

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)
Order in Council, 1953)

MONDAY, 20TH DECEMBER, 1954

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C., in the Chair.

PRESENT

His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C.

Ex-Officio Members:—

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. F. D. Jakeway, O.B.E. (acting).

The Hon. the Attorney General,
Mr. F. W. Holder, Q.C.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. W. O. Fraser, O.B.E.

Nominated Members of Executive Council:—

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid,
C.M.G., C.B.E. (Member for Agriculture,
Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Member
for Labour, Health and Housing)

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Member
for Communications and Works).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E.
(Member for Local Government, Social
Welfare and Co-operative Development).

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj.

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

Nominated Officials:—

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

Nominated Unofficials:—

Mr. W. A. Phang.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E.

Mr. C. A. Carter.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb.

Mr. H. Rahaman.

Miss Gertie H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dey.

Mr. R. B. Jailal.

Mr. Sugrim Singh.

Clerk of the Legislature—
Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—
Mr. E. V. Viapree (acting).

Absent:—

The Hon. G. H. Smellie—on leave.

Mr. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E.

Mr. T. Lee.

Mr. E. F. Correia—on leave.

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

Lt. Col. E. J. Haywood, M.B.E., T.D.
—on leave.

The Speaker read prayers.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, December 17th, 1954, as printed and circulated were taken as read and confirmed.

GEORGETOWN TOWN COUNCIL
(AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. Farnum (Member for Local Government Social Welfare and Co-operative Development) gave notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance further to amend the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance by making provision for Town Constables to be appointed to bear the titles of Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Sergeant, and Corporal.”

REFUND OF TAX ON PRIVATE BILL

Mr. Sugrim Singh gave notice of the following motion—

“Be it resolved: That this Council recommends to Government the refund to the British Guiana Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha the sum of one hundred dollars paid in terms of the Tax Ordinance, 1939, for the Private Bill intituled An Ordinance to Incorporate certain persons as Trustees of the Body known as the British Guiana Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha; to vest in such persons certain property; and for purposes connected with the aforesaid.”

ORDER OF THE DAY

DEVELOPMENT FUND BILL

The Financial Secretary: I now beg to move the second reading of the Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to provide for the establishment of a Development Fund for the carrying out of Works of Development in the Colony.”

In the course of my Budget Statement made on Friday I referred to the necessity of establishing this Fund and for the introduction of legislation in order to do so. I also mentioned that all colonies carrying out major development works were establishing such a Fund, and that it was found necessary to do the same here. It is necessary to provide a credit head to which all funds to be used will be credited. The advantage of that is, once a sum is credited to the Fund it remains development funds and there is no question of the money lapsing and having to be revoted every year. I think that hon. Member will see the necessity for it, and that they will approve of the Bill as drafted.

Sir Frank McDavid seconded.

Question put, and agreed to,

Bill read a second time.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

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

Clause 1—*Short title*—was passed as printed.

Clause 2—*Establishment of Development Fund*.

Mr. Ramphal: I want to put a very simple question to the hon. the Financial Secretary — I would really like to know what he means by development works. Perhaps it is simple, but, for example, roads. Would the building of new roads or the rebuilding of old roads like the one from Georgetown to Rosignol come under development works?

The Financial Secretary: All the projects that normally come under the

Development Programme will come under the Development Fund. Finance will be drawn from that Fund.

Mr. Ramphal: I do not want to rise too often, but I do not think that is an answer to my question, and I am not going to accept that. What comes under the Development Programme?

The Financial Secretary: All the Items, I take it, which have been passed in the Programme and which have been approved by this Council as being in the Development Programme.

The Chairman: Perhaps the hon. Member is suggesting that some proposal of his did not develop.

Sir Frank McDavid: I say in answer, this: any work or expenditure item which would not probably be met from current revenues. I hope the hon. Member follows me. That is to say, there is a recurrent budget which will carry all ordinary expenditure works and another budget which will not. All works which cannot be financed out of the current budget will go into the development budget as coming out of development funds.

