nil. I spent a lot of time going into this matter in the interest of the public, but rather than being complimented I was abused, because you need not be abused by hearing a display of words. I have done all I could possibly do, and when the Advisory Committee was appointed I thought I had some hope of getting certain things investigated properly and some prompt action taken. On the whole I am disappointed at the manner in which the Department is administered at present. In the Department itself, the Advisory Committee and everybody. I thought that with an Advisory Committee composed of Members of this Council, any representation made would receive consideration and prompt action. I spoke to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on at least six occasions. I have telephoned him and I have given him a written statement on two matters I wish investigated. I explained to him what I thought was the best to adopt in investigating those matters. There was one matter that was dealt with by the Court and, I think, fairly satisfactorily. Another matter was handled departmentally and I wrote the hon. Member for Western Essequibo, as Chairman of the Advisory Committee about it. I ask Your Excellency's permission to read it:

"**W. C. Basin.** — I am also reliably informed that a new basin was purchased from J. P. Santos & Co., Ltd., for installation at the office of the Department of Agriculture. This new basin was not installed but was sold to a private individual and an old basin, cleaned up, was used.

I suggest that you look at the basin, take a note of the name, condition etc., and verify these particulars with the particulars of the new basin supplied by J. P. Santos & Co., Ltd.

If the particulars given to me are not correct then the matter may be dropped."

The hon. gentleman rang me on the telephone about the matter and I told him that not only the basin but all the fittings were sold to a private person whose name was given to me. The particulars were given to me by someone, but I was not going to disclose the name. I maintain that if departmental action was taken, if the foreman and the engineer were asked what they had to say about it as they are the people acquainted with the working of the Department, something would have been achieved. If I were Chairman of the Advisory Committee I would have done that.

Mr. FERREIRA: I replied to the question last night, and I stated that the W. C., basin was installed in the Colonial Secretary's house in Kingston. I thought that reply would have satisfied the hon. Member. The report of the Engineer in charge is in the hands of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The hon. Member raised this point during some other debate and I answered it fully. There is no cause for misrepresentation. I thought I had made myself very clear.

Mr. JACOB: Is this how the debate is to be continued? I was speaking on a point and my hon. friend and another hon. Member are trying to explain—

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of explanation! I thought I had already answered this point. I distinctly said the hon. Member gave the information. I do not know if the Council would be pleased for me to be reiterating something that comes within the knowledge of the intelligent section of the Council.

I distinctly said that I told him I would visit that morning and ring the hon. Member up. I went that day to the Public Works Department and got hold of the Engineer and the Overseer and then returned to the Agricultural Department with them. I informed the hon. Member that to carry out a prosecution it must be on other than suspicion, as you have to get evidence. The hon. Member for Essequibo River promised to supply the witness who carried the basin. The hon. Member distinctly said so.

Mr. JACOB: I never referred to the hon. Member for Essequibo River.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I must refer the hon. Member to the fact that the Police were present at his request. The Director spoke to the hon. Member. I pointed out to him there was a missing link to connect up the basin, but he did not worry about that. Are we going to jeopardize the liberty of the subject when there is a missing link, when the person who can come and give evidence refuses to produce that evidence?

Mr. JACOB: That is a red herring being drawn across the trail. The hon. Member for Essequibo River does not know about this complaint at all. I told the hon. Member as Chairman of the Advisory Committee that it was a complaint from myself and that nobody knew about it. That other conversation with the hon. Member for Essequibo River is not concerned with it, I think the hon. Member for Essequibo River a week or so ago told the hon. Member for Berbice River that he did not know anything about it. I ask the hon. Member for Berbice River to verify that.

Mr. FERREIRA: When the conversation arose the other night here, I was told that a certain individual refused to give information to the Police.

Mr. JACOB: I have not been treated with the courtesy of being told what happened.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of order! I must refute that statement. I telephoned the hon. Member myself and spoke to him. I told him we want evidence; it was not enough to suspect certain persons. There was no evidence.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask hon. Members to proceed to some other point.

Mr. JACOB: I ask permission to clear up this matter. I think the hon. Member is very badly mixed up. I made the complaint and did not bring in any other person. We had several conversations, but I never knew that a report had been issued until when I raised the matter in a debate here. I think that having made the complaint I am entitled to a copy of that report. I do ask that this Council be supplied with a copy of that report. Not only has that occurred, I have specific information as to other things that are happening, and I do ask this Government not to throw the initiative on me. I rather not. It is for Government to invite me and give the assurance that certain things will not be divulged. I am not a news-carrier to carry news to Government when I hear anything strange. If Government go about these things in a different way it would achieve the desired results. If Government finds these grave irregularities do exist it is a reflection on the Government for not heeding the hints given.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If any Member of this Council has knowledge of irregularities taking place, it is his duty to report the fact and to substantiate it. After it is substantiated it is the duty of Government to act. So far as I know the hon. Member has never brought to me any fact of irregularities in the Public Works Department so that any action could properly be taken by Government or the Colonial

Secretariat. If he does so, I give him my personal assurance that action will be immediately taken by me, but I must ask the hon. Member that when he brings a criminal accusation against employees of Government to give me some evidence on which to act.

Mr. JACOB: I do not understand that speech at all. I have given information to an Officer of this Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of order! The hon. Member asked what the Secretariat was doing, and I have told him what the position was.

Mr. JACOB: Why was I not supplied with a copy of that report? Surely Government Officers have some responsibility. I am satisfied that the majority of the Officers of the Government have absolutely no responsibility, and the remarks I have made touching self-interest and no responsibility just confirm that and apply with double force to this Department.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The hon. Member, himself, in relation to these matters has refused to give me the statements which were in his possession and the names of the persons who made those statements.

Mr. JACOB: I refused pending the hon. Member telling me what he had done. I am not going to give all my information so that he can counteract them.

At this stage the Council resumed and adjourned to 8.30 p.m.

NIGHT SESSION

8.30 p.m.—

The Council resumed and resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1945.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to reply to certain points raised by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob). He said that perhaps I was not well acquainted with figures. I do not profess to be an accountant but I hope the hon. Member will never have the pleasure of being cross-examined by me on figures at any time. If the hon. Member would turn to the Abstract of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1945, at page vii, he would find under Head XXXV.—Public Works Department—the sum of \$160,786, and under XXXVa—Drainage, Irrigation and Sea Defences—the sum of \$87,667. If he added those two sums and took them away from the figures which he quoted this afternoon, viz \$1,997,848, he would get the figure which was quoted by the Treasurer in his Budget Statement. I will repeat that in his statement the Colonial Treasurer distinctly states:—

“The total provision made in the estimates for expenditure to be undertaken in 1945 from Colony funds on public works (including drainage, irrigation and sea defences) is \$1,748,395, of which \$931,505 represents extraordinary works and \$816,890 maintenance.”

If the hon. Member will appreciate what is written there he will find that it eliminates the staff of both the Public Works Department and the Sea Defence Department. Therefore the Treasurer's figures are absolutely correct, and so are mine.

Mr. JACOB: I never questioned the Treasurer's figures; I questioned the figures given by the hon. Member, and he is actually saying now that he repeats what he said.

Mr. WIGHT: I repeated that I quoted the Treasurer's figures, so that if my figures are wrong the Treasurer's are wrong.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I would like to make a few general observations

and reserve what I may say in detail for a later period when the motion tabled by the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) is being debated in this Council. I would like first of all to congratulate the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the review he has given this Council on the working of this Department. Whatever may have happened during the early part of this year cannot be put against his Committee in any way. What I am very much concerned about is the administration of the funds of the Department. I have had bitter experience this year with respect to the waste of public money. I speak as one who has almost inner knowledge of what is happening in this Department, and I think it my duty to bring to the notice of Government at the proper time (I need not say it here) all the information I have at my disposal. It would correct a great deal of what has been happening for some time. Rules and regulations made for the conduct of this Department have been broken flagrantly. Engineers who have charge of districts in this Colony have stated publicly that it is not a question of observance of the rules; they conduct their Department in the way they think best.

I do not agree with the suggestion of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias, that the post of Paymaster should be abolished. It would be most unwise to allow an Engineer in charge of a district to supervise and identify those who work under him, the overseers and foremen in his district. Instead of being absent on pay days I think it is the duty of the Engineer, the overseer and the foremen, to be present and identify every person who is called up to be paid public funds, and to see that those people who perform their duties and are entitled to be paid receive whatever amounts are entered against their names on the pay sheets. There is no doubt about it that there has been a loose system in this Department. Votes

have been manipulated and sums of money taken from the Extraordinary vote to meet annually recurrent expenditure.

The Sea Defence block vote, which is known as the milch cow of the Department, has been drawn upon in order to meet excess expenditure under a number of votes passed by this Council. In other words there has been deceit of the Head of their Department on the part of the men who administer Government funds. Reports are wrongly written—false reports for that matter—and have been sent to the Head of the Department on whom I lay no blame. He has been deceived by those who ought to know better, and the sooner an enquiry is made into this Department, and whether the officer is of high or low rank he is made to toe the line or dismissed from the Service the better it would be for the clean administration of the Department. Let us clean the Augcan stables. There is something wrong in the "State of Denmark." I shall put my services at the disposal of Mr. Wight's Committee and give all the information I can to correct what has happened in the past year. I think it is my duty as a citizen and taxpayer to give all the information I have been able to acquire in this matter.

