

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

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

FRIDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY, 1955

The Council met at 2 p.m. His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Gordon 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 (acting).

The Hon. the Attorney General  
Mr. F. W. Holder, C.M.G., 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, and Lands and Mines).

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 Develop-  
ment).

The Hon. G. H. Smellie

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

*Deputy Speaker:—*

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

*Nominated Unofficials:—*

Mr. T. Lee.

Mr. W. A. Phang.

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.

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

Lt. Col. E. J. Haywood, M.B.E., T.D.

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. P. A. Cummings (Member  
for Labour, Health and Housing).  
—on leave.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj—on leave.

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

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C. —on leave.

Mr. E. F. Correia —on leave.

The Speaker read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, February 3, 1955 as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

#### THE AMPLIFYING EQUIPMENT

**Mr. Macnie :** Your Honour, we cannot hear you. It appears that the amplifying equipment is not working.

**Mr. Speaker :** I do not know what to say about it. It has been giving trouble since it was installed, though every effort has been made to get the Department to do something about it. I can assure hon. Members it is not a question of expenditure. We have difficulty in hearing the hon. Member, Miss Collins, and I particularly asked the Head of the Department concerned to provide some equipment, perhaps ear-phones, so as to enable hon. Members to hear Miss Collins, for example. He told me he would try and have something done.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

##### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

**Mr. Speaker :** The hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo, is unable to attend today and has asked to be excused. The hon. the Chief Secretary, I hope, will be here shortly.

#### REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

**The Financial Secretary (Mr. W. O. Fraser):** I beg to lay on the table the following document—

The Annual Report of the Directors of the New Widows and Orphans' Fund for the year 1953.

**Mr. Farnum :** (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): On behalf of the hon. Member for Communications

and Works (Mr. Kendall) I beg to lay on the table the following document—

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Transport and Harbours Department together with a certified copy of the Financial Statement for the year 1952.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

##### APPROPRIATION BILL, 1955

Council resumed the debate on the motion for the second reading of the Bill intitled—

“An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current session of the Legislative Council.”

**Mr. Speaker :** The hon. Member, Mr. Jallal, was speaking when the adjournment was taken. I do not know if any other Member has made up his mind to follow him. As I have said before, hon. Members should indicate if they are going to speak, so that I can determine to whom preference may be given on account of other duties. Sometimes a Minister will not be here the next day of adjournment and may like the opportunity to be given him to intervene in the debate before the adjournment.

**Mr. Carter (interrupting):** These amplifiers do not work. I cannot hear you, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker :** I do not expect them to work.

**Mr. Macnie :** Do you ask for intimation whether other Members wish to speak?

**Mr. Speaker :** It is usual in a debate like this one for Members to indicate to the Clerk if they propose to speak, and then I select the order according to urgency.

**Mr. Macnie:** I personally know that one hon. Member and myself propose to speak. I would like to speak at some stage, not necessarily following the hon. Member, Mr. Jailal.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have asked whether we can sit on Monday and I have been told "No". It is not usual to sit on that day. What about Tuesday?

**Mr. Bobb :** I desire to speak, but I cannot this afternoon.

**Mr. Speaker:** I understand that, and that is why I mention the matter. I hope that those Members who would like to speak would be able to do so at the time they want, and that some arrangement may be made whereby they can speak even if we have to postpone the debate.

**The Financial Secretary :** If you want to sit on Tuesday I would have no objection. I, however, do feel it is important that we do get through the Budget. It has been hanging fire since the 17th of December.

**Mr. Speaker:** We will see how we get on.

**Mr. Jailal :** When we closed yesterday, I was speaking on the rice industry. In my speech I had called for a statement of policy from Government in respect of the rice industry, and I tried to explain what I meant by 'statement of policy'. I would like to plead now for the implementation at an early stage of the Hutchinson plan for drainage and irrigation. It is true that the Hutchinson proposals require a considerable sum of money in order to put them into effect. It is my view—and I know it is also the view of the farming community—that steps should be taken by which money could be got to put the plan into action. We have been able to get money on loan from

outside for various items from time to time in the history of this country, and I see no reason why the same cannot be achieved now, when we know and accept that in the absence of a Hutchinson plan and in the absence of a full-scale drainage scheme farming in this country will always be considered something of a chance in which the farmer does not even have a 'fifty-fifty' opportunity of security.

If this plan is not put into action, then we may as well condemn our entire plan for the coastal areas and their development, because we will always suffer from adverse weather conditions. Our terrain is such that we have to be able to control flood waters if we intend to make a worthwhile living for our people. We have to be bold, we need to have vision and we need to marshal our resources in order to prosecute a living here. Maybe it would be advisable to take the plan in parts, but if we did, we would depart from the general scheme laid out. A portion of the work is due to commence this year, but the laying down of dams to keep out the sea from the land is nothing for us to be really very happy about. It is no use cleaning out a canal on the East Coast and not making ditches in the backlands—we must bring the water from the back. I do not want to go into the details of this matter because I am going to deal with it later, but it will suffice to say now that we are not going to get far with a piece-meal project.

There is one other matter which exercises my mind, and that is, the help that has been given over the years to our peasant farmers. I would want to admit that in the past some small farmers have been given help. But not all. I will commend to Government this view that, as long as rice remains in the hands of peasants Government must

[Mr. Jaijal]

not withdraw the opportunity by which the small man might cultivate with profit. I would want to compliment Government on its idea that co-operative activity will help, but let us not forget that the farmer is needful of help; until such time as co-operatives are duly formed Government must give an undertaking that it will continue to do as it has done in the past and help farmers so that they would be able to live their normal way of life.

Although there is a Credit Corporation and although there are Banks, there are some farmers who are merely tenants and who will never be able to obtain an opportunity to get loans on their own strength. Their credit-worthiness is insufficient to merit these organisations lending them money. If we do not lend them money through the channels we provide, they they will continue to be victims of usury—something that has been practised on rice farmers for generations. I have spoken at length on duty-free gasoline and I shall not return to it, but on the whole, I feel that more speed should be lent by the Department of Agriculture to such things as the culture of seed padi in the districts. If more effort is given to a job like this, already started, I am sure we will have a satisfied rice-farming community.

And so I turn my attention to another item in the Budget. I have tried in every part of my speech to be impersonal. I have tried to bring forward arguments to say that our Budget suffers from a lack of boldness and imagination. It is not only in the field of agriculture that this is the case, but in many others. Our planning for the future should include this particular item which I am going to speak about now. I referred to the question of a dredge when it was brought up here

last year. If we would buy a dredge for this Colony, I know—and those who have had to do work that brought them in touch with dredging operations would know also—that we would not have to remove bridges and kokers at such a high cost as \$35,000 or \$38,000 sometimes. I venture to say that there is no knowledge in this Council of what a dredge can do and that is why the situation has not been fully appreciated. If the mouth of the Moruca river had been drained, the Pomeroun river would not have been a basin in bad weather, and we would have had better relief for the rains in the savannahs. It should be remembered that these rivers are very shallow at their mouths and that similar conditions exist in some of the creeks where the people make a living. I feel that a dredge is the only answer to the difficulties of these people. By the use of a dredge we would be able to clear away in a few hours the silting up that has taken place over a period of years. That could be done at Nog Eens, for instance.