Mr. Macnie: My friend, the last speaker has said that if works or any expenditure cannot be carried out from the current annual estimates that they might be met from the development funds. You might find something under 'development' which is not development at all, but there because of the limit of finance for the operation.

Sir Frank McDavid: That is purely dialectical. The real distinction between the various works is that some cannot be properly or reasonably carried on the ordinary budget. That is the distinction.

Mr. Ramphal: I had in view saying something about this when we come to discuss the Financial Secretary's Budget: the inclusion of funds for the building of houses for Government officers. Normally we do not carry that from year to year except for maintenance and quite a lot of money is going to be spent on it. However, I am not going to pursue that now. Sir Frank has given us an answer in the negative, and I will accept it for the time being.

The Chairman: I do not think I have put the Clause. I think I was just about to do so.

The Attorney General: You were just about to put it.

The Chairman: Very well, I will put it now.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 2 passed as printed.

Clause 3—*Sources of Development Fund.*

Mr. Macnie: I am dealing with 3 (a) and (b). "(a) refers to sums received by Government from time to time as grants or contributions for the purpose of works of development in the Colony; "(b)", sums by law appropriated to the Development Fund from the revenues and funds of the Colony. Is the distinction very subtle? If it is not, will the Financial Secretary tell the Council what sums he has in mind might be appropriated? I hope I am not embarrassing the hon. Member.

The Financial Secretary: The hon. Member does not realise there are two distinct contributions. One comes from revenue of the Budget—the current revenue. I have made provision for the Development Fund from the current

[The Financial Secretary]

revenue to the extent of \$1,100,000. In addition to that contribution there is the contribution from accumulated surplus balances which have to be appropriated from year to year.

The Chairman: I think that is the answer to the hon. Member's question.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 3 passed as printed.

Clause 4—*Investment of Development Fund.*

Mr. Ramphal: Before we go further. I do not wish to move an amendment to the Clause as it is printed, but I will make this suggestion here that, as we are all after getting foreign investors to come into this country and investing money—I do not know if hon. Members will agree with me—that His Excellency the Governor should give preference to local securities and local projects, so as to show the outside world that we believe in our own country and we believe in the things we are doing, rather than investing money outside.

The Chairman: The hon. Member is not moving an amendment, but just throwing out a suggestion. I will bear that in mind.

Sir Frank McDavid: May I point out that there is a distinction between 'investment' in the meaning of this Clause, and expenditure on a project. That is to say, the Clause is dealing with the temporary investment of money and funds. It speaks of lawfully depositing in any bank or temporary investment in securities. Now the hon. Member suggested that that 'investment' there might mean devoting it to some project. That is not investment

at all. If, indeed, monies of this Development Fund were to be expended in that way, then the correct course would be to expend it directly and with the approval of this Council on the project—not to invest in any securities to finance the project. It simply means to secure the money temporarily while it is not being used. I hope I am being clear.

Mr. Ramphal: Very well, Sir.

The Financial Secretary: Investment in this case really means that money belonging to this Fund may be put into something to be available at call, so that if it is wanted at any time it could be easily withdrawn. It may be either deposited at one of the local commercial Banks, the Post Office Savings Bank, or with the Joint Colonial Fund, which is done in the case of loan funds.

Clause 4 put, and agreed to.

Clause 5.—*Development Estimates.*

Mr. Ramphal: I observe that in this clause supreme power is given to the Financial Secretary to submit Development Estimates to the Legislative Council for approval. I am wondering whether he will have any responsibility to the Executive Council before he does that?

The Financial Secretary: All estimates go before the Executive Council before they are submitted to this Council.

Mr. Ramphal: Sub-clause (3) shows how apposite my statement was a moment ago. It says:

"(3) If the Financial Secretary is satisfied after the Development Estimates for any financial year have been approved by the Legislative Council that it is necessary or expedient to add to the amounts to be expended from the Development Fund as

shown in such Estimates, he may submit to the Legislative Council for the approval thereof, Supplementary Estimates of the additional amounts to be expended from the Development Fund during that financial year (hereafter in this Ordinance called "the Supplementary Development Estimates.)."