Two million dollars is the estimated expenditure for the coming year. It is a large sum, and the sooner we point our fingers in the direction of those who ought to be out of the Service the better for the administration of this large sum of money. Votes for roads, bridges and buildings have been exceeded, and yet we find officers being able to change the head of charge in order that money might be paid out. Government has been deceived by officers writing reports stating that they have kept within the estimates. It is a sorry state of things in that Department I speak as one who has been able to acquire a great deal of knowledge. As I said before, I shall

deal with the matter more fully when the motion which has been tabled by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, is being debated by this Council.

I would like, however, to bring to the notice of Government the deplorable condition of the roads on the West Coast of Berbice. It is no pleasure at all to motor over those roads, and it seems to me that the Department appears to have forgotten that "a stitch in time saves nine." With large lorries and passenger buses travelling over those roads they have almost become dangerous for use by the ordinary small motor cars between Georgetown and Rosignol. I think that some attention should be paid to the roads which are going from bad to worse. I desire to help Mr. Wight's Committee which is doing everything in its power to rectify what wrongs have been committed. I do not think it would be prudent to have a public exposure of this matter, at least in this Council, but if the Committee should require my assistance at any time I shall put my services at its disposal unreservedly.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: The review by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee has disclosed that this Department has an unexpended balance of \$600,000, with an estimated expenditure of two million dollars for next year. It is alarming to me how the Department is going to carry out the various works without additional staff. I will say at the outset that I do not say that there has not been some negligence on the part of some of the officers, but taking the Department as a whole I sympathize with the situation. The expenditure of the Department has risen by 100 per cent. within the last couple of years without any additional staff, and I do not think it is a wise policy to provide estimates for works which the Department has not the staff to carry out, and hope that those works would even be started. If Government is genuinely disposed to provide employment for people by the execution of public works in every part of the Colony

I think its first duty should have been to see that the Public Works Department was fully staffed. I appreciate that at the present moment it is difficult to get a staff of technical officers, but we should meet the conditions as they exist. We were told by the Commissioner of Local Government a few days ago that we have men in this Colony capable of filling almost any post. I agree with that view, and so far as this Department is concerned I feel certain that under present conditions we cannot get technical staff from abroad, but I see no reason why the Department should not be staffed by local men who have had many years of practical experience of various works carried out by the Department. For instance we need not have a technical officer to supervise trench digging, which involves a large proportion of the estimates. Thousands of men, and more than the Department requires, can be found for the supervision of works of that nature, and I am appealing to Government to consider seriously this aspect of the question rather than have these arrears of work from year to year, and unexpended balances from one year to another because technical officers cannot be found to fill these vacancies.

Another Department has been created, and as far as I can gather, the work of the Public Works Department has been divided. I think care should be taken to see that there is no overlapping. Now that we are short of technical officers in one Department another Department has been created without additional staff, and the question is whether it will not be more difficult to do the works which are being estimated for. As regards the new Department I have not seen any provision made for an adequate staff. I gather from the announcement made by Your Excellency that a grant has been approved by the Imperial Government for that Department, but I see no provision on the estimate for the staffing of that Department. How these works are going to be carried out I

do not know. I do not know if Government's idea is simply to place works on the estimate to raise the hopes of people all over the Colony that work will be provided for them, while year after year those works are left undone. I am appealing to Government to make every effort, and I feel certain that sufficient men can be found in this Colony with practical experience and capable of working under the technical officers. So far as supervision is concerned one need not be a technical officer.

I quite agree with the hon. Member who has just taken his seat as regards the post of Paymaster. The post was created in order to relieve the technical officers of having to go from one end of their district to another to pay employees of the Department. The trouble does not lie with the Paymaster. One does not expect him to be a detective. Before pay sheets are passed the work has to be examined by the overseer and checked by the District Engineer, on whose certificate payments are made. Therefore the District Engineer has to be satisfied that he certifies payments for works that have been completed. I do not exonerate an officer who signs a pay sheet without being satisfied that the works have been carried out, but I must admit that in every Department some reliance must be placed on junior officers who are supposed to carry out certain duties. If a senior officer has to check everything I feel certain that very little would be done in any Department. Therefore, a junior officer should be properly paid. In many cases in the Public Works Department one finds that a foreman, and for that matter even an overseer, receives far less salary than perhaps half a dozen contractors in the district. If we look for cheap supervisors there must be leakage somewhere. Therefore, in selecting officers for such responsible posts, care should be taken to select reliable officers, and of course adequate salaries should be attached to such posts. In a Department which spends two

million dollars a year it is hopeless, and I do not think any Member who has spoken would expect that there would be no pilfering at all, but that such pilfering should be reduced to the minimum. To achieve that care must be taken in the selection of senior officers.

As regards the roads of the Colony I can say that the stretch from Mahalacony to Rosignol is in a deplorable condition. It is not a pleasure to travel on the roads — in fact it is dangerous to life — yet maintenance votes are spent year after year. I think that before the month of October the vote is exhausted each year, and scarcely anything has been done to the roads. It appears to me that it does not concern the Department or the officer in charge.

Mr. JACKSON: I would just like to support what has been said about the condition of the roads of the Colony. It seems to me that the problem of maintaining the roads or constructing proper roads is a very difficult one so far as the Public Works Department is concerned. This is an age of experts, and we have experts coming here to do one thing and another. Is it not possible for us to get an expert road-maker so that this difficult problem might be solved? It is certainly annoying to travel on the roads of the Colony in dry weather. There are ruts which shake your life out of you. I do sincerely trust that some effort might be made to improve the condition of the roads. Of course the material used for road-making is not worth while. It cannot stand up to the traffic of heavy vehicles, and I think some effort should be made to find other materials. There is no doubt that the roads are a disgrace to the Colony, and I do not know who is particularly responsible for this state of affairs. Since I have been a Member of this Council I have never heard any Member refuse to vote money for the upkeep of roads.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I thought I had made it perfectly clear in my review that the Department contemplated the establishment of a Road Research Department. Perhaps I may repeat that the Advisory Committee feels that it is highly desirable to have an expert. Experiments on a small scale are now proceeding with sand and concrete, and a stretch of 600 feet has been laid out on the East Bank road. The Committee has seen the experiments which have been made with sand. In other cases we have experimented with all kinds of material.

Perhaps, at this stage I may also point out to hon. Members that the question of burnt earth was one of considerable concern to the Committee. We were out of burnt earth and the Department had actually to go into the question of burning its own supply. We have now a stock. Stone is unobtainable and even the roads in Georgetown, hon. Members will appreciate, have rather depreciated as a result. I do not think it can be said fairly that the Department is doing nothing in regard to the roads.

Mr. JACKSON: This is very good news indeed, and I compliment the Chairman of the Committee for the information supplied. I hope the research work that is going on will be productive of good results. I have no doubt that if the research work should prove successful there would be no need to refer to the question of roads again in the near future, but I do not think the hon. Member would deny that the roads are in a very bad condition. That is my complaint.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I can appreciate that, and I think you and I have had the most uncomfortable drive through the West Coast Demerara some time ago when we could have hardly got through.

Mr. SEAFORD: It is very very easy to come here and find fault with this and that department. I do not say it is always undeserved, but I think the

Public Works Department is more open to criticism than any other because it is more in public view. But I would like to say that any hole one can pick in it today is due to under-staffing of that Department. The Engineers and Officers of that Department have very much more to do than any human being can be expected to carry out. For years in this Council the Director of Public Works has asked for an increased vote to do certain work and has not been given it. I remember a late Director of Public Works here, Major Craig, getting up in this Council and saying "I am only allowed so much per mile and my colleague in Trinidad is allowed ten times as much per mile." I must admit that today this Council is prepared to give more money for the staff of the Public Works Department, but unfortunately today we are unable to procure the Officers necessary. I think you have done your best to get an increased staff. I do think that any criticism made today is entirely due to the shortage of staff. I know that the present Director of Public Works has done his utmost. I said that in Committee a short time ago when he produced figures to show that the expenditure on works carried out was not 100 per cent. but about 300 or 400 per cent. greater with exactly the same staff he had before. I do feel it is only fair to these Officers to say that they have done their best. If they even failed they have done good because you cannot expect more from them than from any human being.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I just want to add a few words to what was said by the hon. Member on my right (Mr. Seaford), speaking of certain figures showing the value of works undertaken by the Public Works Department. I was careful to point out in my Budget Statement that those were works met from public funds, but the Public Works Department is also called upon at the present time to undertake an enormous amount of new work under Development and Welfare. That is an added burden which has

caused the strain on the Public Works Department. Hon. Members can hardly realize the effect of those works on that Department and on most of the service departments as well. I mention that to show that we cannot base our argument on \$2,000,000. The amount is very much more than that.

Sir, I listened to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Luckhoo, and I can quite appreciate his anxiety as regards the administration of the Public Works Department. He has given his feelings, but I would like to say this: I am not defending the Department at all. I, as Financial Officer, regard it as a manipulation of funds. On the other hand this kind of manipulation of funds has been more or less with us not to the large extent as expressed. There is one thing said about it and that is, one reason for that manipulation is the fear of coming forward for excess votes. It is a reflection of the control which has been exercised by the administration and by this Council itself. It is to some extent, I submit, wrong though it is a reflection of fear on the part of these Officers to admit bad estimating in several respects. That does not justify—and I may say I was horrified at the offence. It is not evidence of a criminal offence. It is not evidence of a criminal act but a departmental administrative irregularity.

With regard to the report that eleven employees of the Public Works Department were arraigned before the Criminal Assizes, it is a little unfair to the Department to call all of them "employees." I believe, not more than three of them were members of the staff, the others were Contractors with the Department and not employees at all. Although it does not weigh much in the consideration, as I have said, it is wrong to say eleven employees of the Public Works Department. Two or three were substantially employees of the Department, and the others were Contractors.