It takes only four hours to dredge from one bank of a river in the Esse-qui-bo district to the other bank, and the results soon become obvious. I say again that a dredge would help us to solve the big problem of drainage and irrigation and result in the saving of very much money for the Colony. Therefore, I think we should investigate the question in its entirety and see whether the purchase or hire of a dredge and other equipment would not help this Colony in the course of time. I feel that this Government should try to initiate as many schemes as are possible for success during its regime, and endeavour to be free of criticism at the end of its time. It would be better to say that we investigated a thing and failed than to admit that we made no attempt to do anything at all. I am sure that our Drainage and Irrigation Department would benefit very much by

the acquisition of a dredge and other equipment.

I would like to come to the end of my speech by making passing references to two other Heads, and one of them is "Government Information Services". I want to assure Government that I feel that this is something necessary and well instituted, but I cannot agree that we should overspend in this direction. I say so particularly because of the large amount of money that has been estimated. I feel that there is an obligation on the part of cinema owners to the people of this Colony, to put on the screen anything of public interest that Government might like to put over. As a result, I think there is absolutely no reason why Government should purchase a film unit. I feel that the Information Services should be carried on, but every effort should be made to see that they are carried on as cheaply as possible and in the best interest of all concerned. I cannot agree with overstaffing and the sending of officers all over the Colony—creating new posts as it were—to collect information. I believe in sending men, well trained, to get the information so that they could write it up and present it to the public. I also believe that we have such a staff, and that they can do the job very well indeed.

I should like also to comment on the question of our schools before I take my seat, since the subject is one that is very dear to me. I was a teacher for several years and was connected with several schools during that period. Our schools problem is indeed a very heavy one, but I want to say that there is also a lack of vision in this respect. There are in Georgetown two important secondary schools, but Berbice, with a growing population—the granary of the Colony and a county whose statistics

show that it has been producing many professional men within recent times—has no first-class secondary school. Government has been reluctant to establish such a school in that county but, to my mind, one is absolutely necessary, regardless of whether it is placed at Rose Hall or New Amsterdam. The fact is that the Berbice High School is inadequate to meet the needs of the County, and I suggest strongly that Government should take it over, otherwise it would lose its usefulness in that community. This school is anxious to produce better results, but it requires better staffing and is also without a science laboratory and other facilities such as Queen's College has. It is well known that Queen's College cannot accommodate all the students that can normally go to it, therefore I think it is the duty of Government to relieve the situation. If we are going to develop we have to educate the people of the country, especially the youths, and it is no use throwing cold water on such a plan. One of the big problems of the country is to provide a sound education for our children, and I think Government should endeavour to tackle it in the best possible manner.

**Mr. Rahaman :** Unlike my hon. friend, the last speaker, I have great hopes in the future of this Colony. I was at a loss, however, to hear the hon. Member challenging the honesty and integrity of the people of this country. I think it is a bad reflection on the people of this Colony for a Member of this Council to say to the outside world; where people read our newspapers, that we have not got anybody capable of running our affairs at home. As I travel about this Colony—and I do travel extensively—I can certainly say that I have seen within recent times much willingness on the part of the people to produce more and more. I travel about the Corentyne district every Sunday

(Mr. Rahaman)

especially, and that is the picture I see everywhere.

I desire also to congratulate the hon. the Financial Secretary on the very capable manner in which he has presented the Budget to this Council. I have given very careful consideration to the question of the tax on gasoline for industrial purposes, because I know that it would create a hardship on both the rice and the timber industries. I know that tractors and other vehicles have taken the places of bulls and oxen in this Colony, and I also know that there has been a rise in the quantity of gasoline used for industrial purposes, but I think some scheme could be devised to stop any abuse in that direction. This is really a mechanized age and I know that very many of the small farmers in the Corentyne district own tractors which, as they have indicated, they would return to the various firms if this duty-free gasoline is taken away from them. Therefore, I desire to appeal to the hon. the Financial Secretary to give further consideration to the proposal. If it is carried through the cost of production would rise in both the rice and the timber industries. It would mean that rice farmers who are now paying about \$8 per acre for ploughing their land would automatically have to pay about \$16 per acre for doing so. There would also be similar results in the timber industry.

As regards the rice industry, I can say that in the past hundreds of cattle died in the course of a reaping season through eating padi which was being threshed, but such occurrences do not take place any longer. Members of Local Authorities in the various districts would also state that as a result of mechanized methods in the rice industry many dams and bridges are no longer being damaged by oxen which the rice

farmers formerly used. This was especially the case in the Blocks I and II areas in the Corentyne district where, owing to the presence of much water, it is necessary to use the tractors. The cost of maintenance to the Local Authorities is very high. The Chairman of the Drainage Board is here and is well aware of the amount of damage done to the dams by cattle. I wish to appeal to the hon. the Financial Secretary to give the question of the removal of the duty free concession on gasoline some reconsideration.

**Mr. Sugrim Singh :** In this Budget debate one seems to have a sort of roving commission (I speak subject to correction) but I promise that I shall not be boring in what I propose to say under the head "Agriculture." I have chosen that subject because, in my opinion, this country is basically an agricultural country. First of all I wish to compliment the author of this Budget for having been able to assemble (I use the word "assemble" advisedly) this document, for it must have entailed a lot of work to present it in its present form. But looking through the head "Agriculture" I find that much more could have been done at least to alleviate and prevent the recurrence of certain things which have been known in the past to paralyse agriculture in this country. I refer to flooding.

I agree that last year there was abnormal rainfall. It was a case of *force majeure*; no one could have been held responsible. But no long-range policy or scheme is yet afoot to assist the farmers in certain areas. I refer particularly to the Mahaica-Mahaicony Abary area which I know personally. No scheme has been evolved to assist the farmers who have been frustrated as a result of frequent floods. I do not consider the position hopeless. It may be a costly scheme but I think Government should seek the assistance of experts to see what could

be done to avert the flooding of those areas which has paralysed the rice industry.

On the question of the abolition of duty-free gasoline I am aware, and I am sure other hon. Members are aware, that at the moment a Committee is examining the matter. I would suggest, if I may, that if it is the desire, founded on good grounds, to change the existing types of machinery for a more economical type, a period of about five years should be allowed so that those who have spent large sums of money in acquiring agricultural machinery, and are at the moment heavily indebted, may be able to dispose of their machines without considerable loss to themselves. It has been suggested that duty-free gasoline is being used for other purposes. I would not say I do not believe it, but if there are a few isolated cases of misuse of the concession I do not think those few cases justify its removal. I need only mention the case of bush rum which is still being made although the penalty has been increased. My point is that it would be a great hardship on the users of agricultural machinery to withdraw this tax concession.

When the proposal was first mooted I tried to obtain what information I could get in order to reconcile the move, but from everyone with whom I have spoken came the one song — that the withdrawal of the concession is going to paralyse them. I plead with Government not to throw a spanner into the works and put a stumbling block in the path of progress. One knows that whenever innovations are introduced there is opposition to them, but I am appealing to Government to allow a period of five years within which the owners of the existing types of machinery may be able to dispose of them without suffering much loss.

