

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

FRIDAY, 28TH JUNE, 1957

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT:

His Honour the Speaker:

Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E.,
Q.C.

Ex-Officio Members:

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. M. S. Porcher (Ag.):

The Hon. the Attorney General,
Mr. A. M. I. Austin.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. F. W. Essex.

Nominated Members of Executive Council:

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

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Mem-
ber for Labour, Health and Housing).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Mem-
ber 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 Official:

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

Nominated Unofficials:

Mr. W. A. Phang

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

Mr. C. A. Carter

Mr. E. F. Correia

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb

Mr. H. Rahaman

Miss Gertie H. Collins

Mrs. Esther E. Dey

Dr. H. A. Fraser

Mr. R. B. Jailal

Mr. Sugrim Singh

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

Clerk of the Legislature:

Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature:

Mr. E. V. Viapree.

Absent:

Mr. T. Lee — on leave.

The Speaker read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the
Council held on Thursday, 27th June,
1957, as printed and circulated were
taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISSOLUTION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I am going to read the text of a message I have just received from His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government.

"Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members.

Tomorrow will see the dissolution of the first Legislative Council to be constituted under the British Guiana (Constitution) (Temporary Provisions) Order in Council, 1953. I am certain that had he been here the Governor would not have allowed the occasion to pass without conveying to you his grateful appreciation of the work done by you during the past three and a half years. You accepted Governor Sir Alfred Savage's invitation to take office at a most difficult time in the country's history. By their nature nominated legislatures cannot be expected to be popular and you may feel that this one has been no exception.

It is, however, by their record of achievement that legislatures are ultimately judged and I do not think you need have any fear of the verdict of posterity. It is impossible in this short Message to catalogue all the legislation that has been passed — and, of course, content is the important thing not mere bulk—but a survey of the close on 200 bills which you will have dealt with before dissolution, shows how wide-ranging and far-reaching your legislative work has been, encompassing every sphere of Government interest from elections to electricity, from mining to money-lending, from fish to fires, from law to labour, from prisons to paddy. Even so the enactment of laws forms but a part of the work of a legislature. The range of Motions and Resolutions is just as extensive. Besides examining two major development programmes you have debated and adopted important resolutions on social security, the health service, secondary education and aviation, to name only a few. The public service has claimed your attention on many occasions and has always received fair treatment, for which I personally am particularly grateful. Then, last but not least, there

is your scrutiny of expenditure in Finance Committee where, in an unpublicised, informal atmosphere so much of your work has been done. The fact that so much development has taken place with virtually no increase in an already high level of taxation is a tribute to your watchfulness as guardians of the public purse.

A nominated legislature faces a dilemma. If it supports the Administration it is exposed to the accusation of being a mere "rubber stamp." If it opposes the Administration (which it can successfully do since it has the majority) it is liable to be charged with obstructing the government. It must be critical, but constructively so. Here again, looking back on your record, I think it can be fairly said that you have trodden the middle way with remarkable consistency.

Mr. Speaker, to you, Sir, a particular and personal expression of gratitude is due. After presiding with distinction over two Legislative Councils you are about to give up office. The office of Speaker is peculiar to the British parliamentary tradition. It is an office of little power but great influence. The whole character of a legislature can be determined by its Speaker, not directly but by the impact of his wisdom, experience, personality and judgment. I can only say that as the first of what I hope will be a long line of Speakers in British Guiana you have set a standard which your successors will have to strive hard to surpass."

PAPERS LAID

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex): I beg to lay on the table the—

Minutes of the Meetings of Finance Committee held on 7th, 13th and 25th June, 1957.

secondly—

Schedule of Supplementary Estimates for the month of June, 1957.

thirdly—

Schedule of Supplementary Estimates (Development) for the month of June, 1957.

fourthly—

Final Schedule of Additional Provision on the Recurrent Estimates, 1956.

Mr. W. O. R. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works): I beg to lay on the table the—

“Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations, 1957.”

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES —
JUNE, 1957

The Financial Secretary: I beg to give notice of the following motions standing in my name—

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates for the month of June, 1957, totalling \$297,415.76 which have been laid on the table.”

SUPPLEMENTARY DEVELOPMENT
ESTIMATES FOR JUNE, 1957

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates (Development) for the month of June, 1957, totalling \$2,163,034.00, which have been laid on the table.”

1956 SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Statement of Supplementary Expenditure totalling \$422,403.54, which was incurred during the year 1956 and was not included in any previous schedule and is to be admitted as a charge to Public Funds under Colonial Regulations 223 (2) (c), and which has been laid on the table.”

I should like to proceed with them at a later stage at this meeting.

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

OIL—EXPLORATION, AND OTHER
PROJECTS

Sir Frank McDavid: (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I have an announcement to make. This being the last meeting

of the Council, I wish to take the opportunity to make some announcements concerning certain important investigations which are in prospect and in regard to four projects in the Development Programme.

First, there is Oil Exploration. Government has received an application for an Oil Exploration Licence by the California Exploration Company, a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company of California. Favourable consideration is now being given to this application which has been made on behalf of the California Oil Company of British Guiana—a company to be formed and registered in British Guiana. The local Company will have a capital of \$720,000 to be supplemented by advances as required from the principal parent company.

The Exploration Licence would embrace an area of the sea bed within the boundaries of British Guiana comprising the southern section of the Continental Shelf together with a narrow strip of contiguous land on the coast.

The Standard Oil Company of California is one of the leading international oil groups and is presently engaged in active operations in Trinidad through another subsidiary—Dominion Oil Ltd. The Officers of the California Exploration Company have wide experience in the execution and supervision of geological and geophysical exploration for petroleum and in related development activities.

The Company has intimated that it is prepared to begin the exploration programme at once using a ‘crew’ (survey vessels) now operating in the Caribbean Area. The work to be carried out will involve a comprehensive seismic survey of the Continental Shelf within the limits of the area covered by the Exploration Licence, with subsequent study and interpretation of the data

[Sir Frank McDavid]

and results of the survey. Negotiations are now in progress with respect to the detailed terms of the Exploration Licence and of any Prospecting Licence for which application might subsequently be made by the Company should the results of the exploration justify prospection.

TIMBER UTILIZATION

Reynolds Metals Company have had discussions with Government as to the feasibility of economic utilization of the timbers in the areas covered by their bauxite mining concessions with a view to manufacture for export in various commercial forms e.g. pulp, synthetic lumber and lumber forms. As a result of these discussions a project has been agreed upon for execution in three stages namely (i) Preliminary Survey (ii) Full Scale Forest Inventory Survey and (iii) World Market Study. The participants in this project will be Reynolds Metals Company, the International Co-operation Administration of the U.S.A. and the Forest Department. A project agreement with I.C.A. has been signed in terms of which I.C.A. will make available the services of a specialist to undertake the preliminary survey which, it is expected, will be carried out in July-August. Subject to a favourable report on this preliminary survey the full scale commercial inventory would be undertaken and thereafter Reynolds Metals Company would make the world market study if the analysis of the inventory indicates a favourable commercial content of the forest. It is hoped that the results of this forest utilization survey would illustrate the economic possibilities of comprehensive exploitation of other forest areas of the Colony.

NEW HOTEL FOR GEORGETOWN

A recognized organization of hotel-

iers in the U.S.A. is considering a project to build and operate a hotel in Georgetown and has approached Government to make available a suitable seaside site. Government have agreed to allocate for this purpose a section of the Thomas Lands facing the Sea Wall and to make it available to the firm on long-term lease on condition that a hotel of agreed capacity and type is erected with suitable development of the grounds.

TORANI CANAL

This project, comprising the construction of an irrigation canal between the Berbice and Canje Rivers, 12 miles long about 100 feet wide and 10 feet deep together with sets of regulator gates at both ends, is now in its final stage. It is hoped that it will be possible to make arrangements for a ceremonial opening of the intake regulator gates on the Berbice River thus admitting water from this river into the Canal. This ceremony has been tentatively fixed to take place on a suitable date during the first week of August. The construction of an airstrip on the savannah adjacent to the canal is being undertaken. This will enable those invited to travel to the site by B.G. Airways Dakota aircraft and return to Georgetown on the same day.