Mr. JACOB: Is the hon. the Colonial Treasurer criticizing the Auditor's report which clearly states that eleven employees of the Public Works Department are on trial? I gather from what the hon. Member says that the Auditor's report is incorrect.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am not criticizing anybody. I am merely making a statement of fact. Eleven employees were charged with fraud, but one only was an Officer on the regular Public Works Department establishment while three were temporary clerks, and the other seven were Contractors. Those are the facts. It does not make very much difference but for the sake of record we should get it corrected.

The hon. Member for Western Berbice referred to this Head—XXXVA—Public Works—Drainage, Drainage and Sea Defences—which has been inserted in the Estimates, and he wonders why it had not been made for additional staff. I would ask him to read the Explanatory Note attached to the Head. What I attempted to do in framing these particular estimates was to provide under this new Head for all the existing staffs who are being transferred to form the nucleus of the new Department. I thought it desirable that we should start in that way. I thought we should not interpolate in these Estimates the hypothetical position of Officers whom we are hoping to get but have not a chance of getting in the immediate future. I have suggested, reported and advised that the Department should take immediate steps to get as many of the substantive staff—engineers, overseers, etc., for the new areas as quickly as possible, fix the salaries, make arrangements for employment and come forward with the necessary provision on application to this Council. As the Message indicates a grant has been authorized in regard to this new Department and, as I also said, it is proposed to come forward to the Council with

a Message setting out the details in full of the new Department, get approval and proceed with the new Head fully set out in the new year. At the present moment this is the nucleus or starting point of the Department. The Department is going ahead as fast as it can to get as much staff as it can.

The CHAIRMAN: The point is fully set out in the Notes to page 75.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I desire just to say one thing on that. As regards the work undertaken by the Public Works Department in 1944, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and other Members of this Council spoke with far more knowledge than myself, but I want to give just one example of additional and extraordinary work placed on the Department without the necessary opportunity of getting additional skilled staff. The Flying Field at Mackenzie when completed the actual runway will be as large as the one at Atkinson Field. In the construction of the runway at Atkinson Field the U. S. Authorities brought hundreds of men, but the Public Works Department is doing the one at Mackenzie Field with its old staff. I appeal to the generosity of Members to realize that taking on a job like that along with the general normal work of the country is an immense undertaking. Mr. Boyce (Director of Public Works), I know, is worried over that one particular job. It is enormous and honestly, gentlemen, you should go and see it.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Whatever has been said in defence of the criticisms that have been levelled in connection with the affairs of this Department, I feel that it is proper that Members should express considerable concern over the affairs that now exist and have been in existence for some time. As I understand the criticisms that have been levelled against this vote so far, it is not that the money is being voted here and spent without any valuable returns for it. As a matter of fact my experience

in this Council is that whenever this Department is under consideration it has never been that, at all. I do not think, sir, that anything hon. Members have said so far and, I hope, what I will say a little later will be taken to be criticism of the Head, or any particular member of the Department, or for that matter the Advisory Committee or any particular member of that committee. In so far as the Advisory Committee is concerned the members have an extremely difficult task ahead of them and, if I may say so, I think that Members of this Council ought to sympathize with them in the same way as I do sympathize with them. But the hard and cold fact remains that some shake up, very soon I hope must be carried out in this Department, if these criticisms are to be stopped or if the situation we hope to see is to be achieved.

Let us examine the meat of the criticisms that have been levelled so far. The substance of what has been said is that not only there is over-payment in wages but also there has been loss of materials. In short, sir, let us put it very bluntly. It is not only that somebody is being paid for work he has not done. Let us say they have been overpaid for the work or in fact they did not work at all. Some time ago when the criticism, I believe, was very severe against this Department, the Government appointed a committee to consider the question of staffing. The proposals of that Committee were put up to this Council and, I think I am correct in saying, they were accepted because every Member of the Council felt, as I believe they feel today, that too much could not be done to strengthen the supervision that seems to be so necessary in this Department, and I use those words advisedly. On one occasion, I think, it was also suggested that rather than giving out work in the way it was being done the work ought to be given out under contract. As a matter of fact it was said in defence that whenever the opportunity presented itself the work was given out

by contract as against being done by ordinary day labour. But what do we find? Even when the contract work is given out there is very strong and striking evidence of dishonesty. The Contractor contracts to do a job for \$300 and either he does not do the job at all and collects the \$300, or he does half of it and the \$300 is already paid to him and, for want of a better term, for peace sake he is given more money in order that the work should be completed and some substantive Officer would not have to go back to the Head of the Department and say "I regret exceedingly to inform you (to use Government language) the job cannot now be done for \$300; it requires more money to complete it." Why do they have to adopt these subterfuges? I think that is where the evil begins. The Officers in the Public Works Department should be informed that in no circumstances would they be allowed to adopt subterfuges in order to cover a short vote. I think that is the first step which ought to be taken if we do hope to see some improvement

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Hon. Members will observe that in respect of the very point made by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member who spoke strongly and the hon. Member who has just taken his seat, the Contingencies vote in Appendix F, sub-Head 1, has been increased to \$9,000 in order to stop where necessary the transferring of votes. In other words, the Committee felt that these amounts which are tabulated against several sub-heads should remain as such and there should be no drawing in excess. Any transfer of vote if necessary would be taken out of the Contingencies vote. Hon. Members will see that in 1944, I am speaking subject to correction, the vote under a similar sub-head was in the neighbourhood of \$3,600. We hope by this process to obviate what has been referred to by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member. Also we hope in time to

extend that principle to other votes. There is another point. I may inform hon. Members that the general list of Contractors numbering hundreds is now being reviewed by the Committee, and it is proposed from that to select only those who are reliable. Hon. Members will appreciate that in the past, perhaps rightly or wrongly, the Department may have been forced, perhaps by Members themselves in the various constituencies advancing arguments for the employment of this or that Contractor, to swell the list of Contractors. Therefore we now have under review the general revision of the whole list of Contractors of the Public Works Department.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I must say, I am not convinced by the explanation just made by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat and, if I may be allowed to suggest what I think is likely to happen from my knowledge of the situation, this item "Contingencies" will probably become a bottomless pit. It may be too that this Contingencies vote will be under the control of the Head of the Department, but I say, and I say it most emphatically, that you may have one vote of \$9,000 or 10 at \$9,000 each and that will not prevent the manipulation of votes. We know it because it is found in every Department, and we close our eyes to it because in those cases the amounts involved are very small. Maybe it is on account of that this pernicious habit is growing.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Will the hon. Member suggest a way of stopping the manipulation of votes?

Mr. de AGUIAR: If the hon. Member allows me to proceed I hope to be of some assistance in that direction. With his frequent interruptions it may be difficult to pick up the threads of one's thoughts. When he began to speak I gave myself the credit of listening to him. These frequent interruptions make it exceedingly difficult to pick up where I left off. If we are here merely to

sympathize with the Department, or the Advisory Committee, or the Head of the Advisory Committee, then perhaps we can do that. It will only take us a matter of a few minutes to do that. I take it that is not our purpose. It is certainly not mine. My idea is to see that I give some assistance, and it is for that reason I have risen to make a few remarks on it. I can well understand it is common knowledge that the Department has grown and is continuing to grow. We all know that the work handed out to the Department to carry out is very great. There can be no question about that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of order! The work has grown in the Department and it has not the staff to cope with it.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I am aware of that. Perhaps the Department has become too top-heavy. That is the answer. I agree that all works of a public character should be carried out by the Public Works Department, and I would be the last person to suggest that we should go on dividing a Department of this kind in order to carry out various works that we have in hand and works that are contemplated. I would be the last person to suggest that, but what I do suggest is that there is considerable thought over the supervision of any job—and I believe that is a statement that will go unchallenged—that is undertaken by the Public Works Department, and that is where the remedy lies. If the Head of this Department wishes to control the various reports that go to them from time to time, it is their duty to exercise such control as they consider proper over the carrying out of any particular job, whether it be the painting of the Public Buildings or it be the construction of a new building or of a new roadway. You can take it from me as it stands here, that is where the weakness lies. They have absolutely no control whatever.

Let us examine that. What is the procedure? Supposing it is considered necessary to build a house at the top of Brickdam. I would bring hon. Members' mind to Georgetown. The procedure is that the draughtsman prepares the plan and the Engineer takes it and passes it to the particular Engineer who is in charge of the erection of buildings in the City; he in turn passes it on to the foreman and it eventually finds its way to the person carrying out the job instead of to the Chief Officer of the Department. I say emphatically we have had scandal after scandal, and on many occasions individual Members of this Council have been able to put their fingers on particular jobs. Not so long ago, I recall, in this Council a Member had to draw Government's attention to the exorbitant cost of a building at the top of Camp Street. It had to be admitted because after all—I do not recall who was the Member—it was a statement of fact. When it was examined Government had to admit that the cost of the building was not only above the estimate that was prepared but also above the probable cost of a building of that size. Every job this Department has carried out that I personally have been able to find out, the cost has been either above the estimate and that is why they have to manipulate the votes, or so high that they had to come back for more money and admit there was some faulty calculation of one kind or another. What hon. Members have said in this Council about manipulation of votes is perfectly true, and I repeat again I regret exceedingly another avenue is being opened for further manipulation of votes. We know as a matter of fact that opportunities are present throughout these estimates that will afford an Officer of this Department to manipulate votes all the year round, and now we are providing him with another avenue. It seems to me that we are looking for trouble in that direction.