I wish to say a few words about dairy cattle, milk pasteurisation, and

the Processing Factory. I will not be as pessimistic as my friend, Mr. Jallal, but I am also not satisfied with the speed with which the Department concerned is moving to encourage the dairy cattle industry in this country, especially in view of the fact that I read in the newspapers today that a site is already chosen for the milk pasteurisation plant. Throughout the Colony one finds that lands formerly used for pasturage have been converted into rice lands, with the result that we have to fall back upon pen-fed cattle. I think the hon. Mr. Macnie will bear me out when I say that there are large tracts of land available for pasturage, but that the cattle owners are given absolutely no assistance even to graze their cattle on them. It strikes me, as it would strike any visitor to this Colony, that we have plenty of land around us, yet we starve. We have not sufficient land for pasturage, agriculture and housing.

It is one thing to have these schemes on paper, laudable as they are, but another thing to put them into execution. I would like to see some genuine effort being made to assist in the development of a dairy cattle industry in this Colony. No dairy cattle, no milk, no pasteurisation plant, no processing factory. At present the owners of dairy cattle are trying to get rid of them. In the first place it does not pay them to keep such cattle, in view of the high price of the cattle feed turned out by the Government factory. I understood that the factory was set up to convert the surplus production of the farmers into cattle and poultry feed, but I am told that today it has to import corn from South Africa. The result is that in spite of the existence of a Processing Factory we have to import cattle feed. What will be the use of an elaborate milk pasteurisation plant without an adequate supply of milk to feed that plant?

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

Are you going to expect people who rear 30 or 40 "scrub" cows to feed this plant with milk? Consequently, if something is not done to improve and encourage a dairy cattle industry, the pasteurisation plant would be the same thing as the processing factory. I hope I am not mistaken.

As regards farming, there was a time when one could have walked around the markets and seen provision of every kind produced in this Colony. There was a time when one could have travelled to the country markets and seen ground provisions, plantains and fruit of all kinds for sale, but today that spectacle no longer exists. What has gone wrong? Is it that the soil of British Guiana has refused to produce or its fertility has vanished? No, Sir; human beings are known to go into the industry that is remunerative or at least can keep their family going. At one time in the history of this Colony and of the rice industry the people planted rice without any thought of the economic outlook. The family ploughed a few acres of land and planted only to get 7 or 8 bags of padi in the end, which was not even a quarter of what they expected to get. The rice industry then existed to provide occupation for the farmer and his family. But right now in this Colony we can produce rice—I speak subject to correction by those versed in commerce—at five cents per lb. or four cents after paying the exchange.

Next is the planting of cassava and plantains. Everyone is turning away from the land. When you want plantains and cassava you have to look to the North West District. The man with the nice little farm is giving it up. Even if he plants, he finds it difficult to get irrigation and drainage. Sad is the spectacle to see a man who has spent his all in farming, especially in cassava, suffer from the flood wiping out his whole cultivation. He is ruined

and is left in debt and to be a debtor for years of his life. I therefore say that something must be done to encourage peasant farming in this Colony. I will be asked "Where are we to find the lands for the smaller farmer?" I wish to compliment Government—I hope, Sir, I am not misrepresenting or in any way saying something about which I do not know—on a policy of relief which I hope will be carried through to a successful end. I am speaking in the interest of the Colony. I am not concerned with anything else. The large proprietors of private estates have got large tracts of cultivable fertile lands, which they do not beneficially use at the moment but simply hold them in order to be able to say "I have an estate of this or that size". Like a good old English Squire they ride around and watch the lands year after year. I may be accused of trying to take away what belongs to somebody. But just around the corner there are hundreds of actual farmers, not the synthetic farmer with the white collar who goes around but does no actual farming, ready to work but have not the lands. Every conceivable obstacle is put in their way, and they are thoroughly discouraged.

The point I wish to make is this: I would like to see the Government intervene, not to rob or deprive anyone of what is theirs or to be unduly harsh, but to see that these genuine small farmers are given every assistance by way of land and by way of transportation of their crops. It is one thing to plant, but quite another thing to get the stuff to market. Some thought must be given to the small farmer. In this Budget I observe some provision for the construction of a road to Mackenzie. I speak subject to correction. I believe Government has in mind the construction of such a road so as to throw into usefulness large tracts of land in that area. But, Sir, it has been

established by Government experts that the lands in that area from the point of view of agriculture and farming are not suitable. The lands there are sandy and, except for a few types of crops, it is almost difficult to be able to plant there. That has been the view held by people who know that area.

But there are other large tracts of land which need a road to connect them with Georgetown. Take the Bartica Road, that will be a boon to this Colony. It will throw into usefulness lands which have been known and confirmed by experts of Government to be cultivable and from which the economic supply of this country can be considerably enhanced. I do agree that British Guiana, comparatively speaking, is a big colony, but I would like to urge on Government that in these matters the question of finance comes up and, therefore, our planning must be on a long range policy. To be specific, we get nowhere by putting a bridge here, a step-off there, a koker there and a dam here. If it is going to be a ten-year plan we must start with something big and comprehensive, and then the results may be of benefit to this Colony. Large tracts of land can be put under cultivation by the construction of roads.

Now I come to an important point, and here again I speak subject to correction. I am referring to rice. The Rice Marketing Board is the single-seller for the rice produced in this Colony. All persons, including the Rice Development Company, are suppliers to the Rice Marketing Board of all the rice to be exported from this Colony. I am reliably informed that the Rice Development Company, which is a completely different body from the Rice Marketing Board, alone gets all the sale profits on the rice shipped by the Company through the Rice Marketing Board.

**Mr. Raatgever:** That is not correct. It is on the rice produced by the Company.

**Sir Frank McDavid** (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines): May I explain? There is an agreement between the Government and the Company in which all these points are set out. One of the points is that the rice grown by the Company itself and manufactured and sold through the Rice Marketing Board is to be paid for at the export price less a calculated figure for expenses. The difference between the export price and the local price is narrow, and the amount which is paid on that part of the rice is relatively small.

**Mr. Sugrim Singh:** I am very grateful for being corrected. On the question of purchase I stand corrected. I am instructed that the Rice Development Company, arising out of this agreement, get some of the profits on the rice sold by the Rice Marketing Board. Why should we make fish of one and fowl of the other?

**Sir Frank McDavid:** May I explain? I do not think it is worth more than \$8,000.00 on the whole of the production. The reason for it is the nature of the experimental mechanised agriculture which is going on at that scheme. May I suggest the hon. Member is overburdening his point.

**Mr. Sugrim Singh:** I thank the hon. Member for correcting me, but those are my instructions. Whatever it is, the point I am making is this: I would like to see at least, in the near future, the actual farmers of rice come in to some of these profits because—and here again I may be corrected—in that Rice Marketing Board I see they are setting up some precedents in this Colony, which I am sure this Government would never be able to overlook in other Departments.

On the question of housing, I do agree that a good deal of work has been done and plans are well on the way to increase the output of houses

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

to meet the demands in this Colony. But, Sir, I would like to see the programme extended a bit more in the rural areas. I may be told that the housing shortage in the City is acute and as a result that has to be tackled first. The point I wish to make is this: Government has been purchasing lands at very high prices, comparatively speaking, in order to provide places to erect these houses. Sir, as you travel through this Colony you cannot but be struck at the sugar estates setting the example. They have not had any elaborate contract. You have all those pasture lands which were full of fish ponds about six to eight years ago now being converted into smiling and very attractive areas for housing. Cannot some arrangement be made by Government with the sugar estates to place some of those useless lands at Government's disposal for housing? There can be a policy whereby the lands can be obtained by Government, provided with sanitation and public health requirements, and the Credit Corporation give the people some money and they struggle among themselves to erect their houses. The trouble is the people cannot find lands on which to erect their houses, and just next door you have the neighbouring sugar estates with beautiful houses in the pasture lands more or less as villages. I would like to see Government do something more about this question of land for housing.