BLOCKS I AND II CORENTYNE

The recently completed sets of elaborate detailed plans and drawings for the drainage and irrigation of Blocks I and II, Corentyne, and for the establishment within the area of four farmers' settlements designed to accommodate 1,500 families have been placed on exhibition in the Committee Room. The Acting Director of Drainage and Irrigation with a representative of the Consulting Engineers, Sir William Halcrow and Partners, and the Director of Land

Settlement will be in attendance this afternoon at a convenient time to explain the project to Members.

FISH MARKETING CENTRE

The Georgetown Fish Marketing Centre at Lombard Street, (which includes the wholesale fish market, fish dock, ramp, grid and amenities for fishermen) is now complete and in full operation. The Centre and its amenities were constructed on the advice of the Fisheries Adviser to the Secretary of State to conform with modern fishery practice. It has not been possible to arrange any formal opening of the Centre but visitors will be invited on a date in July to inspect the Centre and to witness the docking and discharge of the survey vessel "Cape St. Mary" on her return to port from one of her survey and experimental fishing trips.

MILK PASTEURIZATION PLANT

The Government Milk Pasteurization Premises and Plant been completed and an opening ceremony will take place during July.

When the functions to which I have referred take place, this Council will have been dissolved and a new Legislature will not yet have been constituted. I trust that all the present Members of Council will nevertheless feel able to accept the invitations which will be extended to them to be present in a personal capacity.

Honourable Members will, I am confident, share the pleasure and satisfaction of the Government at the prospect of further immediate intensive investigation and exploration of this country's natural resources reflected by the first two announcements I have just made. (*Applause*).

GEORGETOWN TOWN COUNCIL

(AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. Farnum: (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): I beg to move the following motion:

"Be it resolved: That this Council agrees to proceed with the Georgetown Town Council (Amendment) Bill, 1957, forthwith."

Mr. Gajraj: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

Mr. Farnum: I beg to move the second reading of the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance further to amend the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance."

This is a very short Bill. It has been brought in order to exempt the Convent of the Good Shepherd and the lands thereon from the payment of rates and taxes to the Town Council, and to enable them to enjoy the same benefits as similar institutions. The Bill also provides similar benefits for the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society.

Mr. Gajraj: I beg to second the motion. I would like to say a few words particularly on what might appear to be an attempt by this Council to rush this Bill through today. It is being done at the request of the Town Council because the measure is one which should really have been brought many years ago. In so far as this exemption of the Convent of Good Shepherd is concerned, the decision was made (by the Town Council) since 1952 but, unfortunately, through many causes, the legislation has not reached this Council before now.

As the Ordinance now stands the Town Council has to demand that the

[Mr. Gajraj]

institution meet its obligations for the payment of rates and taxes but it does not have the wherewithal to do so. There is another institution which enjoys similar exemption from rates and taxes by the Town Council, therefore I think it is right that we should get ourselves on the right side of the law with regard to the two institutions mentioned in this Bill.

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, and passed the Bill as printed.

Council resumed.

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

Mr. Gajraj: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

FINANCIAL MOTIONS SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Orders to enable me to proceed with three motions of which I have given notice today. I have had the authority of the Officer Administering the Government to proceed with these measures.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

Relevant Standing Orders suspended.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES— JUNE 1957

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the following motion:

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates for the month of June, 1957, totalling \$297,415 76, which have been laid on the table.”

The Schedule relating to this expenditure was only approved yesterday by Finance Committee and I do not propose to take up the time of the Council by going into a great deal of detail. There is nothing startling among the items in this Schedule and we have tried to anticipate the supplementary expenditure which might be incurred within the next few weeks. The larger items in this Schedule are \$10,000 for grants to secondary schools and this stems from a resolution which was passed by this Council. There is also an item of \$20,000 for overseas conferences, \$45,000 for the new school feeding scheme and other items like that. Since we went into the items in Finance Committee yesterday, I shall move that this motion be now adopted.

Mr. Cummings: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (DEVELOPMENT) JUNE, 1957

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the following motion:

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates (Development) for the month of June, 1957, totalling \$2,163,034.00, which have been laid on the table.”

The schedules relating to these items come under two heads — Colonial Development and Welfare \$309,847; and other sources—\$1,353,187—a total of \$2,163,034. The latter schedule is made up mainly of two items, one being the sum of \$1,121,000 for the rehabilitation of the East Bank Road, including a sum of \$320,000 for the purchase of roadmaking plant for use on that road. I do not think anyone would quarrel about this effort to reconstruct the East Bank Road. Another large item is one of half a million dollars for certain development work which must be done this year at Blocks I and II and to which the Member for Agriculture has already referred. I do not think I need to mention anything else with respect to the Schedule, and I move that the motion be now adopted.

Sir Frank McDavid: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

1956 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the following motion:

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Statement of Supplementary Expenditure totalling \$422,403.54, which was incurred during the year 1956 and was not included in any previous schedule and is to be admitted as a charge to Public Funds under Colonial Regulation 223 (2) (c), and which has been laid on the table.”

This is an annual schedule and it represents excesses on votes which were disclosed when the year's accounts were closed. I am very glad to say they are presented earlier this year than usual. I would like to congratulate the Accountant General's Department on that and I would also

like to say that the Schedule — this is something to be desired — shows that the Departments are improving, as of the \$422,000 about \$230,000 represented an underestimate of the teachers salaries revision and Cost of Living Allowances to Pensioners.

I make the usual Financial Secretary's promise in regard to excess expenditure, that we shall do even better next year but I do feel we have done better this year than last year. The Schedule was approved in Finance Committee and I hope it will be passed by this Council.

Sir Frank McDavid: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

Mr. Speaker: That I think, concludes the business on the Order of the Day.

VALEDICTION TO RETIRING SPEAKER

The Chief Secretary: Before we close this sitting which is our last, with Your Honour's permission, I would like to say a few words, and I feel that hon. Members would like to do so too. I am speaking on behalf of my official colleagues. We have heard in the Message from His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government that this Council will be dissolved tomorrow, and we have also heard with deep regret that Your Honour will be relinquishing your office as Speaker. His Excellency described in his Message the peculiar difficulties which face a Nominated Legislature. But in addition to the problems which he mentioned, I think, possibly there is one other — one of considerable importance and one which is not easy to resolve — and that is the problem which

[The Chief Secretary]

faces any collection of people, who without any particular previous connection, are suddenly called upon to serve together and to form a unit which has an identity and character of its own.

An Elected Legislature has its party policies and party leaders to set a pattern for it, but a Nominated Legislature is entirely dependent on its own collective resources to mould its own character. A Legislative Council without a character of its own would, I think, be a very sorry thing, and I feel it is one of the great achievements of this Council that it has undoubtedly been able to develop a definite character of its own.

Three and a half years ago a collection of individuals walked into this Chamber; this afternoon a team — and in my opinion an efficient team—will walk out. Every Member of this Council has played his or her part. There has been no subservience nor has there been any mutiny, although on one or two occasions we got fairly close to it. By a nice balance of criticism and encouragement from this Council, the Government has been able to introduce and implement a policy which has laid a firm and strong foundation on which future Legislative Councils can build. On behalf of my official colleagues I would like to thank every Member of the Council for the assistance and the help which you have all given to us.

Sir, as His Excellency has stated in his Message, the position of the Speaker is a peculiar one. By parliamentary tradition you are set apart from us and yet you travel together with us in the Ship of State. You have served during your term of office

with two Ships of State, and you have been through some rather troubled waters. The fact that you have managed so remarkably successfully can be attributed to many reasons, but, I think, not least of them is a gift which you have and which was also possessed by the greatest admiral in the history of the British Navy. I am referring metaphorically of course, to your use of the telescope and your remarkable ability to apply that instrument to the appropriate eye when the occasion demands. I am sure that during your term of office there must have been occasions when Nelson himself must have touched his hat to you.