Your Excellency, I am going to ask you to pay some heed to the remarks

that have been made during the course of this debate. The position was serious before and, I regret to say, it is becoming worse. I make that statement, as I said at the beginning, not because I want to lay a charge at the door of any particular person. My sole reason for doing so is because it is my earnest desire that every effort, and a serious effort at that, should be made to supervise properly any work that is being carried out by this Department and by a secondary officer of the Department. Do not leave it to any of the subordinates. That is where the trouble lies. It is absolutely impossible to expect a man who is in the lower walks of life to carry out these responsibilities. In the first place he does not get the salary for it; we must not expect him to do it. Whether it is laziness or not, I do not know. That is for the Head of the Department to find out. There may be some other reason too. Some of us do not like work. Some of us have to be driven to do some work, and the sooner something is done in order to make those people who are responsible for the work of this Department toe the line, whether he be the Director, the Deputy Director, the Chief Executive Engineer, whoever he may be, the better it will be for all concerned. It is the only way we can hope to have any satisfaction in the work that is being done by this Department. Let us do it before it is too late. The doors have not yet been closed, and I say that as a note of warning. The doors have not yet been closed against irregularities continuing in this Department, and those officers in charge of its administration should take care that they do not see a repetition of what happened not so very long ago.

Mr. LEE: I would also like to add my protest against the manner in which this Department is carried on, and to point out to Government some of the things that can and should be rectified. I agree with the hon. Mem-

ber for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) that the supervision of public works, whether done by the Department or by contract, should be the responsibility of a senior officer of the Department, so that if anything goes wrong the responsibility could be placed at the door of some responsible officer. If a responsible or a senior officer of the Department had been in charge of the works which figured in the recent trial, the Department would not have been able to put the blame on subordinates. For instance, quite recently some zinc sheets were stolen from the Public Works Department and I got the co-operation of the Director in order to lay the blame on the responsible officer, but I could not procure the necessary evidence because a man was afraid of losing his job.

Dr. SINGH: I have been a Member of this Council for many years and I agree with most of the remarks made by hon. Members, but why continue to whip a dead horse? We have a new order now. An Advisory Committee has been appointed, and if we are given an opportunity we may be able not want people to be prosecuted; I

Mr. LEE: I absolutely agree with the hon. Member. I am not saying that the Advisory Committee should not be given a chance, but I would like to point out that the task is an arduous one, and it requires a clear sweep. If it devoted its attention to all the complaints that are made this Council might have very little criticism against the Public Works Department, because I can assure hon. Members that we have as Director of Public Works a gentleman who will give Members every assistance in order to stop leakages. I have got such assistance from him and I have stopped one or two leakages.

Mr. JACOB: Question.

Mr. LEE: I can prove it. I do to alter things.

want those leakages to be stopped. In the case of the zinc sheets the Director told me that if I could procure the evidence he would protect the informant, but under pressure of someone the man would not come forward to give the evidence, and the tool had to take the blame. I admit that there is a shortage of responsible senior officers but the Department has been re-organized, and I feel sure that if certain of the junior officers were promoted and given salaries commensurate with the work they have to do, Government would get good results. Many of them have complained that they are paid small salaries and simply carry out the orders that are given to them. The junior officers are not given a chance to show their ability. I know of an instance in which, if a junior Paymaster had been listened to, certain irregularities would have been discovered in the pay sheets, but because he is a junior officer a senior officer said: "Don't worry about that, the Engineer should look after that." If a senior officer was held responsible and junior officers were given an opportunity to show their ability and their interest in their work many of these irregularities would be stopped.

I suggest that Government should endeavour as much as possible to avoid giving out public works to contractors. I feel certain that if these contracts are abolished, and the responsibility for such works is placed on an officer of the Department, these irregularities would be prevented. If works are carried out by the Department, the Paymaster would see the pay sheets, and when estimates are prepared the quantity of material, the value of the material, and the cost of labour are all calculated.

As regards the roads I would like to draw Government's attention to the condition of the road on the West Bank. I travel over that road almost every day. It previously had one of the finest stone foundations made by

an overseer some years ago, but the Public Works Department uprooted the stone, levelled it off and applied burnt earth. I am not an expert but I have a little commonsense. As a result of the damage done by heavy lorries I am afraid it will cost Government twice as much to repair that road within the next week or two. An experienced person would have used the same foundation and there would have been a good road. The roads of the Colony are built of burnt earth, and if heavy lorries are allowed to run over them when the rain falls I fear that the Road Vote will have to be doubled. Something should be done to protect the roads before they get into a worse condition. For instance, Vergenoegen is regarded as an outlying district, and because very few people live beyond that village no attention whatever is paid to the upkeep of the road there. I know that a certain solicitor had to leave his car when he got into that part of the road.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : I travelled over that road a couple of days ago. They are working on it.

Mr. LEE: The incident I refer to occurred during the year, and my friend can find out from the solicitor what happened. What I am saying is that because of the neglect and the occurrence that took place on the road they are now trying to repair it, and that the cost will be double. The Department complained of lack of sufficient burnt earth, and decided to increase the price to the contractors. The result is that the Department is burning earth itself, but the cost of materials and the transportation of the wood from one place to another is not added to the cost of burning a heap. I submit that if there was proper supervision of public works there would be very little criticism of the Department by Members of this Council.

The CHAIRMAN: I gather that the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) wishes to vote against this estimate.

Mr. JACOB: From the general trend of the debate I am satisfied that there is great dissatisfaction among the Members of this Council regarding this Department. Certain Members have certain ideas, and it may seem very individualistic to move the deletion of certain items alone. I know that certain Members will move the deletion of two or three items. I think that if a subordinate employee is incapable it is the duty of the Head of the Department to have him removed. There may be two or three of them, but since the Head of the Department will not do anything, and since the Government will not do anything I think it should be the duty of this Council to enter a protest by not voting any money until something is done. I see the hopelessness of doing that. Nevertheless I am going to do it even if I stand alone. I move that the head "Personal Emoluments, \$98,056" be deleted.

The statement has been made that this Department has grown tremendously, and that the staff has not increased in proportion. That is not correct. In 1942 the actual expenditure under "Personal Emoluments" was \$62,839. In 1943 it rose to \$76,807, an increase of \$14,000. In 1944 the approved estimate was \$87,741, an increase of \$10,934, or roughly \$25,000 between 1942 and 1944. Then for 1945 it goes up again to \$98,056, an increase of \$21,000 over 1943. From 1942 to 1945 it has been increased by \$36,000. I think that is sufficient to indicate that the statement that the staff has not been increased in proportion to the increased work is absolutely false.

Mr. SEAFORD: Will the hon. Member also state the cost of the works the Department is responsible for—the increase of those works over a number of years?

The CHAIRMAN: I think we have debated these general things a good deal. If the hon. Member wishes to vote against the Fixed Establish-

ment I will put that to the vote. I think we have debated these general points sufficiently, and we should get on with the actual figures. I therefore propose to put the annually recurrent Fixed Establishment.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Are there any posts vacant on the Fixed Establishment?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Item 10 — Quantity Surveyor. I thought I had mentioned that in my review.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I think there are others.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you know of any others?

Mr. WIGHT: There is a junior Draughtsman, but I believe we have one acting.

The CHAIRMAN: We will get the information for you. I will now put the Fixed Establishment.

Agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.
IRRIGATION AND SEA DEFENCES.

The CHAIRMAN: There are very necessary additions to this staff in view of the drainage and irrigation projects contemplated for 15 or 20 years.

Mr. JACOB: I say this with a certain amount of diffidence, but I think the time has arrived when the rules regarding the retirement of officers who have reached the age of 60 years should be applied very strictly. This Government has heard criticisms year after year regarding the Public Works Department, which includes drainage, irrigation and sea defences, and it is time Government paid some heed to those criticisms. Not because Government has a majority and is in a position to put everything through that it should take advantage of its position.

There are certain Regulations regarding the retirement of officers, and I think some of these officers—at least one of them—is above the retiring age, and I am asking Government to pay some heed to that fact.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, that will be done as soon as possible.

PUBLIC WORKS—ANNUALLY RECURRENT.

The CHAIRMAN: We have to put up the Furniture vote (\$2,860) to \$6,000 in view of the fact that we have deleted similar items from other heads.

Agreed to.

Item 1—Maintenance and Reconditioning of Public Buildings, \$184,000.

Mr. JACOB: May I ask whether there are detailed estimates for each building to be reconditioned, or whether this sum of \$184,000 is just put down as a convenient figure under this head?

Mr. F. H. Allen (Deputy Director of Public Works): Normally we anticipate to spend half this sum on ordinary maintenance, that is repairs to buildings. The other half is applied to reconditioning of buildings. It is impossible to give an estimate for that class of work. We do not know what it is going to cost because as you strip a building you come across defects which examination had not shown in the first instance. It is not possible to give a strict estimate for reconditioning.

The CHAIRMAN: You work on an average from year to year, don't you?

Mr. ALLEN: Yes sir.

Mr. JACOB: I have not been able to catch every word from the Deputy Director of Public Works; it is somewhat difficult to hear him at this end. It seems peculiar that the Department

does not know how much it is going to spend on a particular building. I am asking Government to have that very clearly set out. If you are going to repair 25 buildings you should put a specific sum against each building, and some executive officer ought to see that that amount is kept to, or if it is exceeded, how it is exceeded.

The CHAIRMAN : It would involve an enormous amount of work on the surveyors and engineers.

Mr. ALLEN: You can only know what work has to be done to a building when you proceed to strip it.