Now, Sir, I wish to make one last point. On the question of Campbellville, I wish to say that Government has done a very good thing in purchasing Campbellville. In so doing, Government has recognised the principle that some good can accrue from large scale negotiation with proprietors of land for the benefit of the people. I respectfully wish to suggest that Government con-

tinue this policy. There are sugar estates with large tracts of attractive, well drained and unoccupied frontlands for which they may have some plan, but I think some arrangement or plan can be thought out whereby these lands can also be brought in without much expense to assist in this building programme. I urge Government to continue this Campbellville idea of purchasing lands on a large scale, but let the proprietors deal with Government.

Sir, I do not wish to refer to any particular area, but just next to Campbellville you have Newtown. As a result of the timely intervention of Government the people of Campbellville have got the lands at a small price, but the people in Newtown have got to pay, I am told, large sums for lands not properly drained and no proper road etc.

Before I take my seat: I see in the Budget that every Government Department has been reinforced with staff—I use that word advisely. It is nearly the same in the Development Budget, and taxpayers in the Colony are expecting that Government will, perhaps at the end of the year, or in the not-too-distant future actually show that something has been done to better the Colony. I am not a pessimist, and I am not prepared to lay the blame at the foot of Government in these matters, but we have in this Colony—and I am not exaggerating—people who are no longer sleeping but are very vigilant and wide awake and are looking forward to Government examining all the plans and projects proposed to be embarked upon. This Government, hon. Members and Heads of Government Departments must do their best to see that something is done over and above the ordinary, and a special effort must be made to bring this country to a state of satisfaction—I do not suggest there is dissatisfaction — and

content. I will take my seat on this ambition.

Too often Government officials—those charged with responsibility—and the Heads of Departments are reluctant and unwilling to ‘climb down’ and try to understand and assess complaints and grievances of small groups and small individuals. It is true that one cannot expect a head of department to deal with every small matter, but I would urge that it is no longer the ‘old order of things’ — I prefer to describe it thus—and I would like to see Government officials ‘climb down’ a little bit more and visit and get in positive touch with the areas which come under their jurisdiction. I say this without fear of contradiction, that some officials have never yet gone through their district. I would like to see some more personal contacts made; even if they fail to grant all the requests of the people, it is far better to go and see them on the spot. There is too much of this letter-writing technique, namely “Your letter of complaint has been received, and the matter is receiving attention.” They go from file to file, when the matter could have been handled in two shakes of a lamb’s tail through personal contact.

**Dr. Fraser:** I rise to add my share to the debate on the Budget, and I must express my congratulation to the hon. the Financial Secretary on the manner in which he furnished this Council with information when the Budget was being considered in Finance Committee. The Financial Secretary said in the opening paragraph of his Budget Statement:

“...the year now coming to its close has not been without its difficulties, but indications are that the year ahead is possibly going to be still more difficult.”

I think this Council fully realises the truth of this statement, and in that spirit in Finance Committee we ap-

proached the Estimates with a deep desire to assist in solving some of the problems facing the Colony. I think that this Interim Government is very concerned over the rising cost of the recurrent Budget, although it fully realises that the increase is due in a large measure to the Development Budget and the establishment of the two new departments of Land Settlement and Drainage and Irrigation.

I think it is true to say that this Colony is an agricultural one and its prosperity is intimately concerned with its agricultural policy. As such, we look to the Agricultural Department as a “development department” to increase agricultural productivity. But I feel, and I think other hon. Members also feel, that all is not well with the Department of Agriculture. There seems to be some lack of policy in matters pertaining to agricultural development in this colony, and I would like to draw to the attention of the hon. the Member for Agriculture the need for the Executive Government to know what I have said, and to ask him to endeavour to make some re-organisation of policy—or in respect of the lack of policy—in that Department.

This Colony has a very narrow diversification of crops. There are only two major crops: sugar and rice. Their future may be adversely affected by world conditions and rising productions, and any fall in the prices of these crops must interfere with the economy of the Colony. During the war years the Government was intensely interested in agricultural matters and in marketing, with a desire to aid the farmers and to increase food production. This aim seems to have undergone some change in the post-war years and seems to have been superseded by a bureaucratic system of price control. As a result, today we have a scarcity in almost every local product—scarcity and

[Dr. Fraser]

high prices — of ground provisions, coffee, fruit, milk, eggs and meat. To make good these shortages and to satisfy consumer demands importation of the products of basic crops and commodities into this Colony has increased within the last few years. Now, in 1953 5½ million pounds of milk were imported, valued at \$1,600,000 and last year, in 1954, 6½ million pounds were imported for \$1,700,000. In the case of meat, in 1953 185,000 pounds were imported, valued at \$72,000, and last year 266,000 pounds at \$92,000. As regards milk, I suppose that in one year there had been an increase in importation of over one million pounds. We can produce a large portion of the milk consumed in this Colony; instead of that, we are sending money overseas to provide a living for people in foreign countries while we need all the money in this Colony, to give employment for our people.

The proposed Milk Pasteurisation Plant has come in for a fair amount of criticism from the hon. Member, Mr. Jallal and the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh. This plant is to cost about a quarter of a million dollars. Last year, in Finance Committee, when we were considering the Budget I objected to this item. I said there was not sufficient milk in this country to supply the plant and I expressed the thought that the money intended for it could be better spent on dairy herd improvement. The hon. the Member for Agriculture said it was an old scheme, machinery for it had been ordered since 1953, and, as a matter of fact, some of the machinery was in the Colony already. It is almost a year since the item was considered, in 1954, and the plant is still lying in its crates. It might cost another quarter of a million dollars before it is completed.

I come now to the Livestock Station at St. Ignatius in the Rupununi. Ten years ago, in 1945, money was voted for this station. A plan was laid down by Government involving the lease of an area of 45 square miles, and the financing of it started. In the following year a Manager was engaged for the Station. Bulls which were ordered from the United States, arrived in the Colony in 1946 and were sent up to Rupununi. Today, we are asked for more money to support this station. For seven years there has been nothing done at this station, and we have to start all over again. Ebini station on the Berbice was started 15 years ago, to investigate the mineral deficiency on the savannah where no domesticated animal could live for more than one year. In six years the problem was solved and, so far, the station has over 200 head of cattle—an increase of roughly 100 per cent—in spite of all the difficulties and losses that occurred during the investigation. It was 72 per cent and considerably better than on the coastlands and in the Rupununi. The calving capacity was double that of the Rupununi.

Since then, there appears to have been a hiatus in marking time, and nothing has been done at all. It seems that our reason for going into details of the shortage on the coastlands of milk and vegetables is the fact that there is need for a station in the Rupununi, and to bring to Government's notice that there is need for a drastic revision of the policy of the Agriculture Department, which is one of the chief developing Departments in the country.