All of us here owe you a deep debt of gratitude. For many of us it was our first experience of Legislative Council work when we came into this Chamber. There is nothing like the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate. There is no previous experience which prepares you for it entirely. It can be a rather frightening and sometimes even a humiliating experience. But by your tact you have enabled us to cut our teeth with the minimum of discomfort.

Hon. Members will forgive me— I am sure my official colleagues will forgive me — if I express my own personal gratitude to you. I am one of those who were inducted into the mysteries of parliamentary debate under your guidance, and I am extremely grateful to you for the help and encouragement you have given me.

This afternoon we are writing the last paragraph in a notable chapter of this Colony's history. There are, no doubt, some who will rejoice tomorrow when this chapter is closed, but I, myself, believe firmly that the pages of this chapter have been well written and, I think, in the years to come posterity will endorse my view.

Mr. Cummings : I think I will begin where the hon. the Chief Secretary in his very admirable speech left off. I do not propose to speak in any detail, or for that matter, at all on what posterity will, I am sure, judge to be achievement.

It has been to me a very stimulating experience to have worked along with my colleagues and members of the "opposition", if I may so term them, and after about three and a half years. I know we go out with the gratitude of a large number of people in this country whom we have been able to assist.

I have really risen to make my contribution to the tributes which I know every Member of this Council will wish to pay you. Sir, as a distinguished lawyer you will remember that there is a presumption of continuance of the state of things. It is a very peculiar presumption when one thinks of the inevitability of change in this life. It is paradoxical that many of us should accept such a presumption. Many had come to feel that you were like Tennyson's brook; that while men were coming and going, you would go on forever. You, Sir, are perhaps the only one alive among those who sat with you when you first entered this Chamber. Your association with this Chamber over a long period of years has been almost continuous, although in different capacities.

I am happy that you are leaving this high office of yours spontaneously and, in my opinion, in a mind even more resilient than that with which you entered this Chamber. No one can doubt the keenness of your mind, and although the tradition of your high office necessitates impartiality

Your Honour had your own method of indicating your views and guiding the debate in progress. I, like the hon. the Chief Secretary, made my first appearance in this Council with you in that Chair. Few people know --and I speak on a personal note-- how helpful you have been to me in this Council and also at the Bar, where *de facto* you practise your profession. Your legal career is too distinguished, too well known to need citation on an occasion like this.

In bidding you farewell in this Council, Mr. Speaker, the words of two poets come to mind. In one case, it is Longfellow's words:

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime;
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

I know many young Guianese who, on reading those words, would think about you, Sir. I myself remember an edition of the "Christmas Annual" of years ago in which your picture appeared with the caption, "Man of the Year". Ever since that time you have been held up to our youths as an embodiment of those words of Longfellow. Years have passed and your conduct and your actions have not only justified the injunction of our parents and well-wishers, but have cemented our thoughts to the fact that those words are well suited to you and we should emulate your example. The other lines that occur to me are from Milton's "Lycidas":

"At last he rose, and twitch'd his
mantle blue,
Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures
new."

You go, Sir, tomorrow, to fresh pastures new. It is the wish of this

[Mr. Cummings]

Council that you enjoy your well-earned retirement.

Mr. Ramphal: I rise now to speak for the unofficial side, with those who do not occupy the stately chairs and are known as Floor members.

The last act in the drama in which for the past three and a half years we have been players is about to be performed, and we, the players, will soon make our exit into our several ways. For the succeeding play, parts have not yet been allotted to players.

This Council may be criticized, but there is its record of achievement which, as has already been said, history will judge. The legislative activity of this Council can be compared very favourably with that of whole decades in the history of our country. The material advancement of this county is noticeable to everyone. But we do not have to proclaim that. It proclaims itself, and if Sir Frank McDavid were a politician, he could not have timed his pronouncements with greater precision than he has done.

Those are very solid achievements and no amount of criticism can take away the solidity of those prospects. The Members of this Council I am sure, like Aeneas of old, will say "*Et quorum pars magna fui*—of these things we have played no inconsiderable part." We therefore leave a legacy to those who come behind us, a legacy which we trust neither their greed nor their political partisanship will allow to go unkept. We trust that those who follow us will take up from where we leave off and that posterity will give them a place as the fulfillers of the hopes which we have been able to create for this our country.

Sir, it was not with any pleasure whatsoever that we learnt from the Message which you communicated at the beginning of this meeting that you were relinquishing your post as Speaker of this Council. There is no one here, Sir, but has admired you and admired the wit and humour with which you seem to be more than fully endowed. We wish to pattern ourselves on your urbanity, on your spirit of tolerance and your unflinching tact. You have become a legend in this country, and like the hon. Mr. Cummings, we wish to express on behalf of the entire Council that wherever you may be, whatever you may engage yourself in, you will find as much pleasure as you have found in conducting the affairs of this Council. We trust, Sir, that with that pleasure you will have a continued abundance of good health.

May I be permitted on this occasion—I nearly said the last occasion on which I would speak in this Council, but I refrain from doing so: I must not anticipate history—but on this last occasion I think possibly Members would permit me to make one comment and that is that there appeared to me despite the grandeur of this building, its absolute magnificence—perhaps the best in the West Indies—that there is something about the layout of the assembly that does not make itself for the cut and thrust of debate.

Seated as we are, it appears to me, and it has been before my eyes throughout these three and a half years, that we are more fitted for making speeches here than for debating—and democracy is based on debate and discussion. I wish, speaking on my own behalf, that the future Government will consider very seriously rearrangement of this building or the erection of a new and greater building than this in which the more

ancient method as exhibited in our Mother of Parliaments, would be made possible for our future legislators.

Now, may I, like the Romans of old, say to my colleagues "*Avete, valete*"

Mr. Luckhoo: May I join with the other floor Members in returning thanks to His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government for his kind message to Members of the Legislative Council. May I say for myself very briefly, nevertheless in a very outspoken manner, that I regard it as a privilege and I am proud that I was a member of this Legislative Council. We have each in our own way sought to give service to our country and to make our humble contribution as we saw fit.

The other aspect of his speech is one in which I would wish to join with my colleagues and to thank you, Sir, for the service which you have given not only in this Legislature but to the country in holding the high office of Speaker with dignity, courage and distinction. I feel that there are few persons in British Guiana who could lay claim to the intimate knowledge and background of our institutions and our practices. I am happy that on many occasions you took the opportunity to give us as a matter of permanent record the background and the history of some of these institutions and principles.

We are a comparatively new people and it is good that these matters should be recorded so that those who come after us may read and be proud. There is no doubt that in the holding of your office you have brought to bear your knowledge of Parliamentary procedure, which I say with every sense of modesty I think is unrivalled in the Caribbean. On no occasion during the whole period of our three and a half years

here have I seen your Honour refer to the rules in an endeavour to unravel what might appear to be a knotty point of procedure. Always, as someone stepped in it, you have been able to unravel it out and undoubtedly to act rightly.

There was one remark I heard after one of our very long meetings in this Council Chamber relative to the debate on Federation when there was a rather noisy scene at one stage. Your Honour was able effectively to quell that disturbance, not by the unspoken word, but by the audible word. I think that is a great tribute to Your Honour, that your personality could so unobtrusively dominate the scene that you were always their Speaker.

Sir, I have no doubt that whatever office you enter, wherever you may go, whether it is on the playing fields, whether it is on the race-course, whether it is the highest chamber, you will bring to bear that natural sense of dignity and propriety which will enrich the office you hold. Like my colleagues, I also end with a quotation: "Saying goodbye to you is such sweet sorrow I could say it until tomorrow."

Mr. Sugrim Singh: Your Honour, on this momentous and historic day I wish to join my colleagues who have spoken before in saying a few words on the very eve of our dispersal from this Council.