The CHAIRMAN : Until you have started on it you cannot know how much it is going to cost. For instance, if you had an exact survey made in June or July and you cannot get on with the work until November of the next year your original estimate would be completely useless.

Mr. JACOB : We have heard about galvanized sheets, and it is known that the case went before the Magistrate where a subordinate employee pleaded guilty. Galvanized sheets were removed from a building and sold, and new ones were put on. If that building had been properly supervised it would have been discovered that certain materials taken out could have been used. Further, it has happened that certain contractors—not reputable firms—were asked to supply 1,000 feet of board but they supplied 500 ft. only. There is no check of the quantities of materials ordered and received, and gross over-payments have resulted. That is my reason for asking these questions. The Department should have some check made of these things. The money saved would greatly compensate for the time and paper used by the supervising officer.

The CHAIRMAN: We will make a note of that.

Mr. SEAFORD: I challenge anyone, I do not care how experienced he is even if he is an expert like the hon. Member for North-Western District, to give any close estimate of what any building is going to cost, not only the repairs but the stripping of the building.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I think the hon. Member for North-Western District missed the point of explanation offered by the Deputy Director of Public Works. It is not possible to estimate for maintenance and reconditioning of public buildings. As soon as you touch the building you find something else is wrong. It is only when the work is actually done that you know how much is the cost. Not only is it a waste of paper but a waste of the valuable time of Officers of the Department

Mr. de AGUIAR : There is only one request I have to make and I need not have a reply now. I suggest it may be useful to adopt it in the future. It is that in respect of the column "Actual Expenditure" the details may be set out instead of giving the lump sum.

The CHAIRMAN : I agree with the hon. Member. It will give a much better idea.

Mr. de AGUIAR: And wherever possible in the Estimates that may be adopted especially when dealing with expenditure of that kind. The estimates of the Clerical staff can be lumped.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it would be useful. Hon. Members are agreeable to item 6, "Furniture" being increased to \$6,000.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item increased from \$2,860 to \$6,000.

Item k—Artesian Wells and Distribution Lines, \$4,000

Mr. EDUN: Last year I made reference to pipe-lines for Best and Phoenix, West Coast, Demerara. I was told that attention would be paid to that district, and even the District Commissioner told me that something would be done. I want some attention to be paid to it now.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the Director take a note of that?

Mr. ALLEN: Yes, sir.

PRISONS.

The CHAIRMAN: The Superintendent is out of town. I do not see anything peculiar about the vote. There are a few increases in salaries—increments—and maintenance. We have a certain number of additions proposed under Prisons as the result of a report which came to the Executive Council a little while ago. I call on the hon. the Colonial Treasurer to state them

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The items to be moved in are to strengthen the staff at the Mazaruni Station because of a report received by Government. It is proposed to have a new Chief Prison Officer, Mazaruni, at a salary scale of \$1,200 to \$1,440 by \$60 and the item carried out at \$1,440, as a new item under sub-head 1—Personal Emoluments. Item g should be amended to read:—

“Warders—3 Principal Warders (\$960 by \$60 to \$1,200)—\$3,060; 6 First Class Warders (\$720 by \$60 to \$960)—\$4,520; 8 Second Class Warders (\$600 by \$30 to \$720)—\$4,990.”

The item will be increased by \$2,940 to \$12,570. For the Mazaruni Station there will be a Chief Prison Officer, 2 First-Class Warders, one Second-Class and one Third Class Warder to be substituted for two Assistant Warders, one Messenger and one Mess Cook.

The other consequential amendments are—

“Item j amended to read—19 Third-Class Warders (\$480 by \$30 to \$9,600)—\$9,640; 30 Assistant Warders (\$360 by \$24 to \$480)—\$12,800; 6 Supernumerary Warders (\$240 by \$24 to \$360)—\$1,862, and the total reduced from \$24,782 to \$24,302.

Item n — Station Allowances to Warders and Lighting Plant Attendants), H.M.P.S., to be increased by \$600 from \$2,040 to \$2,640.

Item s—Temporary War Bonus—to be increased by \$560 from \$8,832 to \$9,392.”

The two items to which I referred, to be inserted are—

Item t— Messenger (\$240 by \$24 to \$360)—\$240.

Item u—Mess Cook (\$300. by \$24 to \$360)—\$300.

Further Sub-head 7—Uniforms for Officers and Warders—to be increased from \$2,350 to \$2,536.

From all the figures I have quoted the increase in the staff is one Chief Prison Officer, two First-Class Warders, one Messenger, one Mess Cook, and one Second-Class Warder and one Third-Class Warder to be substituted for two Assistant Warders, the whole being to improve the strength of the staff at Mazaruni. I beg to move those amendments.

The CHAIRMAN: How many Officers?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Three new Officers and two substituted for two Assistant Warders, a Messenger and a Mess Cook—five officers.

The CHAIRMAN: Conditions are not entirely satisfactory at Mazaruni, and it is strongly recommended by the Executive Council.

Amendments put, and agreed to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: On the printed memorandum there is one other item, to be moved in—sub head 4—Clothing and Bedding—to be increased by \$950 and carried out at \$3,950. The reason for that is the prisoners were in the habit of using pyjamas made of flour bags. These were very difficult to get and the administration had to purchase cotton for the making of pyjamas. That too is a recommendation of the Committee and that is being carried out.

Mr. de AGUIAR: They cannot get flour bags! What happens to the bags from the flour they use in the Prison Bakery? This is something new. They bake bread and have a lot of bags.

Dr. SINGH: There are so many prisoners to be provided for. Some of the bags are used in making garments.

Mr. deAGUIAR: More prisoners they have, the more bread they will have to make and the more bags will be available for them to make use of.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This matter was thoroughly investigated and strongly advocated by those who know about it. The matter went to the Executive Council and we were entirely satisfied that enough material was not available for clothing.

Dr. SINGH: The bags are not enough to make garments for each prisoner and, therefore, it is thought wise to purchase some other cloth.

Mr. de AGUIAR: If the Committee is satisfied, I am. But I speak from personal experience. I know what happens to flour bags.

Mr. JACOB: This vote has been increased from 1943 by \$32,000. It does not speak very well to have the prison population increasing. It is better to have the population of the Colony increasing as a whole. I think our Social Welfare Officers have a great deal of work to do.

Mr. LEE: May I enquire whether application has been made to the Comptroller for Colonial Development and Welfare for funds to repair the buildings at Mazaruni?

The CHAIRMAN: As far as I know we are carrying that on our own vote. I very much doubt we can get funds merely for reconditioning existing buildings. Some constructive scheme, some ideal scheme like the reconditioning of a hospital, may be successful.

Mr. LEE: Will Government consider an application for a new building?

The CHAIRMAN: We are going on with our programme of reconditioning. There is the difficulty of obtaining materials.

Question for the increase of sub-head 4 put, and agreed to.

The increase of the vote under the Head from \$119,763 to \$125,599 was agreed to.

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE SCHEMES.

The CHAIRMAN: As far as the actual money from our own funds is concerned the vote is a formality.

Vote agreed to.

POLICE.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the increases in the Personal Emoluments have been covered by resolution. Is that not so, Mr. Treasurer?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: A communication is now with the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Mr. LEE: Under this Head may I enquire from Government in respect of certain officers who are employed

on "J" boats on the specialized staff? Your Excellency, I understand that when these men were engaged they were told that they would be given a Sergeant's pay. That rate of pay has since been increased but they have not been given that increase. I ask Government to enquire into the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: How many are they?

Mr. LEE: I cannot say. I think there are about 12 or 15 of them.

The CHAIRMAN: What are their duties?

Mr. LEE: They are engineers on the military boats on the river.

The CHAIRMAN: The Commissioner has asked that the title of County Superintendent be simply Superintendent, and all the District Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents be classified as Assistant Superintendents. This will be as it is throughout the Unified Service. The change will be shown on the Estimates as 6 Superintendents and 12 Assistant Superintendents.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is proposed to delete the word "County" from item (3) and to insert the word "Assistant" before the word "Superintendents" in item (6).

The CHAIRMAN: The Commissioner informed us in Executive Council that that is desirable.

Question put, and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: We have one question of principle in respect of men taken on as engineers on "J" boats who were given to understand that they would receive a Sergeant's pay. That has gone up and they have not received any increase.

Mr. ORRETT (Commissioner of Police): The understanding was that

their rate of pay would be graded as that of a Sergeant at the time, and the correspondence on the subject referred to them as being recommended for a Sergeant's pay. I do not think there is any intention that these men, who are doing work that can be done by Constables or Lance-Corporals, should receive the pay that Sergeants get today.

The CHAIRMAN: As a matter of convenience on first appointment they were given that pay, and there is no necessity to increase their pay simply because that of Sergeants of Police has been increased.

Mr. ORRETT: Yes.

Mr. LEE: When they got the job they were told they would get a Sergeant's pay. That pay has been increased and, therefore, they should get the increase too.

Mr. ORRETT: In the correspondence between the Commissioner and Government the recommendation was made that they should be graded at the pay of a Sergeant. Sergeants were then paid a comparatively small amount. They were taken on for war work as Rural Sergeants. I can fill their places tomorrow with Constables. They are merely launch engineers and coxswains and are certainly not doing the work that deserves the pay of a Police Sergeant.

The CHAIRMAN: We will bear that in mind.

Mr. LEE: I am not satisfied with the explanation. If Government at the time of appointment tells a person that his pay will be that of another person and that other person's pay goes up his similarly ought to go up too.