As regards the question of inflation and the need for production, I would like to point out that the success of such a programme depends to a large extent on the success made by the

farmer of his land. He should be made to increase his production, and an extensive programme should be drawn up whereby a farmer could put into practice the results of research. The criticisms that I have made are not intended in any way to reflect personally on the hon. Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines. I realise that he has only recently assumed the portfolio of his office and must take time to get down to the work of the Department; and I also realise that the recently-appointed Director of Agriculture has not long ago arrived in the Colony. The Department has been without a head for about six months, and it must take time to balance itself firmly, but I want to say very strongly that something is definitely wrong with the Department, as stated by the last two speakers, who have gone into more detail than I have done.

With regard to the question of drainage and irrigation, I cannot but recall that we were told in Finance Committee that Government was unable to obtain the technical staff if wanted—engineers and so on—to put the schemes into operation. I feel that in view of the elaborate housing schemes which are being carried out, the people must have work so as to be able to pay their rents. I think the Colony's need of technical staff is so great that Government should consider the question of obtaining engineers from other countries, as has been suggested in Finance Committee, if they are not obtainable from the United Kingdom. I do not think there is anything further I would like to add.

**Mr. Tello:** I would like to associate myself with the remarks of those hon. Members who have congratulated the hon. the Financial Secretary and the staff of the Finance Department on the arduous duties they performed in

order to be able to present the Budget before the Council. In presenting it the Financial Secretary had the very painful duty of having to impose new taxation. I know that the imposition of new taxation at any time has never been a pleasant duty, and therefore it must be painful to all of us as workers, and especially to me. This painful duty was discharged with a great deal of courage, and I cannot but pay a compliment to the hon. the Financial Secretary for the very commendable way in which he presented the Budget and admitted a knowledge of the various difficulties and problems in that respect.

We find that the increased taxation fell, fortunately, within an ambit that could be regarded as luxuries, and that the new taxation took the form of increases in the excise duty on spirituous liquor and so on. I presume that this new taxation must have been the outcome of a great deal of thought on the part of Government. I am not a great user of spiritous liquor myself, and I would have liked to be able to say that I am drinking my beer at last year's prices, but I realise that the extra twopence I would have to pay for my glass of beer would be a contribution to a very worthy cause, as it would make life more pleasant for thousands of people through our social services and otherwise. I do not think our Government should have any qualms about the imposition of this new taxation.

I also do not think we should attempt to make any apologies in the matter of increased licence for motor cars. I notice that the hon. the Financial Secretary was rather guarded in this respect and took extreme care to preserve the difference between the cars and the buses, because the increased licence has not reached the mode of conveyance that is very popular with the small man. I refer to the bus services which operate in both urban and

[Mr. Tello]

rural areas. The buses have gone free of increased taxation, and I thank the hon. the Financial Secretary for having passed them up. He should tax those who can afford to pay and not those who cannot afford to pay.

There is a sore point I would like to touch upon, Sir, at this stage. I want to say that my mind became rather unhappy when I heard so many references to a lack of vision and foresight in the preparation of this Budget. Each hon. Member is entitled to his own point of view, but I venture to think that if anyone applies himself to a careful study of the Budget he could not safely say that he has recognised in it a lack of vision and foresight. I wonder why such a view should have been expressed when we were here for 12 months previously and could have assisted in guiding the Administration to make the best possible use of the time and the ability at its disposal. That might have assisted the hon. the Financial Secretary in no small measure in presenting a Budget full of all the vision that some Members would like it to have.

I do not think Members should have waited until now—at this stage when it is so easy to criticise—in order to make the unhappy references I have referred to. If we sat down here and did not make up our minds as regards improved measures before this stage, then we ourselves are guilty of the lack of vision and foresight that some Members have complained about. If it is true that outside of this Council we have been referred to as “rubber stamps”, then it is our duty to remove this impression and to assist Government in every possible way to show that the measures proposed in the Budget emanated from the Members of the Council, or have been approved by them. In

other words, we should assist Government in formulating policies instead of sitting complacently until that has been done and making adverse criticisms afterwards.

I am not ashamed of my appointment to the Interim Government. I never lose an opportunity for service, and I feel that fate has decreed that this opportunity to serve my people should come to me, and whenever I am attacked wrongfully I will stand up here with pride and defend myself.

I must refer again to the matter of the removal of the tax concession on industrial gasoline. It did occur to the hon. the Financial Secretary that it was the best policy to remove the concession, but he did not decide on the proposal blindly; he received advice from the B. G. Rice Development Company. Let us go back into the history of rice cultivation in this country and see whether the Financial Secretary erred. It is true that the Rice Development Company, or the Mahaicony-Abary Rice Development Scheme, are the pioneers of the mechanisation of the rice industry in this Colony, and at their own risk introduced expensive machinery. They departed from the ordinary routine to experiment with the use of machinery adapted to rice cultivation. It is an accepted fact that when those people saw evidence of the successful use of machinery—tractors, combines and harvesting machines—they did not act selfishly, but invited the farmers to lectures. I also attended those lectures, and the farmers who attended were not charged one ha' penny. It is true to say that the increased mechanization of the rice industry is the outcome of those lectures at the Mahaicony-Abary Rice Development Scheme. Those farmers who received advice bought machines, but to this day the

greatest users of mechanical devices in the rice industry are the Rice Development Co. Are they therefore not competent to advise Government on the use of such machinery and the question of fuel consumption? I think we should lift our hats to the Financial Secretary for having the ability to know where to seek advice.

I was extremely disappointed when the hon. Member, Mr. Jailal, made so much out of the withdrawal of the concession of duty-free gasoline, because it is almost a public secret now that the matter is still under consideration, and the decision to go further into the question came also from the Financial Secretary himself. That, in my opinion, is also another credit to him, for because of his interest in agriculture and industry he communicated with the users of gasoline, recognising that there was a great amount of dissatisfaction and misunderstanding. He has also recognised that possibly there are many things relating to the matter of which he is not fully cognisant, and he has decided to invite representatives of industry and agriculture to meet him for a further discussion of the proposal. Isn't that something to be proud of? Am I not right to be proud to be associated with an officer of such high standing?

I want to say too that I am rather disappointed that the hon. Member, Mr. Jailal, has played politics and deliberately attempted to mislead this Council, and possibly the general public.

**Mr. Jailal :** Mr. Speaker, I take strong objection to that remark; I object to the word "mislead." I made reference to duty-free gasoline being withdrawn. I was referring only to the Budget Statement and I warned Government that if such a step were taken regardless of what the outcome would be, it would sound the death-knell of the rice and timber industries.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would also like to add that in a case where a Member expresses his own views or strong convictions on a matter (I am referring not only to what Mr. Jailal said but to the remarks of Mr. Rahman who supported his plea that this concession should not be removed) he is entitled to his opinion. The actual words used by the last speaker were that Mr. Jailal "deliberately attempted to mislead." I do not think he means exactly what those words really connote. I do not think that where a difference of opinion exists and a Member is supported in his view by another, he should be accused of deliberately misleading the Council. Knowing the hon. Member as I do, I do not think he meant what the words he used convey.