The Financial Secretary can do anything without the approval of the Executive Council.

Clause 5 put, and agreed to.

Clause 6.—*Application of Development Fund.*

Mr. Lord: I observe that there is no specific provision for the auditing of the Fund by the Director of Audit. I take it that it is so intended.

The Financial Secretary : All funds come under the scrutiny of the Director of Audit.

Clause 6 put, and agreed to.

Title and enacting clause agreed to.

Council resumed.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Sir Frank McDavid seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

LEGAL TENDER (JAMAICA CURRENCY NOTES) BILL

The Financial Secretary : I beg to move the second reading of the Bill intitled:

"An Ordinance to provide that all Government currency notes which are legal

tender in the island of Jamaica shall be legal tender for the payment of any amount in British Guiana."

I do not think I need add very much to what I stated in the course of my Budget Statement, in which I referred to the fact that I proposed to introduce legislation into this Council in order to make the currency notes issued by the Government of Jamaica legal tender in British Guiana. At present they are not accepted here. What I am seeking to do today in making those notes legal tender is what has been done in the Eastern Caribbean Colonies. It is the first step which we must take in bringing Jamaica into the unified currency system. When the Eastern Caribbean Colonies entered into that system Jamaica did not come in, for the reason that there were a number of difficulties. Jamaica's currency was in sterling, which imposed some difficulty as the currency of the other Colonies and the unified currency system were expressed in dollars. Those difficulties have now been resolved, and the Government of Jamaica has made formal application to the Currency Board for admission to the unified currency system. The Board has very gladly approved of Jamaica coming into the scheme and has always hoped that she would.

There are three steps which must be taken before there can be complete integration of the currency of Jamaica with that of the Colonies of the Eastern Caribbean. This is the first step. The next step is when Jamaica adopts the design of the unified currency notes while still retaining sterling. The final stage is when she decides to abandon sterling and accept the West Indian dollar. My hon. colleague on my right (Sir Frank McDavid) is entitled to feel every satisfaction for this achievement

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in bringing Jamaica within the unified currency fold, because he was mainly concerned in the early negotiations to this end. It has really only fallen to my honour to introduce this legislation, but the credit belongs to him. The formula on which Jamaica has agreed to come in is one which he himself devised, and I feel that he should take satisfaction in the successful outcome of something with which, as Financial Secretary, he has had so much to do.

Sir Frank McDavid: I beg to second the motion for the second reading of the Bill and to thank the hon. the Financial Secretary for his very generous remarks about myself. Like him I feel very gratified that Jamaica has taken this first step towards unification of currency to which the sister Colonies have been admitted. I am not so modest as not to say that I did have quite a lot to do with it, and I remember telling some of our good friends in Jamaica that it was quite useless their talking about federation if they could not take the very essential step in unification by agreeing to the unification of their currency with those of their West Indian neighbours. I am therefore extremely gratified that this process has now become an accomplished fact.

Mr. Speaker: There is one thing I would like to mention which I am rather surprised no one has mentioned before. It is that the \$10 and \$1 currency notes are very similar in colour, and I have heard complaints of losses incurred by persons on account of that similarity. Another fact is that the \$100 note is the least distinct in colour yet the most valuable. It is a sort of pale mauve.

Sir Frank McDavid: I may say that the colours were chosen on the best

advice. The Crown Agents and the manufacturers of the notes took a great deal of care indeed before they decided on the colour scheme which was approved by the Board of Commissioners of Currency. Your criticism is the first I have heard about the colour of the \$100 note which is not very frequently used. I do agree that after use one note in particular becomes very similar in colour to another, but it is unfortunate. I can assure you, Sir, that a great deal of care was taken in selecting the colour scheme.