The CHAIRMAN: But the wording of the letter which I have in front of me is entirely different; they were not guaranteed to be always paid as Sergeants. The Commissioner is satisfied that is so.

Mr. ORRETT: I consider that adequate pay for launch engineers and coxswains.

Mr. LEE: I am leaving it to you, sir, to enquire into.

The CHAIRMAN: I will have a look at the letter myself.

Mr. EDUN: I want to take this opportunity to make certain observations on certain aspects of the administration of this Department and, I think, I should not lose this opportunity at all. I detest to detain the Council, but in the interest of this country it is my duty to speak and I shall speak as strongly as I can. I remember very well indeed some months ago, or perhaps a year ago, when one other hon. Member of this Council and myself approached you in the matter of Police administration on the Corentyne Coast. I remember very well indeed you told us that the Police must not only act impartially but they must show that impartiality in the administration of justice. I want to bring to the attention of this honourable Council how partial the Police have been in their action in the matter of a recent tragedy.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL I must object. That matter is *sub-judice*.

Mr. ROTH: I rise to a point of order! I think that matter is *sub-judice*.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. the Attorney-General has just apprised me of that fact.

Mr. EDUN: Can the hon. the Attorney-General stop me from speaking in this Council on the matter of Police administration?

The CHAIRMAN: No, not if the remarks are general. I will not attach them to any particular question or thing that may be a question before the Court at the moment.

Mr. EDUN: The point I want to bring to this Council is that the Police Department from the Commissioner down to the ordinary Rural Constable is being paid from public funds gathered from the inhabitants, especially the producing element and, therefore, I as the Representative of that producing element have the unequivocal right to say to the Commissioner, who is a servant of the people, how the Police should act in order to prove to the inhabitants of British Guiana that they are acting impartially. There has been found on the West Coast Demerara a human skeleton, and there is every indication of foul play. Months have passed and all sorts of rumours are pervading the atmosphere around that district, and yet the Police seem to be impotent to ferret out even the identification of that person. I am simply pointing out the complacent attitude adopted by the Police in this particular case. Further on the East Coast an Indian woman--

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This case also is before the Court.

The CHAIRMAN: This case being also before the Court it cannot be discussed.

Mr. EDUN: I do not think anybody has been charged in this case.

The CHAIRMAN: If you think your remarks are general you may proceed.

Mr. EDUN: I ask, why when certain facts of maladministration are being produced here certain people must be troublesome? Law or no law, this Council is above the law because after all this is the Council that makes the law.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, please! This Council is not above the law. Please do not say so. It is quite unnecessary to use extravagant phrases

of that kind. They may put you out of order. Go on with your general comment on the administration of the Police Department.

Mr. EDUN: I am placing before the Council certain incidents that have occurred recently. I am going to prove to this Council where impartiality is being exercised in a matter common to the inhabitants of this country. I started my story in a very logical way, pointing out that from the West Coast, Demerara to the East Coast Demerara, there have been tragic occurrences and up to now I, as a public man and a newspaperman, do not know what has happened, whether the culprits have as yet been found. I have not seen a temporary Police Station established in those districts to ferret out the culprits. An Indian woman was shot in her home. But at Port Mourant the whole Police Force was engaged in investigating a crime which took place there.

The CHAIRMAN: Now you have mentioned a particular case again. If you are intelligent you can get along perfectly well without putting yourself out of order. But for the specific references to one place or a particular crime you will be all right.

Mr. EDUN: Very well. At a certain place a temporary police station was set up, and from there the Police started a campaign of terrorism against—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I must object. That case is coming before the Supreme Court and the jury—

The CHAIRMAN: You have gone so far now that anything you say is going to be related to that particular case.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It would appear in the Press to-morrow and all the jurymen would read it.

The CHAIRMAN: No reference to this matter must appear in the Press to-morrow, please.

Mr. EDUN: Am I not entitled to tell this Council that without a warrant a policeman raided the office of the Man-Power Association at Rosehall? I want to tell the Commissioner that we are going to charge that man with trespassing within the precincts of that office, and we will see whether British justice will not be done in this case. But I am not to speak here; the President does not care for me to speak on these matters.

The CHAIRMAN: I am, unfortunately, bound by the law.

Mr. EDUN: I do not see that any law comes in here under the administration of the Police Department.

Mr. LEE: I must ask the hon. Member to keep to the subject of the debate and not to say that the President is obstructing him.

Mr. EDUN: Sir, I shall not speak.

Mr. LEE: I am glad of that.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry you could not get across what you wished to say. You could have done it very well without making reference to certain occurrences. Unfortunately, I have to make certain decisions.

Mr. LEE: I notice that the salaries of the County Superintendents of Police have been increased slightly, but I would ask Government whether it is satisfied that the increases are adequate for the work they are doing. I consider that their remuneration is not sufficient, and I ask that some consideration be given to the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: You were not in Council when I made an announcement on that particular point. I said I was unable to give any ruling or even to

comment usefully on a point of that kind because the matter had gone forward to the Secretary of State with a recommendation from the Executive Council. I ended by saying that the point I wished to make was that it was impossible for me to take any decision, or even to comment usefully on those proposals until I had the Secretary of State's reply which might, of course, raise very special and new points. That does not prohibit you asking what you wish, but it prohibits me giving you the kind of answer you wish.

Mr. LEE: I will leave it to Government to do what is best. I would also like to ask Government to consider the position of police constables stationed in the country districts. They have to search for houses, and the Rents Restriction Ordinance is only applicable to certain areas—Georgetown, New Amsterdam, Bartica and Christianburg. Landlords in other parts of the country have increased their rents more than 50 per cent. while the salaries of policemen have not been increased as much as 50 per cent. I am suggesting that Government might consider some house allowance to these men.

Mr. JACOB: I am sorry the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) was unable to make his point. I have risen to say that I have received several complaints regarding the partiality of the Police. I refer to complaints from Berbice. I am not certain of the other places, and if I say "elsewhere" that would be sufficient. I know that the Police do not pay particular attention to certain matters, while in other matters they pay a little too much attention, with the result that yesterday afternoon comments were made by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. J. A. Luckhoo) regarding the frequent attendance of certain persons at the Magistrate's Court, and to the fact that fees for Crown witnesses have increased very much. I am a strict believer in law and order, and I

would certainly like to see any culprit brought to justice, but I do disagree entirely with partial methods when the real culprits are never brought to justice.

The Police vote has increased tremendously, and for next year it is being increased by \$156,245. The vote for 1943 was \$642,037, and for 1945 it is \$794,524—an increase of over \$150,000 within two years. I do not think there is less crime; in fact there is more crime now. The prison population is increasing very rapidly. There must be something wrong somewhere. I do not think it can be said that the people of the country are getting very bad; that they are disregarding law and order and are becoming criminals. I think that with different methods by the Police we could have less expenditure, and a great deal of time could be saved—not only the time of the Police but the time of civilians could be utilized to better advantage. I speak with a certain amount of diffidence, but I do hope that something will be done to allow the civil population to feel that they are safe, and that if anything happens steps would be taken to bring the real culprits to justice.

Mr. ROTH: Government is aware that during the past year I have criticized the Police very strongly. I have lived in this country for nearly 40 years and I have had considerable experience of the Police. Their ranks include some of the finest men one could wish to meet. I admire them but, unfortunately, there are many men among them who cannot by any stretch of the imagination be put in that class. It is a very delicate subject. I know, but, speaking from personal experience, I wish to assure Your Excellency that certain of the Police are intimately associated with the criminal class. It strikes me that we have to improve the character of the Police Force and come to some arrangement whereby some of the Officers may be transferred frequently from this country to other

Colonies. In the last few days we have heard a lot about a Unified Service. I think that system should be applied to the Police Force.

Mr. EDUN: As we are in Committee I think I should once again endeavour to say something about the Police. When the Police vote was under consideration last year I endeavoured to point out that every policeman should, from the commencement of his service, receive a minimum salary of \$40 per month. I meant that from the bottom of my heart, because I thought that if we had a satisfied Police Force there would be proper administration of justice to the inhabitants of this country. I also endeavoured to point out that upon the administration of the Police Department rests the security and the liberty of the people. I think the whole civilized world endeavours to maintain its Police service at a high standard of efficiency and conduct. I have not seen that conduct on the part of the Police Superintendents because, somehow, they happen to belong to a social group apart from the general inhabitants of the Colony. I feel, sir, that if we are to achieve and maintain progress we have to see to it that money is paid for efficient service, and we have to examine the credentials of those whom we pay.

I was not here last evening but I was told of cases in which policemen endeavoured to make cases against shopkeepers for Sunday trading. Let me give an instance of how Police administration is carried on. The law makes it an offence to open a shop on Sundays and expose goods for sale or barter. The Police prosecuted several shopkeepers for opening their shop windows, without proving to the Magistrate that there was sale or barter of goods. It was only recently that a clarification of that section of the law was made on the West Coast of Demerara. I do not know who was responsible, or whether there are men competent to prosecute in the country

districts. I do not know whether prosecutions can be properly carried out by an ordinary N.C.O who has no knowledge of the law, except that gained by reading the law and being for some time in a police station. I think every legal practitioner ought to protest against prosecutions being carried on by N.C.O's.