**Mr. Tello :** If I have offended the hon. Member I apologise and beg to withdraw the words "deliberately mislead." But I will say this: that I think it was rather unfortunate that he laboured the point to such an extent as to cause the general public to misunderstand what was actually being said. I would like to continue by saying that the Financial Secretary's decision to meet representatives of industry and agriculture to have the proposal freely discussed is a very statesmanlike one, and is evidence of his great interest in industry and agriculture.

I would like to make a few remarks under "Agriculture." For years the Department of Agriculture has been the object of criticism. There may be very good reasons for criticising the Department, but to say that no effort is being made to improve the Department as a whole and to improve the service it is rendering is to make a bold and unfair statement. In the Estimates we see provision for the appointment of an Agricultural Engineer, the necessity for which has been

[Mr. Tello]

felt for quite a long time. I am told that there was great difficulty in the first place to find the money to engage the services of such an important and high level officer, and there is still some amount of difficulty to secure someone at the salary we can afford to offer. An Agricultural Engineer is being sought primarily to assist the farmers who are now in the very early stage of mechanized agriculture. I think it is a commendable step by Government to place the services of an Agricultural Engineer at the disposal of those who most need such assistance.

I will now pass on to Fisheries. We have often read reports about nutrition and malnutrition, and often we hear criticisms of Government's failure to take steps to overcome deficiencies in diet. I am sure that every Member of this Council realises that there has been a growing scarcity of fish in the local markets and in our homes.

**Mr. Speaker:** And it is very expensive too. It is sold at sight; there is no weighing of it.

**Mr. Tello :** It is because of the scarcity. The demand has become so great that it is almost a luxury to have fish on your table. Government is today training officers to take care of the culture of fish inland, and also the improvement of the technique of fish catching. This effort on the part of Government has been endorsed by the Department of Agriculture and the Ministry. Together they have worked out the best ways and means to train these officers and to employ them in the most useful way.

The question of milk and the question of cattle have been very much debated in this Council and I am not a competent one to speak of animal husbandry or cattle rearing, but I am satisfied as I move around the country that

the farmer expresses gratitude and pleasure for the services of the artificial insemination. They speak rather highly of it and they see that the long term policy of Government is to produce in this Colony a cow that can use a less area of land to produce a greater quantity of milk. Sir, it is said that the "scrub" cattle is now looked upon as a liability. What is the harm in having the people induced to rear and care a higher breed of cattle from its very infancy until such time that they know enough and care enough about a good breed of cattle and would always want to own and possess them?

Much criticism has been laid at the door of Government for making provision for a pasteurisation plant. One of the things that kill most of our industries is the lack of a ready market and today Government is prepared to spend a few thousand dollars in order to provide a ready market for the farmer. Government is now striving to breed a better cow and to produce more milk on less land. Is it wrong for Government to take a step further, as my hon. Friend said, approach it boldly, in the investment of a few thousand dollars so as to prepare a ready market for the producer and a very reliable commodity for the consumer? I think if we are slightly ahead of our time, it is something of which we should be proud, because all along the burden of criticism was "What are you waiting for? Why don't you take a bold step and do something now?" Now that we have taken a step forward and slightly ahead of our time we are criticised. Indeed I am so proud of it that I think all that criticism falls to the ground, and I am certain the farmers themselves would not co-operate or collaborate with that criticism.

I am also satisfied that a great deal more can be done to assist the rear-

ing of poultry and the poultry industry as a whole. I think I can believe what I read in the Press only yesterday that Government is doing as much as is possible to assist this industry. I think we are satisfied with all the Department of Agriculture has done with the limited funds voted for it to assist in the proper care and raising of proper birds and the teaching of the people the proper care of their birds. I am satisfied and, if there is any doubt, I am certain that those persons who listened to the "Working Together" programme that was put over recently by the Department of Agriculture would agree that efforts are being made to make the farmer even more farm conscious than he was. It is not that educational programmes are restricted to talks over the radio. The officers actually go into the field and talk to the people and explain conditions. In that matter I want to crave the indulgence of this Council to pay special tribute to two officers of the Department of Agriculture, and I refer to the Senior Field Officer and to the Live Stock Officer. I want to pay special tribute to them, and to those folks who are still in doubt that the Agricultural Department is playing its part. I want to refer them to the Budget where they will see that provision is there for enough money to equip a proper Plant Pathology Laboratory. Plant Pathology has played a very important part in saving the sugar industry in the last three years in the fight against pests. But that is the published side of it.

Very few persons know how much extra work was done by that division in the interest of the small cocoanut growers, the small rice growers. It is a pleasure to see the number of people who call on the Department for advice; and, now, fortunately, that we have a

Plant Pathologist, who is a son of the soil, who fortunately grew up here and understands local conditions, and is not sparing himself in going out to the people, to meet them and to talk to them and explain things to them. All these things give me reason to be proud and gives me more delight to refer to them. I fully agree that great efforts can be made to assist the small producers, the small farmers. But I must also admit that as yet the small farmer has not sufficient regard and respect for scientific knowledge. As yet he has not learnt to turn to the scientist for advice and leadership. But I am happy to say the tide is turning and today the average small farmer has begun to regard the specialist, the scientist and expert with a new interest and confidence.

I also want to say too that while the rice industry is regarded as the second important industry of this Colony, it is also true that the Agricultural Department has never let up on its continuous experiments for a variety that would be both profitable and easy to handle. There was a complaint that enough of this work is not publicised and, probably we can charge the Department with that, but we must be also frank and fair. It is not true that the people who are actually in the industry, the rice producers, have not taken enough interest or given sufficient thought as to publicise what is actually being done in the interest of the rice grower and to teach him to have a greater interest in what is being done. If this Colony must make progress, we have to work together; we have to work co-operatively. We cannot just stand aside and seek the weak spots and loopholes to give us an opportunity to criticize. I am certain that we can freely condemn the Department for not having done enough to publicise what they are doing, though they can also excuse

[Mr. Tello]

themselves on the lack of machinery to do so.

But I am satisfied, Sir, that when politicians and trade unionists want to propagandise a matter they do not wait on Government's assistance; they do not wait on the Bureau of Public Information of the Government Information Services; they do not wait on the Press. They go to the Press and to the people. If it is true that the leaders of the rice industry have that interest in the industry which they should, and the peasants themselves, they would have obtained that information and taken it to the people and create the necessary interest, and we would have had those people invading the Department by the droves for information. I throw this out as a warning and as a humble advice, that if we propose to lead people we must never leave a stone unturned that can be used in the interest of the people we serve.

I also want to make reference to the Budget. We are charged that this Budget lacks vision. What greater evidence of vision we need than the creating of the Irrigation and Drainage Department? Is it not true that the economy of the Colony is hinged to a great extent on the success of agriculture? Is it not true that it is impossible to make agriculture a success without proper irrigation and drainage? Can anyone doubt that the creating of a department to handle specifically such important a matter as irrigation and drainage is an exhibition of great interest in the people and of admirable vision? Who can doubt that this Department given a chance, as a body, to apply themselves with the necessary technical staff should make a good job of it? But, Sir, I say to those people who criticise the Government that they should see the wisdom of admiring the Government for creating this Depart-

ment and then co-operate with the Government in seeing that this Department shows itself worthy of being created as an independent department. Let us all join together and see that these people do their work. Once they have done their work, they would have fulfilled the faith of all concerned and justified the wisdom of this Interim Government.