In the first place, Sir, I wish to say that this is a convivial occasion, tinged with an element of sorrow as we part from this Chamber. It is convivial in the sense that anyone in this Council must appreciate the fact that the Constitution of any country is always a growth and not a creation, and we are moving forward after a temporary setback to place this country once again on the road to constitutional and economic stability, progress and re-

[Mr. Sagrim Singh]

spectability, not only in the Caribbean, but to the entire world outside.

As a team, we walked into this Chamber 3½ years ago twenty-four strong along with the usual Official Members. Today, after 3½ years we are 19 sitting in this Council. One has gone before, three have left us—one to serve us and give of his experience in a very important field, and one who is absent from the Colony on holiday.

Sir, the public in British Guiana, if I may liken them to a jury, will sit and decide what we, as a team in this Council and in our humble way, tried to do. We shall not discuss our achievements at all. I want to say on that point however, that I share some pride in having been a Member of this Interim Legislature and I am sure that every member of this Council, in the same way, shares that pride. This country of ours is moving slowly and confidently.

The future viewed from certain angles appears to be gloomy but I hope and pray that these passing clouds will move and settle towards the horizon and clear the way so that we can see a bright and brilliant sunshine ahead. The stage has been set for any reasonable Government to pick up the threads and carry on for the benefit of this country. The future will decide how that task must be done.

I must, Sir, before I take my seat, express my own appreciation and that of Members of the opposition for the charity, consideration, advice and help we have at all times received from you as Speaker of this Council. Sir, half a century you have scored in the political evolution of this country. You have carved your name on the walls of fame. We of this

Council, Sir, have always looked to you and obtained your guidance. We shall not easily forget your affable disposition, your cool, suave and yet effective decisions and, Sir, the future politicians and public men of this country will have much to study and learn from the records of this Council when, in the more strenuous times, you were at the helm of deliberations in this Council and although the waves rolled your years of experience came to your help and you took our ship safely ashore.

Sir, I would say you are the signpost of the past and you are the star of the present. Unquestionably, you will remain the beacon of the future. We are leaving this Council this evening; we have done our task in this Council, as mentioned in the statement presented to us today, but we have never been "rubber stamps." Although nominated to this Council we have given vigorous opposition and on many occasions we have honoured the Government.

Forgetting our affiliations to any party to which we may belong, I think that each and everyone of us in this Council wishes that this country will once again take its proper place in the firmament of the Caribbean Nations. That decision, Sir, lies in the hands of the good people of this country.

Mr. Correia: Mr. Speaker, I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without adding something to what has been said by the hon. Members who spoke before me. I am sure Members around this table will join me in thanking the Acting Governor for his generous message to this Council today.

I think you have occupied that Chair with great dignity — the dignity of a person who has experience. I can assure you, Sir, that today you are sending out a team of veterans — veterans who can take their places in any Legislative Council. It is only because of your help and guidance that we were able to succeed. (*Applause*).

I remember, when I first entered this Chamber four years ago in the House of Assembly, how you gathered inexperienced legislators around you and guided them. You have done a great service to your country, and like a schoolmaster you have trained men to take their places in the building of this country.

I am sure Members around this table will join me in wishing you in your retirement many more years of usefulness and happiness.

Mr. Lord: Mr. Speaker, I should like to join with other Members in thanking the Officer Administering the Government for his kind words to the Members of this Council on its dissolution. I, myself, have never been an aspirant for political honours, and I consider it an honour and a privilege to have been nominated to serve as a Member of this Interim Government. As one hon. Member has stated, it has also been a very stimulating experience.

I consider that this Interim Government can justly claim to have had a very good record of achievement, and if through lack of finance, personnel, or lack of time this Government has not been able to achieve more, I hope that those who succeed us in office will be in a position to carry out the plans made by this Government to a successful conclusion.

With regard to your service, Sir, I should like to pay tribute to you as the first Speaker of any Legislature in this Colony and one who has been able to understand us. An hon. Member referred to us as “untried politicians” when we first came here

We are grateful for your guidance and the way in which you permitted us to carry on our affairs. We hope that now you have planned to retire from your high office you will have many more useful years of service not only to the community in general, but also that your experience will always be available to Members in any future Council of this Colony. (*Applause*).

Mrs. Dey: Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my quota of thanks to what other hon. Members have said in thanking the Officer Administering the Government for his message, and also to support those who have already mentioned their appreciation of your guidance.

His Excellency in his message quite wisely mentioned that “the public considered us as rubber stamps.” But, Sir, if a rubber stamp is properly cut and the pad is properly inked the result will be legible. I, Sir, am proud to be one of the “rubber stamp” Members to whom reference has been made, and I am sure that my colleagues will agree with me when I say that the imprint we shall be leaving behind—the one which will be handed down to posterity — is that of an indelible stamp — with all the good we have attempted to do for our fellow Guianese in this beloved country of ours. When we entered this Council we were given no torch — not even a box of matches to light — but today we are handing down a torch with which others may read aloud. I sincerely

[Mrs. Dey]

trust that those who come behind us would enter this Chamber with the same fervour and the same characteristic loyalty that we have shown during the 3½ years that we have kept the torch ablaze. Today, we see the remains of the Interim Government going into the ashes, but like the phoenix of old we will rise from the ashes of the past.

Throughout the time I have sat in this Council I have endeavoured to carry out my duties fearlessly. I can well remember the morning when I had to take the oath (of Allegiance) when I came to the words "So help me God," I repeated them in a very slow manner. When I got home my husband (who had been listening to the proceedings on the radio) said to me: "You were different from the others," and I replied that as I had gone to take up a public duty I had to call on God to help me and I felt that was where I should ask Him to help me to carry out my task. In keeping with my biblical name of Esther I have always been pleading for co-operation and progress in this Council, and I have tried in this Council to secure various benefits not only for my sex but for my fellow Guianese.

So far as Your Honour's going from us is concerned, I am moved with the emotions of my own personal feelings. At the early age of 12 years I won my first school prize — a book — "St. Elmo" by A. J. Evans, of which you were the donor. I can well remember my dear mother asking me never to let you feel sorry that you had given me the book. As the years went by and I was about to leave school — I know that my colleagues are going to laugh at this — I told all my friends that I would like to be a Barrister-at-Law. It also happened

that if any pupil of my school had occasion to send a chit to me which called for a reply, I used to sign my name as Esther Lewis, LL.D. — not even LL.B. as one might have expected.

Since I have been a member of this Council, however, I have found myself sitting among Barristers with Your Honour's knowledge and experience to guide me. I am, therefore, leaving this Council with pleasant memories and with feelings of emotion that will linger. I am not ashamed of having been part and parcel of the Interim Government that has served within this Chamber, for whatever I did was done according to the dictates of my conscience.

Like you, Sir, I am making an honourable step-out, and I cannot but recall a saying which I used to hear from my school masters — that "it is better to make an honourable step-out, than to experience a dishonourable kick-out." No member of this Interim Government has experienced a kick-out up to the present time. Since we are now meeting for the last time, Sir, I can only say on behalf of myself and my colleagues "May God bless you in your retiring years."

Mr. Rahaman: I wish to add my quota, Sir, in thanking His Excellency the O.A.G., for his message of appreciation to the Members of this Council for the work we have done. It is true that certain persons have labelled us as being a "rubber stamp" Government, but I know that we have succeeded in achieving quite a few outstanding things such as no other Government has done before. That is a fact which I know will go down in history.

The Members of this Interim Government must be complimented for their various services, and I hope that

the in-coming Government would be able to co-operate and achieve similar things for the benefit of this country. I sincerely hope that we would not have a recurrence of 1953.

I desire also to pay a compliment to you, Sir, for the very able manner in which you have guided this Council in the course of its various activities. You have shown much patience with the Members, many of whom were inexperienced, and in doing so you have often allowed them to exceed their time-limit for speaking, especially when an important matter had to be debated. I will conclude, Sir, by wishing that your years of retirement will be long and happy; and, I wish again to thank His Excellency the O.A.G., for his very kind Message.