Mr. Macnie: I was about to ask to be permitted to share your view, Sir, with regard to the similarity between the \$10 and \$1 notes. I am afraid I have not much acquaintance with the \$100 note. This is not the only country that suffers from similarity, especially after a little wear, between the \$10 and \$1 notes. The U.S.A. at one time had a similar difficulty, and I have been caught by that similarity. It is very true what you have said, but apart from that I feel that this is a very great step forward, especially for those who have to travel to Jamaica, for some of us know that it is quite an undertaking. The people in Jamaica would not accept our currency notes, neither would they accept sterling notes. On my arrival in Jamaica some time ago I tendered sterling notes which were refused, but I got over the difficulty by saying I had no change, as they soon found a way to change those £ notes.

Sir Frank McDavid: They would accept American money but not sterling notes!

Mr. Macnie: They are only too glad to accept American and Canadian money. I hope that the Jamaica Government will not be too long in passing similar legislation, because I assume

that this Government will not proclaim this Ordinance as coming into operation until Jamaica reciprocates with similar legislation.

The Financial Secretary: As far as I know, Jamaica has decided to introduce this legislation before the new year. I think most of the Colonies are taking similar action at this time. Certainly, as the hon. Member has asked, this Ordinance will not be acclaimed until we are satisfied that the Colony of Jamaica has taken similar action.

Mr. Speaker: I am trying to emphasize the depth of colour. The experts may accept the colour.

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.

Clause 2 — *Government Currency Notes of the Island of Jamaica to be legal tender in this Colony.*

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this clause be re-numbered clause 2 sub-clause (1) and a new sub-clause (2) be inserted. Copies of the proposed amendment have been already circulated to Members and, I think, it meets with their approval. It reads:

“(2) For the purposes of this section the value of currency notes provided, issued or re-issued under the Currency Notes Law of the Island of Jamaica shall be calculated at the rate of one pound for four dollars and eighty cents.”

That is what I would like to have inserted as sub-clause (2)

Mr. Macnie: It is usual to use the word “sterling” after the word “pound.”

Sir Frank McDavid: “Sterling” means the British pound. The reason is that sterling in our existing Currency Law is the Dollar, so we must equate the Jamaica pound with our dollar.

Mr. Luckhoo: May I ask if Chapter 275 referred to in the marginal note is supposed to be of the British Guiana Laws, as that chapter in our laws is the Whipping and Flogging Ordinance.

The Financial Secretary: It refers to the Jamaica Laws.

The Chairman: We had better insert the word “Jamaica.”

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, passed.

Mr. Carter: One question I would like to ask. Why this Legal Tender Ordinance only applies to Jamaica and not to the other Islands of the Caribbean as well?

The Financial Secretary: The other Islands of the Caribbean are already in the Unified Currency Agreement.

The Chairman: Trinidad and Barbados Notes are all legal tender here.

Council resumed.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Sir Frank McDavid seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BRITISH GUIANA RICE PRODUCERS
ASSOCIATION (SPECIAL PROVISIONS)
(AMENDMENT) BILL

Sir Frank McDavid: (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines): I ask leave of the Council to postpone the second reading of the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to amend the British Guiana Rice Producers Association (Special Provisions) Ordinance, 1952, with respect to the terms of office of member of committees of District Associations and of the Council of the British Guiana Rice Producers Association and for purposes connected therewith until a later date."

Question put, and agreed to.

Second reading of Bill deferred.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BUXTON AND
FRIENDSHIP VILLAGE COUNCIL
ELECTION AND ACTS) VALIDATION BILL

Mr. Farnum: (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): I beg to move the second reading of the Bill intituled—

"An Ordinance to validate the election of certain Councillors of the Buxton and Friendship Village District and all proceedings of the Village Council of that District in which those Councillors have acted and all acts done by such persons as Councillors of that Village Council."