I want to go on to another new department. I refer to Land Settlement. Here again I feel very happy to speak on this Department that is fortunately headed by another son of the soil. Here, Sir, we have listened to debates labouring on the limited avenues of employment. We have also listened to arguments of the limited avenues of employment operating against those who are in search of employment. We have listened to that sort of argument, but as long as there are six persons applying for a single job, the bargaining power would always be balanced in favour of the employer. We have also heard that unless steps are taken to create new avenues of employment, this state of a growing army of unemployed would affect the economy of the Colony to such a damaging extent that we may live to regret it. Here I say boldly the Government has taken into its hand the organizing of this important Department. This Department, I am sure, is one that is welcome to everyone of us around this table. I would like at once to warn my friends and hon. Members in this Council that everything must go through the pains of birth and growth. It must take time to uplift itself from that initial stage. Time must be spent in long and tedious planning, and, I hope, effective planning. Often have we done things in haste and regretted them in leisure, I am not saying that

this department must emerge into its new life with a deliberate "go slow" motion. Certainly not. But it is quite a new department embarking on new ground, and a bit of caution must be expected.

Fortunately, we are informed, the Rice Development Company has seen it fit to hand over Plantation Onverwagt to the Land Settlement Department. This is an ideal opportunity for the department to go right to work. I am certain after talks with the Director of Land Settlement that he is very keen, and very anxious to get into stride. I can assure hon. Members that residents of the West Coast, Berbice, are also very keenly interested. I had been invited to speak to six villages there. I kept twelve meetings speaking to people residing between the Abary and No. 9 Village on the West Coast, Berbice, and they are all ready and willing to co-operate with this department. The suggestion was thrown out as it was not possible to have the Land Settlement Department at once meeting the people, a Land Settlement Committee—Advisory Committee—should be set up. It was pointed out to me that at two land settlement schemes in the Colony there were settlers' committees.

It was also pointed out to me that land settlement went along slowly under the administration of Government Departments and there came a time when certain errors were committed and certain blunders made—at least from the point of view of the settlers. Government was willing to and did accept the suggestion to have settlers' committees. But I cannot at this initial stage say whether the people and the department can get together and make a success or a failure of land settlement. I spoke with the Director of Land Settlement, as I said before, and he was very interested in the suggestion, though, of course, he did not commit

himself. I thought I might throw it out in this Council, and I hope that some thought will be given to it by the hon. Member in charge of this department. Frankly, I would like to know that my friends on the West Coast are being looked after. I think we can safely say that on the whole, interest in land settlement is high. When a child receives a new toy it is childishly human to concentrate on the new toy, but I am sure that the officers of the Land Settlement Department would not be found guilty of such a thing. I am certain and confident that embarking on new ground on the West Coast, Berbice would not prevent the department from taking full care of the existing schemes. The department must also study the grievances and complaints of the various settlers and deal with them more expeditiously and more effectively.

Another department I am pleased about and which, if I had my own free will, I would have asked a few thousand dollars more for, and that is the extended Co-operative Department. If there is one department that has made excellent progress for the twelve months I have been associated with this Government, it is this. It has made the old co-operatives stronger and more confident, and new ones are springing up further afield. The only regret seems to be reflected in the complaint often heard both inside this Chamber and outside that the Rice Marketing Board has not been made a co-operative. I said to the Rice Producers' Co-operative at Bush Lot, "You folks have made such a success on a small scale! You should not restrict your experience but encourage more activity, possibly more buying co-operatives. So that if the Government says tomorrow, 'we are going to have the Rice Marketing Board turned into a co-operative and each man shall have a share in it, and it shall be run on a

[Mr. Tello]

true co-operative basis' then you can give the Government the assurance that you have enough knowledge and experience to handle the Rice Marketing Board." I asked them if they did not see that by making the best use of co-operatives, they were helping themselves.

The Credit Corporation is serving the people and they too, are assisting to organise credit societies. It is fortunate that for some time we have had credit unions in the Colony, and it is also fortunate that we have an able Commissioner of Co-operatives, and the sound guiding influence of the Credit Corporation. I am a strong advocate of co-operation and, in fact, I would like to see yet more strong, striving businesses and industries under the control of the Co-operative Movement. I am not satisfied that the Movement is receiving enough co-operation from the people themselves, and this heightens my regard and respect for the department.

In the field of education, I am proud to say that the Government has provided enough money, with the aid of C.D. and W. grants not only to build schools but to renovate many more schools. Government's action has made a number of schools far more healthy and, in fact, more pleasant to dwell in for the five hours a day pupils attend classes in them. I think if we go through the country and see the buildings, once we know what they looked like before, we would be able to appreciate that the new atmosphere must be very inducive and conducive to better learning, and to a better attitude to education. It is quite true that more can be done for secondary education, but we must creep before we walk. There will be no necessity for a strong secondary education programme if our elementary education programme is not handled on a proper basis. Perhaps

hon. Members of this Council know that Government is not prepared to stop at anything to better education, and for that reason money has been provided in the Budget to take over the education of the children who are not fortunate to have the use of their sight. I refer to the provision made for the education of ten blind children at the Institute in Trinidad.

In turning to Social Services, I must say I am certain the few more cents extracted from me for my rum and ginger, and for my glass of beer will find their way into the social services. It is true no one dares criticise this Government on its accelerated and extended interest it is now taking in youth, and when I say 'youth' I mean youth from the cradle even to post-work days. The work and officers of the Social Welfare Department are well known to hon. Members of this Council. I do not see the necessity for labouring it, but I am satisfied that a greater interest is being taken in youth welfare and other branches of the social services. I will not enumerate them, but I am satisfied that in every stage of our lives there are social services at our beck and call, ready to assist us, and when we reach our old age today our pennies will have been used to give us a better old age pension. I am proud that there is provided in our social security services some security for us throughout our lives.

I would also like to mention a small matter, but rather important to the children at school. There has been some criticism of our acceptance in this Colony of milk and cod-liver oil tablets for children — especially milk. Are we ashamed to accept "gifts" from ourselves? The organisation handling this matter and which has made it possible is contributed to by us. That is the law of life: give and take. We give some, and we receive some.

I think that is one thing we can be proud about. I do not say that we must not look forward to the day when we would be able to produce enough milk in this Colony and possibly be donors of tons of milk to social services in this Colony. I am not saying, however, that that would remove the necessity for this concession to be passed on to our children and especially our needy children. I doubt whether in this Colony today there is any person in politics or in public life who would dare to refuse such a gift and stand up to the barrage of criticism that has been showered on the Financial Secretary with respect to some of the items in this Budget.

There are also provisions in the Budget relating to forestry and mines. I think that everyone who has visited the Forest Department and has seen the operations being carried out there with respect to silviculture will agree that the money spent in that direction has been well spent indeed. The time has come when our people should endeavour to find a new outlet as regards money spent on building and building materials. If we were to go around to the humble folk who must build low-cost homes and listen to their conversation relating to the selection of materials, we would be surprised to find that they go to the Forest Department and select their own stuff. This Department is certainly doing a fine job and I think that it should be encouraged in every possible way.