Mr. Phang: I wish to associate myself with the remarks expressed in thanking His Excellency the O.A.G. for his Message, and I should like to take this opportunity to thank you, Sir, for the help and advice you have given us all in this Council.

Mr. Gajraj: Mr. Speaker, the proceedings of this Council today will go down in history no less than the achievements of this Government and this Legislature. I for one have considered it over the last three and a half years a matter of great privilege to be associated with the Government and this Council, and I have no regrets whatever for having done my part for my country, as I felt it was just and right in the circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said already of what we have achieved during the period of time we have served this Government and this Council, but there is one thing in particular which I would like to stress, and that is the manner in which the Members of this Government, who had to travel outside of British Gui-

ana on conferences and meetings, have removed the bad name which became the lot of this country after the way in which our immediate predecessors in office had run the Government of this country.

As one of those who have had the privilege of representing this Government outside of this country, I can attest to the fact that when this present Government started we found amongst our colleagues in the Caribbean a feeling of very grave suspicion. Indeed, they wondered whether we who succeeded a Government that was suspended were going to chide them in the very foolish manner in which those Members used to do.

Today again we seem to be faced with the same trouble in so far as our rice is concerned. The trouble is traceable to 1953 when a certain Minister of Industry and Commerce at a meeting of the Regional Economic Committee told our friends in the Caribbean that they would have to pay a very high price for the rice from British Guiana or do without it. Today the rice farmers of this country are very worried because it would seem that the attitude of those who have been elected to represent those farmers is somewhat akin to the expression to which I have referred. The position is different in so far as our friends in the Caribbean are concerned, because they have got the opportunity now of telling us "You may keep your rice for we are able to do better. We are in a position to dictate terms to you."

I make this statement fully knowing the effect it can have in the country. I feel that on this last day that this Legislature meets opportunity should be taken so that the farmers in the country must know that we are passing through a period of crisis in so far as the security of the

[Mr. Gajraj]

second important agricultural industry of this Colony is concerned; and that unless those who succeed us are prepared to be realistic and not idealistic and face the situation as businessmen, without creating conditions that would adversely affect the farmers, it could react to the detriment of the country's economy.

Mr. Speaker, I know that all of us in this Council have in our own way given of our best. We have made contributions in relation to our ability, combining them together. I make the claim that what we have done can stand comparison with the work of any Legislature not only in this country of ours but in the Caribbean itself. I can only hope that those who come afterwards will not seek to destroy before they have planned to replace.

I think many of us have had the opportunity of seeing a film titled "Venezuela, yesterday and today" and, Your Honour, one statement made several times in the course of that documentary film has remained in my memory. I shall repeat it now because I feel that is a statement which should be taken to the people of this country and hammered into their heads as words of wisdom, because the future of this country lies in the hands of the electors and will be decided on August 12. That statement, Mr. Speaker, is "In Venezuela there is an old adage — **Never destroy anything of value unless you have something of equal value to replace it by.**" Those are words that must be used and must echo and re-echo through the length and breadth of this country during the next few weeks.

Although this is our last session we cannot, I submit, be completely occupied in saying farewell. It is

our duty, I believe, to lay down in our speeches some article of strength which may be used to improve the condition of this country as we leave it, and most important in my opinion is to let our people realize that on no account must they agree to the destruction of anything that has proved its worth or, in other words, valuable to the country now and the future until, and unless, they are satisfied that it is to be replaced with something of greater value and certainly of equal value.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I do not regret my services to this Government and to this Council. If I have the opportunity of doing it over again, I would have no hesitation in similar circumstances to do likewise. Sir, in your important and exalted position as Speaker of this Council you have been an ornament to this Legislature. You have sat there in your seat unperturbed whilst we on the floor scrambled among ourselves. Whenever it was necessary for Members here to seek advice and to obtain guidance Your Honour has, as my hon. Friend Mr. Luckhoo mentioned, either audibly or inaudibly steered us along the correct path.

We shall miss you, Sir. We go out of office but nevertheless we always associate the office and position of Speaker as being one of some degree of permanency, and I myself would have wished to see Your Honour still adorning the Chair as Speaker and still being in a position to guide those who will sit around this table. But while we are filled with regret that you will not be there I still feel that we should express our gratitude to the Almighty that he has spared you to be with us in these three and a half years. You have done so much for this Government and this Council and you have given us such an opportunity to benefit from your wisdom:

all that is something we must feel grateful for, and instead of just saying how sorry we are at your departure, we must also express our joy that you have been with us through these very exciting times, for the work of this Government and this Legislature has been by no means static.

We have worked with an energy and a determination to prove to the people of this country that there are persons sprung from the same stock as they who, given the opportunity, would be able to steer this country out of shallow waters and away from the shoals into a safe harbour. We, I claim, have done much towards proving this to be possible, and although we confess that there is still a great deal to be done in this country, yet what has been achieved in our three and a half years is definitely a record.

The foundation has been laid which, if it is used properly, will enable those builders who will come after us to build more quickly, and to be sure, the building will be secure and will not suffer from the elements—the wind will not blow the structure down. But if they seek to build on shifting sands we all know what the result will be.

Your Honour, I join with my colleagues in bidding you farewell as Speaker of this Council and I want to join them, too, in wishing that in the years that remain with you God will give you health and strength so that you will be able to enjoy every moment of those years: that the vitality, the resiliency and humour which characterized your leadership in this Council will continue to assist you to enjoy your well-earned years.

Mr. Jailal: Mr. Speaker, when I came into this Council a few years

ago and started off on one of my long speeches a piece of poetry came to my mind:

“The day drags through, these storms
keep out the sun,
Thus the heart will break yet brokenly
live on.”

Those lines summed up my approach to the situation at that time. I wish today to commence my remarks of farewell to Your Honour and my colleagues with another quotation, the words of Shakespeare's Henry V, before the battle of Agincourt:

“Think not today upon the faults my
father made encompassing the crown.”

I make reference to the method by which we were co-opted to serve in this Legislature.

Let us forget the method by which we were brought in here. I remember sitting here and bearing Sir Frank McDavid's remarks that we should try and discard the word “Interim” in referring to this Government; that the “interimness” of it was of no importance at all. I share that opinion. I share it because I feel there has been nothing interim in the nature of the things with which we have had to deal. I do not wish to try and show any record of achievement because there will be no real point in that. As I have heard the Chief Secretary say: time and history will tell. I also agree. Only time and history will be able to judge the record of work done by this Council.

But speaking for myself, I shall first of all thank the Governors: the one who appointed us, and the one who removes us from here (*laughter*), for the tolerance which both of them have shown.

[Mr. Jailal]

In Sir Alfred Savage's selection, I feel certain that Members have been able to uphold his expectations when he appointed them as Members of this Council. We have not failed. I am positive that each Member can feel a certain amount of pride in the work we have done here. People can be assured that Members have given their service unselfishly to the cause of British Guiana.

I wish to say a word of thanks not only to the Governor but I also want to say, as a faithful 'opponent', a word of thanks to the Administration for all that they have done. They have done considerably more than we have done, because they had to prepare legislation and bring it here for consideration. The people concerned had to sit here and listen to their proposals being torn to bits, and they had to reconstruct legislation before it could be passed by this Council. It takes men with a certain amount of courage and resourcefulness to be able to stand up to criticism — criticism which at some time would appear burdensome and in some degree unfair.

However, Sir, they have borne their cross with some degree of dignity, and I am sure with the same degree of satisfaction that Members of previous Governments have done. Whatever may be said about the legislation brought before this Council; whatever may be the criticisms levelled against the Government which I feel I have the proud distinction to serve, I feel sure that when the history of British Guiana is written what this Government has done will be recorded on several pages of that book.