This Bill has been brought forward to validate the acts of the Buxton and Friendship Village Council done during the years 1952, 1953 and 1954. In the Objects and Reasons attached to the Bill it is shown that in 1935 the Buxton and Friendship Village District was by Order of the Governor in Council made under the provisions of section 2 (12) of the Local Government (Village Council) Ordinance, 1935, divided into divisions for the election of councillors, and the number of Councillors to be elected by each division was in that Order specified. That Order continued

in force until the Buxton and Friendship Village District was reduced to the status of a Country District during the year 1951.

When the status of the District was restored to that of a Village District in the year 1952, action was not taken under the provisions of section 30 of the Local Government Ordinance, 1945 (No. 14) to divide the village into divisions for the election of councillors and the appointment of the number of councillors to be elected by each division. The election of councillors in the years 1952, 1953 and 1954, however, proceeded as if such action had been taken. It is therefore considered necessary to validate the election of councillors during those years and all rights, powers, acts, and duties exercised by them in respect of their election or purported election as such Councillors. This Bill seeks to make provision to validate those acts during those years.

Mr. Kendall seconded.

Mr. Ramphal: I would like to ask the hon. Member why such a long time has been taken to bring this Bill to this Council. Since 1952 it was necessary, and we are now near to the end of 1954.

Mr. Farnum: I was placed in charge of this department only this year, and so I am not responsible for the lapse. I notice that it is mentioned that it has been due to an oversight that action was not taken before.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without amendment.

Council resumed.

Mr. Farnum: I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. Kendall seconded.

Bill read a third time and passed.

MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD
TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the second reading of a Bill intitled—

“An Ordinance to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment No. 2) Ordinance, 1950, with respect to the licence fees for certain vehicles.”

This is one of the Bills which I mentioned in my Budget Statement that we have to pass before the end of the year. I do not think it is necessary for me at this stage to move the suspension of the Standing Rules, having done so before and Members know I am presenting this Bill. There is nothing much I can add to what has been already stated. It is merely intended to increase taxes. It is part of the proposals recommended to balance the Budget. These proposals have cost me a great number of friends, but I hope this Council will not have much difficulty in approving of this Bill.

Sir Frank McDavid seconded.

The Attorney General: May I ask whether the suspension of the Standing Rules for the purpose of passing this Bill has already got permission?

Mr. Speaker: I did not put the formal motion, as it was due for the first reading.

The Financial Secretary: In order to put myself in order I now formally

move that the Standing Rules be suspended in order to allow me to take this Bill through all its stages today.

The Attorney General: I second that.

Mr. Speaker: Not Standing Rules, but Standing Orders.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Orders suspended.

Mr. Speaker: The Bill is under discussion.

Mr. Macnie: I did not object to the suspension of the Standing Orders, but I do not think it is correct to say that we knew this Bill was going to be taken today. The only thing I wish to say on this Bill is, as I see it, this Bill is part of one of the recommendations of the excellent report by Mr. Nicholas on Taxation in this Colony, but it appears that the Governor in Council, including the hon. the Financial Secretary, has chosen to implement part of Mr. Nicholas's recommendations but not the others with which he linked his recommendations. Mr. Nicholas's recommendations were in separate parts. I have read the Report. The Report was on various subjects which went together and the recommendations were linked together. But Government is today attempting to adopt one of the recommendations and not the others. Mr. Nicholas recommended a reduction in the duty on petrol and gasolene, which would have reduced the price of gasolene in this country, and then he recommended an increase in the tax on motor vehicles. What Government has done would incur some criticism being levelled against it. I hope the hon. the Financial Secretary has not lost too many friends; he surely has not

[Mr. Macnie]

lost mine. I appreciate the value of friendship and can draw the line without losing friendship.

I do feel that the Government is to be criticized for taking this recommendation for an increase and not telling us anything about the other recommendations which were linked to that in that expert's Report to which tribute has been already paid. I feel that there is some cause for apprehension, when we have a series of recommendations tied one to the other and one is taken and nothing is said about the others. I suppose the answer would be that Government is considering the others. But they were made as links in a chain of recommendations. The one affecting the people who have to use these vehicles was that the duty on gasoline imported into this country, which I think is one of the highest in the world, should be reduced.