In the whole administration of the Police Department there is a tendency towards revenue collection. If members of the Police Force from top to bottom are not prepared to behave themselves they cannot expect co-operation from the people. Last year I endeavoured to bring about that co-operation by voting money for the police in order to save them from going around the workers' homes and asking for eggs, fowls and padi. I see that that tendency is still there. Quite recently, at the bidding of a sugar estate manager who made a complaint, a charge was instituted by the Police in the public interest. That is an objectionable thing, especially in view of the fact that the Commissioner of Police told a Press conference that he would see to it that the Police would not interfere in private quarrels. In certain quarrels the Police will not interfere, but when it suits a Police officer to help his friends he uses public funds to do so. That is not the kind of thing which promotes co-operation between the Police and the public. I trust that the few remarks I have made will go into the hearts of those men on whom is dependent the liberty of the poor working class illiterate persons from whom they receive their salaries.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I agree with a great deal of what has been said by the last speaker, but I do not think the Commissioner of Police is aware of what is happening in the Force. In some instances policemen engage unscrupulous people to give evidence in price control matters. I think the Commissioner should put a stop to the

practice of engaging people who would not think twice about lying against another. Quite recently persons have been apprehended, and some policemen got money from them on the assurance that no prosecutions would be brought, but as soon as the money was put into the hands of the policemen the persons were charged with bribery. I consider that a wrong thing to do. Some members of the public suffer through unscrupulous policemen. I know that the Commissioner is doing his best to bring the Force up to a high standard. There is no greater admirer of the Commissioner than I am, but I think some enquiry should be made into the matters which the last speaker has told this Council about, and what I have mentioned.

The CHAIRMAN: Some Member asked about constables in rural districts. What is the precise point?

Mr. LEE: Some of the policemen stationed in rural districts cannot find housing accommodation. They have to rent houses for which unreasonable rents are charged. I am asking Government to consider the position of those men and see whether it is possible to give them an increased house allowance.

Mr. ORRETT: The position, as stated by the hon. Member, is perfectly correct. Some married policemen do find considerable difficulty in getting houses in the rural districts, and have to pay high rents. We have only a certain amount of accommodation for married men. The remedy is to build more quarters, but with building material so difficult to obtain now that is really a matter for the future.

Item (8)—4 Warrant Officers (1 at \$1,680 to \$1,920 by \$48, and 3 at \$1,560 to \$1,848 by \$96), \$6,888.

Item (9)—4 Warrant Officers (1 at \$1,680 to \$1,920 by \$48 and 3 at \$1,440 to \$1,680 by \$48), \$5,850.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Are these two items co-related in any way? There is an explanatory note to item (9) which says:

“Three supernumerary appointments have been made *vice* the Officers away on military duties whose salaries are paid from Imperial funds.”

I presume that the appointments made under item (9) were to fill the posts under item (8), but my usual question comes up again—whether the amount of money put on the estimate was actually spent.

The CHAIRMAN: The men who are away are not drawing their pay, and three supernumeraries are acting for them. That is how I read it. Is that right, Mr. Commissioner? Before I put the Fixed Establishment would you care to reply to some of the comments that have been made on the administration of the Force?

Mr. ORRETT: I would like to refer particularly to the case brought to the Council's attention of the skeleton in West Demerara. Actually a skeleton was found there some months ago, and it has been found quite impossible to identify it. The medical officer found no marks of injury and no one has come forward with a report of any relation or friend of theirs missing. In consequence all sorts of rumours have got around of some mysterious murder.

As regards the other comments about police methods and decoys in price control cases I am afraid that in any police force anywhere one has to take advantage of what tools one can employ. One is dealing with people who are deliberately out to break the law. It is a very difficult matter for the police to get decoys. I am afraid I can offer no solution to that. All police forces have such charges made against them. It is unfortunate that we cannot employ people of the highest type. Everything is most carefully considered before a prosecution is brought.

Mr. LEE: In last year's Estimate there was an item under Public Works-Extraordinary—Erection of new Police Station, Leguan—First instalment. I see no mention of it in this Estimate under Public Works-Extraordinary. Has Government given up the idea of building a new station?

The CHAIRMAN: Is it not in Appendix F?

Mr. LEE: No, sir. It was budgeted for last year but this year it is not there.

The CHAIRMAN: Commissioner, what has happened?

Mr. ORRETT: I am surprised myself that it is not here.

The CHAIRMAN: You would like to see it on the provisional programme?

Mr. LEE: Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: We will pursue it.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It is impossible to reach it, and that is why it has been struck out. There are other police stations to be built, one at Sparendaan, which will cost \$51,000, and there are others much more important. I think we are taking them in order of priority. It is impossible to do all the police stations.

Mr. LEE: The previous Commissioner of Police had budgeted for it for the last three years. Sparendaan was not on the list at that time.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask about it myself.

Item (17)—Allowances.

The CHAIRMAN: I see an allowance in respect of Kwakwani. There is no constable there.

Mr. ORRETT: There is one constable.

The CHAIRMAN: The estimate for uniforms (\$42,900) shows a very large increase. Is that annual?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Part of it appears to be new.

The CHAIRMAN: Every one of the items under "Other Charges" has been substantially increased, and I want to know if they are all really recurrent expenditure. What you are not going to do every year should be an extraordinary vote. You have not shown a single reduction.

Mr. ORRETT: I am afraid it is very difficult with the Police Force.

The CHAIRMAN: I know your numbers have gone up.

Item 2 (b)—Subsistence Allowances, \$9,000.

Mr. LEE: May I enquire whether the same amount is given to the policemen as before the war? I think they used to be given 50 cents per day.

Mr. ORRETT: It is considerably increased now. Subsistence Allowances generally throughout the Service have been increased and owing to the revision of the salaries of the rank and file in 1944 they are not paid the rates of subsistence previously paid to them. That is the reason why these allowances have been increased.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I think the Commissioner of Police may be informed that the increase in the rates of Subsistence Allowances in the Service generally has been questioned, and I hope that the remarks made by me must have been drawn to his attention. I do not know what steps Government proposes to take in the matter, but it seems unfortunate that because a man receives

an increase of salary he falls into a different group and in that way increases the expenditure somewhere else. I do not think that was intended.

Item 7 —Medical Expenses, \$1,200.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I believe the Police get a certain facility at the Public Hospital. I see now that this item is up by \$200, and then the item "Conveyance of Prisoners" is up another \$200. I think they should be knocked out.

Mr. ORRETT: That vote is actually put on there to save us having to come back later on in the year and say that we have overexpended the vote, because it is difficult to control these expenses.

The CHAIRMAN: You should not do it. You must come for the money.

Mr. ORRETT: It is easy to follow a vote.

The CHAIRMAN: What is your average expenditure for last year? That will be your better ground. You spent \$1,115 in 1943 on this particular vote (Conveyance of Prisoners) and you have put in \$1,200 to cover that. As to the Medical Expenses, I do not quite understand what Medical Expenses are paid.

Mr. ORRETT: I have been discussing a scheme with the hon the Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. de AGUIAR: With that assurance, I think, we may pass on.

Item 11 — Books, \$1,800.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I notice in the memorandum on the subject—

"To provide for purchase of copies of Stone's Justices Manual and Archbold's Criminal Pleadings for each Headquarters Station and for additional provision for station books for record keeping."

I would like to know if it is proposed to buy new copies. I have a suggestion to make. At the present moment the Magistrates are not yet provided with those books, but I have an idea that with some assistance you can procure from the Law Library a spare copy or two of each of those books which will be quite sufficient for Police purposes. Law Books are very expensive at the moment and in a good many cases cannot be procured. The Libraries in England have been bombed out. I would like to know what is the intention. I would suggest that you go into the matter with the Librarian. I think the Police can get sufficient copies and so avoid making this expenditure. I would ask, if they are for the use of the Police, that they should be also made available for the use of the Magistrates who very frequently have to refer to them. The practitioners have copies and, therefore, it should be understood at Police Headquarters that the copies should be available to the Magistrates and not be regarded as Police property.

The CHAIRMAN: That suggestion may be considered.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I take it this item will be an extraordinary expenditure.

The CHAIRMAN: I will take out all the new votes and put them under Extraordinary before I issue the warrant.

Mr. LUCKHOO: There is one book I should recommend to the Commissioner which, I think, the Police ought to be provided with. That is a book on Evidence either by Powell or by Phipson.

Item 20 — Maintenance, Water Transport, \$6,000.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I would like to make a suggestion in respect of item 20 arising out of the Explanatory Note

appearing in the Estimates. I hope when river patrolling as far as Hyde Park is no longer necessary that opportunity will be taken to cut down the service at once and so save money in that way. I believe it is still necessary at the moment.

Item 30 — Cleaning of Pounds, \$2,266.

Item 32 — Maintenance of Compounds, \$2,000.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I very much regret to suggest that these two items should stand down. I am going to urge that the Commissioner accept the suggestion that they be deleted.

The CHAIRMAN: I imagine it is to keep the pounds and compounds in decent order which at present is done by Police labour. I take it your argument is that you want the Police to devote their time to their proper duties and not spend much time on the compounds.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I cannot accept that as an official reason.

Mr. ORRETT: What you have said, sir, is one of the reasons, and the other is this: There are always small sums of money one has to spend from time to time to keep the stations in order. Where it is necessary to get supplies of burnt earth from the Public Works Department we have to employ persons to fetch it into the compounds and level it off. This is a general vote spread around a large number of stations, \$2,000 split up amongst the number of stations we have gives a very small amount to each.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I would like to hear the Commissioner on Item 30.