To my fellow Members, the

floor Members, must go my thanks for the spirit of co-operation that has existed in this section of the Council. While it is true that during the past years we did not see eye to eye on every measure brought here, there was a sort of camaraderie and when we left this Council there was never any feeling of rancour. That condition prevailed not merely because Members have the interest of British Guiana at heart, but because of your guidance we have emerged, as one Member said, as statesmen instead of merely interim legislators.

To you, Sir, we owe a lot. I am a very junior Member in this Council — junior not only in years but in practice. I am one of those who literally sat at your feet and took my lessons in this Council. I take this opportunity to join with those who spoke before in thanking you for what you have been able to accomplish out of the raw material you have had in this Council. We feel sure that in the years to come when you sit in retirement you will have happy recollections of your work with us. Like other Members, I wish to offer you peace and contentment in your retirement.

To the people of British Guiana, Sir, I wish to say this—I am leaving this message in the highest place in the land, I believe: the Government that is going out now is passing on a torch—a torch that is aflame with development, a torch that is aflame with goodwill, that is aflame with everything that means well for British Guiana. We are throwing down the gauntlet, and it is up to those who are coming behind to take up the gauntlet and carry on the fight.

Mr. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works): Mr. Speaker,

[Mr. Kendall]

please convey to His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government my sincere thanks for the message of appreciation he has sent to Members of this Council.

Three and a half years ago we accepted an invitation from Sir Alfred Savage to work in this Interim Legislature. Since then many things have happened for the furtherance of the social and economic development of this country. Today, Sir, with mixed feelings, we have to exchange words of farewell to some of our colleagues and to say that, in spite of what has been said outside of this Council, we have contributed much to the advancement of this country within those three and a half years. I sincerely hope that what we have done will be recorded as the foundation columns upon which the future structure of this country's progress will rest.

I wish to thank Members of this Council who, in Finance Committee and in the Legislative Council, supported measures coming from my ministry—measures that will go down as outstanding achievements by any Government.

I wish to record, because I think it is timely that I should do so—taking the lead from the hon. Sir Frank McDavid who is not a politician, and I think I am in good company—that this is the first time in this country's history that we have embarked upon a road policy. I am satisfied that that road policy will produce the type of benefit we hear people talking about, especially at the street corners today.

The rural electrification scheme is another outstanding achievement

of this Government, and I feel that time will tell when that scheme is put into operation how much forethought and vision this Council had in putting the scheme into operation.

Then we have the Telecommunication Rehabilitation Programme which is another outstanding achievement of this Government. For many years people have been talking in and out of this Chamber about the matter of our telecommunication system, and it has fallen to our lot to prepare and produce the necessary information that will make the scheme a reality.

As we go into the countryside, we will notice the Sea Defence Programme which is taking in available land that is not fit for agricultural or housing purposes. I think that the people should be told of these contributions which the Interim Government has been able to make.

And then we have been able to produce new ships. One outstanding achievement is to have ships built in British Guiana and so become the Clyde of the Caribbean. (*Applause*).

If what the hon. Mr. Gajraj mentioned about our second major agricultural industry, rice, turns out to be true and it loses its place on the W.I. market, then we will have to think of other avenues whereby the country's prosperity can be maintained.

I sincerely trust, Sir, that those people who are outside of this Chamber, and who feel that this Government for three and a half years has done nothing, would ponder over what has occurred for the first time since a political party has taken control of the Rice Marketing Board.

[Mr. Kendall]

The only way we can maintain the confidence of our people and those people who consume our surplus commodities is to have the type of representatives in this Chamber and in other statutory bodies who can be respected, and who can negotiate matters in a proper manner to the benefit of this Country. I sincerely trust that they will see and act wisely in order that that particular industry would be safe.

I would also like to recall how, in 1953, when I made a speech congratulating you, Sir, on your appointment as Speaker of this Council, I struck a personal note. I would like to add something to that note today by stating publicly that, as an understudy of yours, I never imagined the day would come when the sentiments I expressed to you in that letter would have come true and that I would have had to sit at your feet and learn from you the first principles of parliamentary practice.

In 1947 when I was called upon to take your seat as representative of New Amsterdam, you will remember, Sir, what was my own personal feeling in that matter. In a Democratic set-up like ours there must be change, and I must say that you accepted that change as a gentleman—like the fine statesman that you are—and since I have been serving in this Council you have never made me feel in the slightest way that you have been annoyed with me.

On the contrary, you have been very tolerant with me since I arrived here in 1953 and, on reading through *Hansard* one is able to realize how well you steered the ship of State through the stormy seas we encountered in those difficult days. Since then, I have had the good

fortune to sit here in this Interim Legislature. I am very grateful for the guidance I have received from you, and, like previous speakers, I should like to express the hope that you will continue to be of service to this country in some form or the other.

You are a shining light of Guiana—one of her most brilliant sons and one who should be emulated by all who love the name of Guiana. I wish again, Sir, to express the hope that your health would be maintained and that you will enjoy your pre-retirement leave, thus making yourself available to those of us who would still be in politics and would need your help. For myself, I would like to thank my colleagues for all the assistance they have given me and to wish the best of luck to those who would have to face the electorate at the general election this year. I do hope that even after the 12th August (polling day) some of us would enjoy the benefit of some of the things we supported in this Interim Government.

Dr. Fraser: I, Sir, feel deeply honoured in having had an opportunity to serve my country in this Interim Government. I am also grateful to the hon. the Chief Secretary for the official view he has expressed to the effect that we are going out of office as an efficient team and have laid a foundation for successive legislatures to build on. I can truly say that I have enjoyed the period during which I have served with my colleagues in this Council. If at any time I have been a bit "difficult" with any Member of the official section especially, it has been, nevertheless, quite a pleasure for me to look back on the years that I have spent here.

To you, Sir, I owe a very deep debt of gratitude for all the help you

have given me in this Council. I have read that Your Honour will be leaving this Colony shortly, and although I am not aware whether you will be returning to reside here, I shall take this opportunity to wish you good health and long life in your retirement.

Rev. Mr. Bobb: I wish to add, very briefly, my humble tribute to the Members of this Council who are about to go out of office and to express my deep appreciation of the honour conferred upon me in being asked to serve on this Council. This afternoon I shall be leaving this Council for the second time, and I think that I am one of the few Members who are able to make comparisons in this respect. On the first occasion my stay was for a very short period for we all know what happened then (in 1953). As we come to the close of this longer period today, Sir, I want to express my great satisfaction and gratitude for the leadership which you have given to the entire Council and which I have had the good fortune to share.

Before I refer to the admirable qualities which Your Honour has displayed as Speaker in this Council, I should like to be permitted to express my appreciation of the manner in which my colleagues, present here, have carried out their various duties for the benefit of the Colony as a whole. I also wish to associate myself with the expressions of appreciation relating to His Excellency the O.A.G., who has recognized the services of the Members of this Council and has definitely shown that those services had been worth-while. One thing came to my mind as the letter from His Excellency the O.A.G. was being read by Your Honour, and I can best express it in the form of a short story which I heard some time ago: Two Ministers were arguing about

the merits of their religion — the manner in which they each carried on their work and so on—since they belonged to different denominations. It was a very interesting argument and although they agreed to have a referee appointed and met on several occasions, no decision could be reached as to who was the better man. Finally, one Minister said to the other: "Well, my brother, let's put an end to this interminable argument. I am satisfied that you have been doing things in your way, and I have been doing things in the Lord's way."

It seems to me that whatever people might say, we are satisfied that we, the Members of this Interim Government, have followed the dictates of our consciences here and have tried to do what Sir Alfred Savage (late Governor of the Colony) advised us to do when opening the 1953 session of this Council, and that was: "Put your hands into the hand of God."