I want also to refer to the question of mining in this Colony. Until a couple of years ago there was a great deal of doubt as to whether or not we would be able to attract capital into this Colony that would take an interest in the development of the interior and establish mining industries there. Even those who are not very familiar with the question have understood, through the columns of the Press, that today that fear has

been overcome, and that there is a new interest and the right type of capital coming forward to investigate our mining possibilities. Mining was started among us by what is known as the common pork-knocker, and I feel that his lot is still a very hard one. In spite of the fact that he is the pioneer of the industry he is usually ignorant of our mining legislation and of the procedure to be adopted in order to establish his rights in anything he might discover.

This is a very sore point which, possibly, escapes the busy minds of public administrators. I mention it, however, because once it is known by public concerns they should be willing to inform these men as to the procedure they should follow in order to obtain their common rights. I plead their cause because many of these small men are turned away in the face of some legal technicality, and it is hard to remove from them the impression that an attempt had not been made to take away their rights and deprive them of what was justly theirs. These people, in the early pioneering days, went into the interior at very great risk and worked exceedingly hard, and their knowledge of our legislation was no more than it is today. I know that no injustices are being committed on them, but today they feel that it is incumbent on the powers that be to find some way or some machinery to remove the doubt that may exist in their minds. Capital would never have been interested in mining industries in this Colony if the pork-knockers had not gone into the interior and displayed a great deal of interest there for the benefit of themselves and the Colony as a whole.

Here, I would like to refer to the Credit Corporation which has been recently established in this Colony. I know that it has met with some degree of criticism, but I want to state that we

[Mr. Tello]

must expect it to be subjected to the pains of birth and growth. In this case they would be worse than usual, because of the anxiety of the small man to have an organisation from which he could obtain loans without paying exorbitant interest.

Long before the Corporation became a legal entity, thousands of applications in this respect were laid on the desk of the Chairman and, naturally, there was a somewhat understandable haste on the part of some of these applicants to have their cases dealt with. Several appointments were made as quickly as possible, but it is true to say that many of the officers and members of Committees who had to advise the Corporation were persons who had never dealt with loans and banking affairs in their lives. Naturally, they were slow and could not deal with those matters with the speed which would have been engendered by greater knowledge and experience. There are many applications that were made as early as March last year, but have not been acknowledged as yet. On the other hand there are many that have been made and acknowledged, but there was no opportunity to deal with them. Further, many applications were sent to District Committees but, unfortunately, no replies were made to them and, according to Press reports, one of those Committees has resigned. All those things, I have already stated, are the pains of birth and growth.

I think the Credit Corporation has done a fine job within the first six months of its existence. I think the distribution of loans was quite equitable and just: there has been no singling out of any special industry or of any special set of people to benefit by these loans, and I think that if the organisation has handled such a large number of loans within such

a short time, with the assistance of a staff fully equipped with the knowledge and experience required it would do very much better. In short, I think it can be truly said that the Corporation has come through with flying colours for the amount of work it has covered within such a short time.

I now move on to Housing. It is quite true that the Housing Department and the Ministry have an easier way to advertise what they are doing than have other Departments, for it is much easier to see a house erected than to see within the files of the Treasury what that Department is doing. In spite of that I am satisfied that the Housing Department and the Ministry are entitled to a great deal of praise from all concerned. I am satisfied that they have put their whole hearts into the job and have fulfilled the promise I made to the people when I was appointed to this Council, that in the Development Programme they would see houses put up, and that the Ministry in charge would tax itself to the limit to assist them to build their own homes, and that self-help schemes would be given special attention. Today I can move about the countryside happy to be reminded of the promise I made.

To say that the Department and the Ministry concerned are free from criticism would be saying too much, because healthy criticism is always welcome, but I am satisfied that the Ministry and the Housing and Planning Department have justified the confidence we have placed in them. They have justified the money voted for them and I think they are on the way to winning the full confidence of our people. We have had our criticisms and we took them, but it is said that when you have a trumpet you should blow it. This is one trumpet that we can blow; it is our show piece and we can take people

around and show them what this Interim Government has done. As the Member in charge says, we are now getting into our strides; the housing plan is gathering momentum.

I have come to the last item on which I wish to speak, and it is income tax. I have always felt that income tax is a very fair and just tax. It is an accepted fact that we obtain water from the spring, and I feel that if a person's income is large enough to carry a tax to assist the revenue of the country a tax on his income is fair and just. Provision is made for the employment of a new officer in the Income Tax Department. There is sufficient evidence that there are certain unscrupulous people who are deliberately evading income tax, and I feel that it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to co-operate and assist the Income Tax Department in every way possible to bring the evaders to justice and make them pay their fair share. I am no mathematician or tax expert but it has often occurred to me that if it were possible to collect income tax from everyone who is liable to the tax there might be sufficient argument or justification for a reduction in the rates of taxation. I have reason to believe that there are a great number of people who live in such a way that one can never believe that they could be assessed for income tax. I think it is another form of robbing the revenue, and is nearly as bad as making counterfeit money. I think we should all join in a crusade against those people.

There has been a great deal of criticism by the small man regarding certain allowances in respect of income tax. I refer to allowances with respect to insurance, especially that which secures annuity for old age. I agree

that each and every one of us should be provided some security for old age, and I do not begrudge the income tax concession granted to those people who can afford insurance, but what worries me is that so many people write me letters complaining that the concessions allowed them are not enough. I think that is where the injustice comes in. If I remember correctly the figure is somewhere between \$1,200 and \$1,500. I wish to remind those people who are dissatisfied, that in this Colony there are thousands of people who do not earn \$1,200 a year, and if \$1,200 a year is allowed a person to provide security in old age he should remember that thousands of people do not earn that much in a year. What would be the attitude of the small man who earns between \$60 and \$80 per month if Government allowed itself to be needled into making a greater concession to a happier few who can set aside enough money for old age security? The small people enjoy very few concessions other than their wages, and generally end up in the Alms House or look forward to old age pension. I would like to conclude by saying that I am very proud to be associated with an officer who has been so courageous and efficient in preparing and presenting his Budget.

#### THE ADJOURNMENT

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to hear from Members what day we should adjourn to.

**The Chief Secretary :** I suggest that we adjourn to Monday.

**Mr. Macnie :** Did I hear correctly that Monday has been suggested?

**Mr. Speaker :** Monday has been suggested. I would like to have Members' views about that.

**Mr. Macnie:** Some of us, not all of us, are subject to previous engagements. I know that one other Member besides myself has an engagement for Monday afternoon. I refer to Mr. Ramphal. We are engaged in certain negotiations. I am not urging that we should not meet on Monday on that account, but I thought I should inform Your Honour about it.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** May I suggest a compromise — Tuesday? Monday is the day on which many of us have other meetings. I also have a meeting on Monday. I would be quite willing to come on Monday but I would prefer Tuesday.

**Mr. Speaker:** Monday is to all intents and purposes a *dies non*.

**The Chief Secretary :** I hope that on Tuesday we will not adjourn until we have got through the Budget. We are already in the second month of the year.

**Mr. Speaker:** I know that the Financial Secretary would like to reply to the debate on the Budget, and the hon. Member for Agriculture might also wish to speak.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** I do not think either of us will speak for three hours, but both of us would like to speak.

**Mr. Carter:** I intend to speak, and I believe nearly every Member who has not already spoken will speak.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Council is adjourned until Tuesday, 8th February, at 2 p.m.