Mr. ORRETT: I found when going around the stations when I first came

here, the system was that the Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of a station is the Pound-keeper for which he received a nominal small fee per month, and the general practice was that the Constables had to clean out the pounds. I do not consider that is any work of a policeman. He is not a scavenger. I consider, and I do submit, he should not be expected to do that as part of his duties. This amount of money will be coming back from the pound fees collected from the impounded animals.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I am supporting the deletion of Item 30. There is a Pound-keeper who is paid a nominal sum, but the Commissioner has not mentioned that so far as the pound fees are concerned the Pound-keeper obtains a portion to which he is entitled and the balance is paid into revenue. It is intended that for that portion he should keep the pound clean. The Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of the station always happens to be the Pound-keeper, and he gets one shilling (24c.) for feeding the animals and cleaning the pound. It is a matter that had been taken up some time ago, that the shilling should not be charged, but it was left in the air. Decision was postponed and not taken up as yet. Even that levy of one shilling was challenged and representation was made for a reduction of the pound fees.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I would like to help the Commissioner, but just fancy these two items are going to increase the vote by \$4,266. They are not urgent and are not necessary. As the hon. Member for Western Berbice has stated, the Pound-keeper gets a portion of the Pound Fee and a certain amount for feeding the animals.

The CHAIRMAN: The Pound Fees are paid to the Pound-keeper who is the Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of the station!

Mr. ORRETT: He collects the fees on behalf of Government and pays them into revenue. Reference is made to money paid for feed. The fee charged the people is that fixed by the Pound Laws and Regulations, and that amount is expected to be expended on feeding the animals. I am not supporting the system of the N.C.O. being Pound-keeper. It is a system I am very sorry to see obtaining here. The law says the amount must be paid for the feeding of the animals and not used by the keeper to clean out the pounds.

The CHAIRMAN: Does he clean out the pound?

Mr. ORRETT: He either does it or the Constables stationed there. The pounds are part of the station and they have to be kept clean. As I have said already, it is not part of the work of the members of the Police Force to be required to clean out the pounds. Their duties are clearly laid down in the Ordinance.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I feel in a very large measure I should support the Commissioner of Police in this matter. Even my learned friend on my left (Mr. Luckhoo), who knows as much of the subject as I do, has forgotten that the animals are taken to the station and are sometimes kept there for several days, and in respect of cases they are sometimes kept there for weeks until the prosecution takes place and it is determined whether the animals are really strays or not. I am speaking of cases where there is some difficulty in obtaining a Magistrate's Order as to whether the animals are strays or not. In some cases the owners admit the animals have strayed and go and release them by paying the pound fees. In such cases the keeper shares the fees. What happens in a case where the animals are kept in the pound as strays? Is it right that an Officer of Police should perform the duty of receiving these strays, exam-

ining the brands and comparing them with the registered brands, and going generally into an investigation with the persons who brought them there? Do you think, as the Commissioner of Police says, men who may rise to Warrant Officers would be pleased to perform the work of a barrack labourer? I object as a citizen to a Policeman who may rise to become an important officer because he happens to be a constable in charge of a station, to be made to perform the work of a barrack labourer. That is what a barrack labourer does—clean out the filth made by the animals in the pound. There is only one point of view at issue. Whilst I am not quite clear about this expenditure being above what the estimate is, I think if there is any expenditure to be incurred in the cleaning of the pounds and in preserving the sanitation of the district where these men live and where the hon. Members who object do not live and are affected by the stench, there is a lot to be said about it.

The CHAIRMAN: How many pounds are there?

Mr. WOOLFORD: Every station in the rural districts has a pound.

Mr. ORRETT: There are about 60 stations, but there are no pounds in Georgetown.

The CHAIRMAN: That is about \$30 each.

Mr. ORRETT: It will be worked out in proportion to the number of cattle kept per year.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: There is the other case quoted by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam, where there is a stray and it remains at the pound for several days. The fees are also collected for such strays. The keeper advertises that stray after seven days and, if that stray happens to be sold at auction, all expenses are deducted including the fees to the keeper and the

balance is deposited in the Treasury until some owner claims it. Perhaps the Commissioner has no experience of the matter as he came here not too long ago, but I am sure the experience is that Non-Commissioned Officers clamour to go to stations where there are always a lot of animals in the pounds, because they derive a good bit of income from that side of their activities as Pound-keepers. I am sure the Commissioner will find that Non-Commissioned Officers ask to be placed at stations like the Mahaicony Station, where every day of the week they have between 40 and 50 head of cattle in the pound, and the keeper collects between 40/- and 50/- per day. Would not that be sufficient to keep the pound clean? I happen to know the Constables do get something from the keeper as an extra amount for keeping the pound clean.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Arising out of this particular question, there are two classes of animals that are detained at the Station. This matter should not be dismissed quite so slightly. One class is the strays and these are redeemed by the real owners within 24 or 48 hours and are not there very long to keep the pound in a filthy condition. I know that in certain districts the Non-Commissioned Officers do make a certain amount of money but not in the cases where there is a charge of larceny or of illegal branding. The point is the animals are detained and they make the pounds filthy. Who is to pay for cleaning the filth? Is that part of a policeman's duty?

Mr. JACOB: May I suggest, if the Colony is going to pay for cleaning the pounds and for everything, that all the fees should go into revenue and the keepers should get nothing?

Mr. ORRETT: The keeper gets nothing. All he gets is \$1 per month for keeping the records. The fee allowed by law is for the feeding of the animals. That is a question I have to go into to find out what books are being kept so as to make sure that the money allowed

by law goes towards the feeding of the animals, as it should be, and no profit made goes to the keeper.

Mr. JACKSON: The money he gets is for keeping the pound. A cow goes into the pound in the morning at 6 o'clock and is taken out by 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. During that interval it messes the pound. He gets nothing for that, but when the cow remains overnight he has to supply it with grass and for that he is paid but not for cleaning the pound. I think the item is a legitimate one.

Mr. LEE: If we are going to raise the morale of the Police Force, I absolutely agree with the Commissioner that the policemen should not be made to clean the pounds. I know as a fact that a cow goes into the pound at 9 o'clock in the morning, and the owner goes at 3 o'clock in the afternoon to take it away and pays only the legitimate fee of 32 cents. He pays nothing more. In the interval the cow is tied in the pound and makes the pound filthy, and the policemen have to go and clean the pound.

With respect to Item 16—"Rural Constables"—I notice in the Explanatory Note that it is proposed to utilize the services of Rural Constables to a greater extent in future. If you are going to utilize their services for Police work, I think the payment of 60 cents per day which is allowed is too small. I would ask Government to consider paying more than 60 cents per day, if they are going to be put on Police duty for over eight hours a day.

The CHAIRMAN: I pass that hint on to the Commissioner.

Question "That this sub-head be allowed to stand as presented to Council" put, and the Committee divided. The voting was as follows:—

For: Messrs. Lee, Jackson, Jacob, Dr. Singh, Austin, Critchlow, Seaford, Woolford, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—11.

Against: Messrs. Peer Bacchus, de Aguiar, C. V. Wight and J. A. Luckhoo—4.

Motion carried.

Item 32 — Maintenance of Compounds, \$2,000

Mr. de AGUIAR: I would like to ask whether in the consideration of the sum for maintenance of compounds there is included an item for cleaning the stables at Brickdam and Eve Leary, or it will be continued to be done by policemen?

Mr. ORRETT: It is part of the duties of a Trooper to look after his horse and to clean the stables.

Mr. LEE: I would like to explain to hon. Members that in respect of this vote I have travelled all over the Essequibo Coast and the Islands of Wakenaam and Leguan, and also on the East and West Coast and Banks, Demerara. Let us assume for agreement's sake a Superintendent of Police thinks a broom is necessary for a station; he has to write and get the Public Works Department to supply it. It takes practically a month and sometimes two months to get that broom. I know a case at Stewartville Court. There was a leak in the roof which could have been done by a carpenter within a few minutes, but by the time the Public Works Department was notified and could send a man to have it done between one and two years elapsed and practically the whole roof needed repairs then. I feel that we should give the Commissioner of Police this vote in order that he might keep the compounds in order without having to go to the Public Works Department for these little items.

The CHAIRMAN: I personally have seen a great many of the compounds have asked that I should attend a meet-

thought they were very well kept, with one exception. The Commissioner has pointed out that the maintenance of these compounds takes up part of the time the police should be engaged on police duties. I imagine that your police have not as much spare time as soldiers.

Mr. ORRETT: Every hour spent at a station on fatigue means an hour lost for police duties.

Mr. JACOB: I am supporting the item. Anything that is relevant to the Public Works Department and the waste that is being carried on will have my support. I do not think this is intended for the repair of buildings; I think it is intended for the purpose of keeping the compounds in order.

I take this opportunity to say that this new procedure of removing the furniture votes for the various Departments and lumping them under "Public Works" is going to lead to very bad consequences. I would very much prefer to see the Police Department looking after its own furniture. They order a certain number of chairs and they pay for them.

Item 32 put, and agreed to.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I ask that my dissent be recorded.

The CHAIRMAN: That leaves us with Post Office, Transport and Harbours, Colonial Emergency Measures, and two minor items under Education—Queen's College and the Bishops' High School. I propose to take Post Office at 2 o'clock tomorrow, with Transport to follow. The Treasurer has a number of items on the final list of additional expenditure for 1944. It is not a very long list and should not take long.

There is another point. Members have asked that I should attend a meet-

ing of Finance Committee to discuss freely the Colonial Emergency Measures. If convenient, I should do that also tomorrow afternoon. We should leave that until we see how we get on tomorrow, and decide whether a night session of the Council is necessary. If not convenient we should have an afternoon sitting on Friday.

The Council resumed.

The PRESIDENT: I would like to thank Members very warmly for the business we have got through tonight. I adjourn the Council until 2 p.m. tomorrow.