Mr. Carter: I did not intend to speak, Your Honour, because this is an occasion when I do not see why every Member should speak. However, seeing that there are only two Members left, I do not intend to be the last to speak or the one who would not speak. I do want, first of all, to support the remarks made by Members with regard to the appreciation expressed by His Excellency the O.A.G. of our achievements in this Council. As a Member of the Interim Government, I would also like to say that, on looking at the admirable way in which Your Honour has handled the affairs of the Council, I think it would be very difficult to find a Speaker to fill your place. A future Speaker might be a stronger or a younger man but the ability to educate and guide Members in political affairs should be one of the outstanding qualities of a Speaker, and in that respect I do not think we can find a

[Mr. Carter]

second to Your Honour. When I recall the failure and the difficulties which resulted from the 1953 Constitution, when I remember how every available seat was occupied by a certain party and that after those seats were vacated this Interim legislature had to be formed, I wondered whether our people were still interested in the welfare and the progress of British Guiana.

It was stated up to recently by members of a certain political party that the Interim Government was a failure, but we know that the kind of people in whom that party is interested are not the kind of people who are interested in us. I also know that we have accomplished more than any Government in the past has accomplished and that we have maintained the dignity of this hon. Council.

We have opposed Government when we considered Government to be wrong, but we supported them when we thought we should do so. I have no fear that we have an electorate which would carry on along the principles established by this Council in spite of what some people think.

If I have to face the electorate, I have no fear to mention the achievements of this Council. I well remember the words said by Sir Alfred Savage concerning the last Government — "Very much could have been achieved, but so little was achieved". I am satisfied that we have achieved much, and I only hope that the incoming Government will carry on where we have left off.

To you, Sir, I bid farewell, and I hope you will enjoy pleasant memories of your association with the House of Assembly during its short life and with this Council for the past three and a half years, as well as long life

and happiness. Some of us will be leaving here as friends and some of us will not find ourselves here after August 12.

Miss Collins: I would like to associate myself with all that has been said by the previous speakers. I do hope and pray that the good God will keep, direct and guide you. May Love and Friendship attend you, and may your future years be crowned with Health and Prosperity.

Sir Frank McDavid: Lest my silence be misunderstood I shall also say a few words, but I am afraid I am lacking the eloquence which the occasion demands. The hon. the Chief Secretary has made an admirable speech, but I notice that he emphasised that he was speaking only on behalf of his official colleagues. I do not know why he laid emphasis on that statement. Presumably the inference is that the Officials go on and other Members of the Executive Council go out. I do hope he will permit us, his unofficial colleagues, to associate ourselves with the sentiments expressed in his address.

I had myself hoped that Members might have refrained from attempting to assess or sum up on this occasion our achievement during the life of this Council. I had that hope because our record is particularly clear and, as someone said, history will tell it. Nevertheless, there is some justification for some of the statements made by Members because of the tenor of His Excellency's most gracious message. Here I want to join in the expression of thanks to His Excellency for that admirably worded message. I myself cherish the remarks which have been made in it. Hon. Members having spoken as they have, I feel I ought to add one observation for the purpose of the record.

On the first of May of this year I had completed 37 continuous years of public service, eighteen of which were spent either as Treasurer or as Financial Secretary, and looking back, quite objectively, over that long period of service I have found that the three and a half years which have just passed have been the most fruitful and the most productive in legislative and other transactions leading to the progress and advancement of the country and the happiness of its people. I say so quite sincerely, although it may appear that I am making an implied criticism of a period during which I served as a public officer. I am sure that what has taken place in these 3½ years in this Council and in the Administration has been of much greater value than in any other previous period in which I played a part.

Perhaps I know Your Honour longer than any other Member present around this table. I do remember you on your first initiation as a politician. You were then known as "The Colt". I do not know what "pet name" we should give you now that after nearly fifty years you are ending that career. I will not venture to suggest one. One hon. Member remarked on your handling of the situation during the course of the debate of Federation. I too have a very firm recollection of that occasion. How many Members remember Your Honour's most eloquent summing up when the debate was over. You attempted and succeeded in making for the records a "thumbnail" sketch of everyone of us. And after each description you queried—"Is he not entitled to express an opinion on this subject?" I cherish the memory of it.

I also cherish the memory of my association with Your Honour outside this Council on two particular occa-

sions—one in Jamaica and the other in London. Members will recall that His Honour and I were honoured to be selected, as this country's representatives, to meet Her Majesty the Queen in Jamaica and I can assure hon. Members we could have had no more dignified a representative than Sir Eustace Woolford on that occasion. I also remember my association with you a few years ago in London when we were both in the United Kingdom. You were on holiday and I, although an official on duty, was also endeavouring to get in a little vacation. I found myself wondering if when I reached your maturity of age I would have the "inner resources" to be able to look after and enjoy myself alone in a big city in the way you did. Hon. Members can be assured that Your Honour would be able to find after retirement quite a lot to take care of your very virile mind; and both mentally and physically to make use of all your powers every day. I will not say every night. I am satisfied that Your Honour would find quite a lot to occupy your mind in the coming years.

My last word. In the course of my career and as a Member of the Legislature of this Colony, I was accustomed to sit under the presidency of the Governor with all the prestige that attaches to the Representative of the Crown, and I myself was a little concerned to know how we would fare in this Legislature under the presidency of someone other than the Governor. But we were very fortunate in having in the person of Sir Eustace Woolford one who, by his own personality and the other attributes of his character, has filled that Chair equally as well as any of the Governors who did so before them. I do pray that Your Honour will in the remaining years of your life enjoy much happiness

[Sir Frank McDavid]

and all the good things to which you are so much entitled.

Mr. Farnum: Sir, like the other Members who have spoken I am very grateful indeed for the appreciation which His Excellency expressed in His Message read today by you. I would like to join with the other Members who have already spoken in the tributes paid to you for the very impressive and dignified manner in which you have conducted the proceedings of this august body. I recollect not very long ago your expressing the view that the dignity and decorum that is always present in this Legislative Council is unknown to the Legislatures in the neighbouring territories and, I think, we ought to be very proud of that and of the fact that we have the most cultured and erudite son of the soil sitting and conducting the proceedings of this Council.

You, Sir, have had great experience in the economic, social and educational fields in this Colony, and, not only that, you have represented the Colony abroad at important conferences. Perhaps it is not known that some of your friends have remarked that your business acumen is of such a high order that you have missed your vocation and should have been a businessman when you would have been a very wealthy man indeed. On the other hand the lawyers say that lawyers are better businessmen because when businessmen are in difficulties they go to the lawyers to get them out of those difficulties.

Perhaps it is not generally known that your knowledge of precious stones is of a high order indeed, and that in many cases where the purity of those stones was to be decided, it was

to you that people came for a decision. That information you gave without equivocation. I think we have been exceptionally fortunate in benefiting from your storehouse of knowledge.

I do not know what Your Honour's plans are—whether you will remain with us or whether you will go abroad—but what I wish to say in conclusion is that I wish for you all that you wish for yourself.

Mr. Teilo: I wish briefly to express my sincere appreciation of the Message from His Excellency and to thank you, Sir, for all you have done. If I may make my remarks a bit personal: so often I have tried your patience because of my ignorance of procedure and so often you were willing to pilot me in this difficult task, and it was always a pleasure for you to do so.

Now the time has come for us to say good-bye. I must say I feel, whatever the result of the next General Election or, shall I say, whatever fate decrees, the incoming Legislature will be losing something in not having the honour to address you as Speaker.

Certainly I feel that we, as a Legislature, have shown tremendous achievement. We will leave a record that posterity will be proud of. I agree with my friend and colleague, the Hon. Mr. Farnum, that the dignity and decorum of this Council was always of a high standard and if we can allow for any faults of the Members, I think we can safely say that the Caribbean Area can look to this Legislature for an example of dignity. We are able to show achievement, we have many things to our credit—we have heard it said from the Official side that we leave here as an efficient team and this has been endorsed by "Floor" Members.