Mr. Jailal: I cannot subscribe to the views expressed in this Bill. I want to join hands with my friend the hon. Member who just spoke and to say that I think that the Government has been most ill-advised to attempt to put additional burden on the people of this country by trying to raise the licensing fees. Already, in the estimation of the people who have them—and probably all the people of Guiana who are forced to use motor vehicles as their only means of transport, motor vehicles have the roughest time. Our roads are impassable and we surface them with the wickedest material. Acids all over the place causes the motorist to lose the whole bottom of his car after 12,000 miles per annum. His parts wear. Parts cost a lot of money and other lubricants cost so much that the car is uneconomical for the population. I do not know where this will all end for the

small man. Perhaps with the big executive guy who does not pay for his car, it does not hurt. The man who finds it difficult is the one who goes to the garage and buys a car so he can proceed with a normal living. He is the fellow who is hard hit.

We must remember that these cars are doing a service to the Colony which the old railway cannot do. I submit for this Council's attention that on the Corentyne Coast where we believed we had solved a problem cars are now being ruined. Even in the old days people never used to wear out a set of tires in three or four months. How we can ask people to pay more on these cars I cannot see. Take the Essequibo Coast. All over the place there are roads which do not permit a man any margin of safety in his operating cost at all, and therefore we are not only going to hurt the man who owns a hire car or a private car, but the general public.

What I would suggest is, that if this Bill is designed to catch the people who are using the private car on the hire basis, then let us raise the fine and let the police do their jobs, but do not penalise the whole public because some fellows are doing the wrong thing. I cannot agree with any rise in the licensing fees for motor vehicles in this Colony because I know how difficult it is for a man to be able to make a living from them. Civil servants will say that the rates they are paying presently from driving continuously are high and they are finding that before the time arrives when they should have paid up fully for the car that they need a new one.

I would not say that you would not find owners of private cars doing the wrong thing—that is what I think

is behind this Bill—but let us put a fine of \$1,000 on such persons. I think this measure will come in for a lot of criticism and I feel certain that Government was very ill-advised on it. People are feeling that this is the smart edge of the wedge and licensing for transport generally will eventually come under scrutiny, and probably go up.

Development is here. These are the things we have to use for development. We have no railway system and we have to depend on motor transport. We have a half-way railway on the East Coast, another half-way one on the West Coast, and still another half-way one at Wismar. We cannot depend on them for sometimes the services are poor. Licenses and franchises have killed bus plyers. There is a new company operating on the West Bank now that cannot earn its oats. I cannot understand whether when this was being considered whether they had a thought for the populace of the country: for the people who had to move about from country to town with their little bit of provision and other things like that in order to be able to prosecute a living.

There is nothing in this Bill that talks about other vehicles which ruin the road and which should be removed—it is only motor cars that are being penalised. There are about 300 or 400 donkey carts which are ruining the East Coast roads all the time. As I see it, the man who is earning a living by a dray cart has practically the same investment as one with a second-hand truck. I think this measure ought to be deleted completely.

Mr. Speaker: Any other Member wishes to speak?

The Financial Secretary: I am very grateful to the hon. Member, Mr. Macnie for assuring me that I still enjoy his friendship, for I fear the prospect of losing it. But in so far as his criticism is concerned, my not implementing all the recommendations of Mr. Nicholas, I have to admit his impeachment. Yet if I had done so, I might have forfeited his friendship because Mr. Nicholas recommends that taxation which could be introduced amounts to something like \$2 million, and that company income tax and personal income tax should also be put up. Perhaps the hon. Member does not realise that part of the Nicholas Report merely covers what had already been decided on. He came and found some proposals already under consideration. But I think the Financial Secretary can in selecting items of additional taxation be guided by what Mr. Nicholas recommended. It is unnecessary to implement all his proposals now.

Mr. Macnie : To a point of correction. I did not say the 'whole report'. I referred to the recommendations on taxation on motor vehicles.

The Financial Secretary: I have already said that there were recommendations already in force and he merely blessed them. The part in which he recommends that the price of gasoline should be decreased would be something which we ourselves have not been able to adopt, and it is precisely for that reason I ask that the licences be increased. It is not because some hire car had converted the number-plate to private. But we need money for the services of the Colony. We are undertaking development and we must have money. This Council agreed to recommendations on Social Security and we want to get revenue from taxation.

In so far as Mr. Jallal's remarks are concerned I would say that the

[The Financial Secretary]

increases are so small that I really do not feel that the \$5 increase on licenses—or \$7.50—would actually kill them. It seems to me I had to look somewhere for the provision of additional revenue and I have done the best I could, fairly and equitably spreading the new taxes. I feel hon. Members will approve of the proposals as part of the Budget Statement.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

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

Clause 1—*Short title*—was passed as printed.

Clause 2—*New rate of licence fees for certain vehicles.*

Mr. Macnie: I would refer at this stage to something the Financial Secretary said. I am not quite clear as to whether Government has reached a decision on the question of the duty on gasoline. I understood the Financial Secretary to say that it was under consideration.

The Financial Secretary: I said it had been considered, but I was unable to accept it.

Mr. Macnie: I see therefore that Government does not propose to do anything about the price of gasoline. But I would suggest that it does not follow that if the price of gasoline were reduced through a reduction in duty, the revenue derived would be less—it might well be that people might not motor as much as they would like

because of a higher price—but rather, in the end a greater amount of gasoline might be used, bringing in the same, if not more, revenue that was got from duty.

If it is the idea that we are to stop wearing the roads, then that is too bad for those of us who have to go on the road—like some of us here. But it has been the case that by cheapening the price of an article sometimes one gets a greater consumption—not only as much, but even more than before.

It must not be thought that this will only react on the motor vehicle owners. It will also react on the people who travel, for there is no question about it that once the owner of the vehicle has to pay more he is going to take it out on the people who use his vehicle. Owners of taxis and buses will do so from the 1st of January, or it may be they will start before. It must not be thought also that it will not be felt in the country. It may not be felt so much in town. There are people in the town of New Amsterdam and in the villages who have to travel every day, and as my friend the hon. Member, Mr Jailal says, they cannot travel by rail. They are going to pay for it. As regards the situation concerning the roads in Berbice, it has been suggested that it was caused by some people using private cars in the carrying of passengers. In Berbice the Licensing people have fixed a limit on the number of cars for hire to run on the roads. Of course there is no limit on the number of private cars, so some of those who wished to run for hire cars registered as private cars allowed themselves to be caught and quite openly told the police the passengers paid 'so much' as fare. The police prosecuted and the

Magistrate decided that they should take out hire car licenses. That is what happens and I do not know whether hon. Members are aware of it.

The hon. Member, Mr. Jailal referred to donkey carts. I have a suggestion to make to this effect, that Government gives serious consideration to assisting donkey cart owners to fit pneumatic tires on to their drays and carts, and that those owners who do not fit them be made to pay the licence. I do not know if it has ever been tried, but it would certainly save a lot of the damage done to the roads between here and Anns Grove, in particular, on the East Coast by donkey carts, and, to my knowledge, in every part of the Colony. For that matter, while improving the transport of the country it would help the unfortunate beast that has to pull the big dray all the time. Government is determined not to reduce the duty on gasolene and I will not put forward this suggestion, nor the other one about the tires on the donkey carts. I am against increasing taxation on donkey carts for the simple reason that we do not allow them to carry passengers, and quite a large section of the community are entirely dependent on them for their living and taking their goods to Georgetown.

Mr. Ramphal: I think I agree with the second suggestion, and I am going to ask the hon. Member to bring it up when we are considering the Development Estimates.

The Chairman: Does the hon. Member wish to reply?