Jointly and collectively we agree that this is an efficient team. Therefore it puzzles me why we cannot now go out to the public as a united team. What greater service could we have rendered British Guiana than saying to the people, "we promised you nothing but we gave you many things; and we want your permission to conclude what we have commenced." This state of affairs makes the dissolution of this assembly all the more sadder than it ought to be. It is the one unfortunate blot on this great chapter we have written in the history of the Legislature. However, lots of things that are not mended today can be mended tomorrow. (*Laughter*).

Sir, I know my language is inadequate to fully say "thank you" for all that you have done for us, so I will merely add that God always assists us to go the path that is right for us without our being conscious of it. I wish your retirement will be just as you want it to be.

Mr. Ramphal: Sir, I rise not to make a second speech, but to make the time-honoured request that His Excellency's gracious Message be printed and circulated.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I would ask your indulgence to be allowed to say that at the moment, feeling as I do, I feel quite unable to convey to you as adequately as I should have liked to have done my appreciation of your kind and generous references to me as to the manner in which I have discharged my duties as the Speaker of this Council during your period of service, but I am deeply grateful to you for what you have said. I have served as a Member in the various Legislative bodies of the Colony for over 40 years, some 30 years of which I represented the same constituency. I have also, on the last

59 years been a Member of the practising Bar of this Colony, having taken Silk in 1919. I believe this is a political and professional record in British Guiana as well as in the British Caribbean area, save and except a barrister in Trinidad, I have been told. I have thus had a rich and eventful life.

Some Members have referred to the success of the Colonization Delegation of 1919 of which I was a Member. That recalls to my mind one of the proudest acts of my life. I was Mayor of the City at the time, and I tried my best to persuade the City Council to have this city sewered, but as I could not get the permission of the Council for Mr. Harris, the City Engineer, to accompany me to the United Kingdom, I asked Sir Wilfred Collet, then Governor of the Colony and with whom it was said I had some influence, to let Mr. Harris accompany the Delegation that was being sent to the Colonial Office to try and revive East Indian immigration to the Colony.

I remained in London where Mr. Harris, Mr. Luke Hill, at one time the Town Superintendent of the Town Council, and myself had conversations with Mr. Howard Humphrys and with the Crown Agents. It was as a result of those conversations that this City was sewered. A special Ordinance was passed to allow of my staying there as my membership of the Council would have become vacant, and I was rewarded on my return by having to fight a contested election for the mayoralty. That was the only occasion on which the ratepayers of the City had taken part in the selection of a Mayor. I won the seat, but the only recognition that I then received was a letter of thanks from Mr. Humphrys. Nevertheless, I have lived to see this City one of the best sewered in the world.

[Mr. Speaker]

I was a member of the first political party this Colony formed around 1908. No member of the party seemed willing to contest the two Georgetown seats at the general elections for membership of the Court of Policy. On the next evening following my meeting, I went to the Town Hall to attend a meeting being held by the late Mr. Dargan, one of my opponents, but on my arrival at the top of the stairs, who should I see presiding over his meeting but the Chairman of my Party! (*Laughter*). Very little encouragement was offered youth in those days both in the legal profession and in any attempt made to enter public life. It was a real handicap to be a young man in the days I am speaking of. I had printed on my propaganda pamphlets "vote for the colt foaled 30 years ago". That is merely to show the contempt I had for those who tried to prevent me from becoming a member of the Legislature on account of my age.

I could not help feeling, when I read the message of the Officer Administering the Government to the Council and I came to the reference to myself, that it would be the first time, I suppose in any Speaker's experience, that he would be called upon to preside over the obsequies of an Interim Legislature and that I should have to read my own obituary notice. I felt like a clergyman conducting a burial service when referring to bodies celestial and terrestrial.

I feel as well today as I felt fifteen years ago. Nature has been kind to me and at no time in my life have I ever had a serious illness. I have very good reasons for making this personal reference to myself.

Never in the course of my public or professional life have I ever been made aware that I had by my conduct

made any enemies. Both in the Press of the Colony and privately, I have always been fortunate enough to be referred to with esteem and respect and whenever I have been confronted with occasions like this—and there have been very many—I have always felt some difficulty on such occasions in expressing my gratitude as fully as I should have done. I can only say that I am deeply conscious of your sincerity in referring to me as you have done today.

I feel that I should direct attention to the way in which valuable public service in this Colony is so easily forgotten. I can never forget the removal from Water Street of the bronze statue erected to the memory of the late Mr. George Forshaw, a leading Solicitor, who had been the Mayor of this City and had rendered outstanding service to this community.

Mr. W. Campbell, a Solicitor, who was the founder of the Royal Agriculture & Commercial Society sent a message to the Headmaster at St. George's School and asked him to send a boy to work in his office. That boy rose to be an outstanding Solicitor in this Colony and Mayor of this City. His name was Mr. G. A. Forshaw, and he has given outstanding service to this community. A bronze statue erected in Water Street to his memory is no longer there. Who ordered its removal and what has become of it?

Another instance is the case of the proposed removal from its present site in the market square of the statue of the late Mr. William Russell, once a prominent planter in this Colony, whose brain conceived the design and construction of the Lamaha and Boer-Asirie Conservancies both of which have been of such inestimable value to the agriculture of this Colony.

The public services rendered by all of you have been a very notable and memorable achievement. Never in the course of my forty years of experience in the Legislative Council has any legislation been enacted in this room equal in volume or importance to that you have taken part in and have been responsible for.

I had asked the Clerk of the Council, Mr. Crum Ewing, to furnish me with the details of the work done in both Finance Committee and in this Council during your membership. The references to your services in the Message has been anticipated by His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government. The many references of a derogatory nature that have been made by those outside to your services, have, I feel, been due to the ignorance or apathy of the public.

The administration of the affairs of this Colony has to be carried on in some form or another, whether by a nominated body, or a partially nominated and partially elected one. I think that it ought to be impressed on the electorate that unless they are able to return to this Council capable and responsible men who are pledged to promote the welfare and development of this country as you have done, there is only a very slender hope of a truly democratic constitution being given to this Colony. The proceedings and the record of the valuable public services rendered by this Council are a challenge to the Electorate.

I have no hesitation in saying that the record of public service—both in volume and output—of this Interim Government, or this Interim

Legislature, has not been surpassed by any previous Legislative Council of which I have ever been a Member. If this is borne in mind by the Electorate, it may well be that this method of carrying on the business of Government may again be resorted to. There have been in my time several nominated members of the Legislative Council, both nominated officials and others, whose knowledge and experience far exceeded that possessed by elected members.

Within the last year or so, I have had the opportunity of meeting several visitors to this Colony and they have told me how tremendously impressed they were with the dignity of the proceedings in this Council, and with the manner in which order and discipline were observed. They said they had not experienced the same standard of decorum anywhere in the Caribbean islands. I think that we should congratulate ourselves on the reputation we have earned. I am very proud to know that at a very difficult period in the political history of this Colony when I was presiding in this Council there was some disorder caused by certain members in the proceedings who left the Chamber, but they nevertheless returned to their duties the next day. I continued to carry on with the business of the Council, as I know by experience that with a spirit of tolerance people in this Colony could generally be made to act reasonably.

I would like to join with you in thanking His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government for his timely and opportune Message. I am sorry that time does not permit me to refer to all I would like to say about the Message, but I am deeply grateful to you for all that you have

[Mr. Speaker]

said in appreciation of my own services in this Council, and for your unfailing courtesy to me at all times during my occupancy of the Speaker's Chair.

I would like to refer also to the very excellent service that has been rendered to the Members of this Council and to myself by the Clerk of the Council, Mr. Crum Ewing. I know only too well how valuable his services have been to every Member of this Council. He is a very efficient officer, very unassuming and painstaking in the discharge of his duties and an ornament to the Public

Service. I would commend his services to those in authority in the hope that they may be substantially recognized.

I would also like to thank the staff of my department for the assistance they have rendered the Council, and lastly, I would wish all of you long life and success in your future careers and hope that you will all live to attain my age and feel as I do at the moment. I now declare the Session to be at an end.

The Third Session accordingly came to an end.