The Financial Secretary: Only to say this, that so far as donkey carts and dray carts care concerned I believe it is the case that all such carts fitted with pneumatic tires are allowed a concession so far as the licence is concerned—I think the licence duty is refunded. As regards the cost, what the hon. Member says is the case, but the position is this, that I have not increased the licences on buses, and while they run on the same prices it is for them in any case to increase them. But so far as the car is concerned the increase would be so small that owners of the hire car would find it difficult to pass it on, and there is a tremendous amount of competition to keep that down.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 2 and Schedule passed as printed.

Council resumed.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed. In doing so I would like to make it perfectly clear that I have His Excellency's permission to move the suspension of the Standing Orders in this case also.

Sir Frank McDavid seconded.

Mr. Ramphal: I would like to mention that a few of us did not fully understand that the ordinary push bicycles to which motors are attached are now considered as motor vehicles. We feel that it would be a great hardship to owners of such cycles to be made to pay the full motor cycle licences, and we would ask the hon. the Financial Secretary to consider that aspect of the matter. I am making a special plea on behalf of those people.

Mr. Macnie : I did not say anything about the matter because I was not encouraged in the remarks I made.

The Financial Secretary: I am informed that the increased motor cycle licence does include those vehicles, but we will look into it.

Mr. Macnie : We would have to amend the law.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SESSIONS OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Financial Secretary: Before we adjourn, Sir, I would like to refer to the meetings of Finance Committee. On Friday last hon. Members decided that they would start work on the Estimates on the 3rd of January. I would like to mention that His Excellency the Governor is very anxious that we should complete the Budget by the 15th of January, and I would like to ask Members whether, in the circumstances, they would be prepared to work at night until 11 o'clock so as to get the Budget through by that date. It is very important that we should make every effort to do so, because delay in passing the Budget helps to slow down our Development Programme, as there is no authority for any new expenditure except this Council gives it. There are also quite a number of new appointments to be made with respect to our Development Programme.

The Chief Secretary: I wish to support the hon. the Financial Secretary in that request. It is a matter of very great importance at this time that we should show how earnest we

are by not losing any time in getting ahead with our Development Plan. It is true, as the Financial Secretary has said, that the later our Budget is passed the later will our Development Estimates be passed, and the later we can get on with the new plans and the making of new appointments. In this particular year, when we have other matters of moment to consider in connection with salaries, for one thing all of which must wait until the Budget has been passed before they can come before this Council—I do feel that it would be a good action on the part of Council to agree to sit at night in Finance Committee in the new year so as to get our Appropriation Ordinance passed by the 15th of January.

Mr Luckhoo: Speaking for myself—and I have no doubt that other hon. Members would not wish to slow up the machinery, for although we are “marking time” the idea is that we should move forward—I am quite willing to co-operate, and I have no doubt other Members will also co-operate as far as possible.

Mr. Macnie: I am of the same view, Sir, and I appreciate all that has been said by the hon. the Financial Secretary and the hon. the Chief Secretary, but one remark made by the Chief Secretary makes me a bit puzzled. He referred to the matter of salaries, but I do not know how we can consider the Budget before a decision has been taken on the question of the revision of salaries. I do not know how we can deal with the Budget of the Colony on the present basis of salaries until the revision of salaries has been settled.

The Chief Secretary: The intention is that the Budget should be passed before the Salaries Commissioner's Report comes before the Council for

consideration. Provision has been made in the Estimates for implementation of that Report. Naturally, although provision has been made the revised salaries will not be paid until the Council has approved of any new salary rates which may be recommended. We must do one thing at a time, and we must have our Estimates approved and passed before we can get on to considering other business.

Mr. Ramphal: I should have liked to hear a suggestion that we should spend this week and next week considering the Estimates, but I think the hon. the Financial Secretary himself erred somewhat when in this Budget Statement he mentioned about dealing with the Estimates early next year.

The Financial Secretary: I do not think I said so. I think I offered to work even at night.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS.

Mr. Phang: Mr. Speaker, as the oldest Member present I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Council to wish you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Mr. Speaker: I reciprocate your wishes and hope you will all have as good a time as I propose to have.

Council was then adjourned *sine die*.