

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 28th November, 1939.

The Council met at 11 a.m., pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Acting Governor, SIR JOHN WADDINGTON, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

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

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

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

The Hon. J. S. Dash, Director of Agriculture.

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E., (Eastern Berbice).

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

The Hon. E. F. McDavid, M.B.E., Colonial Treasurer.

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

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

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

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

The Hon. G. O. Case, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

The Hon. L. G. Crease, Director of Education.

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

The Hon. W. A. Macnie, Commissioner of Labour and Local Government, (Acting).

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

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

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 24th of November, 1939, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

PAPER LAID.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. G. D. Owen) laid on the table the following document:—

Defence (Rice Control) (Amendment) Regulations, 1939, published in the *Official Gazette (Extraordinary)*, dated 25th November, 1939.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESTIMATES—1940.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1940, which have been laid on the table.

MEDICAL.

Item 1 (10)—3 Health Officers (\$3,120 by \$120 to \$3,840,) \$10,800.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Owen): I move that the item be amended to read: "2 Health Officers" and the amount carried out at \$7,680. By mistake

three Health Officers were included on the Estimates. Government's intention was to include only two.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I would like to enquire whether this is a new appointment, seeing that it is the first time that the item appears on the Estimates. I would like to know whether the parties are already in the Service.

Dr. MACLENNAN (Director of Medical Services): These appointments have been transferred from the Health Department. They were approved in 1939 and were merely being transferred as the result of the amalgamation of the Medical and Health Departments.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Then the officers are already in the Service!

Dr. MACLENNAN: The officers have not yet been appointed.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Health is first wealth to the individual as well as to the country. I do think that health conditions in this country have stood up very well against everything I can think of, and I do not think, although these appointments have been approved in 1939, that this is the time to engage new officers at such high salaries. There are more serious things in the country that need attention now than the health of the country. Malnutrition has been discovered, and it does not require new officers to discover that. If the people are given employment and paid a wage sufficient for them to maintain themselves, they would provide nutriment for their bodies. The appointment of officers is not going to improve the health of the country one whit from where it is at the present time, and this money can be better used somewhere else than for bringing strangers into the country. I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that as soon as this item is passed by this Council you are going to have two more birds of passage—present company excepted—coming in. When are you going to put a period to this ceaseless flight of birds of passage and very often birds of prey. The thing is a monstrosity. Every penny they earn and take out of the country leaves it the poorer. I do not know what they do to warrant getting these large salaries, but whatever they have to invest they do so outside the Colony, and when

the time comes for pension they get it and go and live elsewhere.

Government cannot tell us that men cannot be found in this Colony for these jobs. Government is bringing these people to work here while our young men are in need of employment and cannot get it. If the employment is approved why have the appointments not yet been made? It has not been done though the men are here to be had, and it will not be done until we have passed the Estimates and our hands are tied. We will then be told that this is a Crown Colony and we must just put up with it and shut up. I do not think this is the time to embark upon this scheme. Government is only finding work in the several Departments for people outside the Colony at large salaries. I am assuming that I am going to be told that there is not a man in the Colony fit to do the job. But who is doing this work up to now? As soon as our hands are tied the Secretary of State or somebody will make the appointment. Perhaps the person may have been secured only waiting for us to fix the money vote. It is all very well for the Secretary of State 4,000 miles away to find employment for these people, but we have to find the money. If an officer is wanted for a particular Department and he is appointed, Government finds the money somewhere before you begin to think about it, but to come here and say it has been approved and the appointment has not been made is not good enough. By whom is it approved—the people who want the appointments made and have someone earmarked for each appointment? Later on you are going to bring a supplementary estimate for the third officer and point out that you cannot go on without that other officer. I am going to move the deletion of this item.

Mr. JACOB: I desire to support the remarks of the hon. Member who has just taken his seat. This Department has become too top-heavy of late. Looking at the details of expenditure in the Comparative Statement under the separate heads of Colonial Estimates from 1930, I find that it was \$134,804 in 1930, the actual expenditure in 1938 was \$147,145, the approved estimate for 1939 was \$145,880, and the estimate for 1940 \$169,663. From \$134,804 in 1930, it will be \$169,663

in 1940. I am going to concede that certain items from another Head have been brought under this Head, though I really do not understand what is the reason for it. If the intention is to merge the two Departments, I think it should be done as a whole and not for just two items to be brought in and the balance left out. Hon. Members are not scrutinizing and criticizing these items as they ought to do. We are paying large salaries all the time and health conditions in this Colony are not improving. I say so as a definite statement. If it is going to be said that from statistics health conditions are better, I am going to urge further that if more care is taken by the Medical and other Departments the statistics would be better still. Most of the officers of this Department, whose principal work is to administer the law, simply read the regulations and say: "These are the regulations, and I am there to enforce them." When an Ordinance is passed here and an assurance given to see how it will work, the officers who go to administer its provisions take no notice of that assurance; they simply administer them to the letter and the assurances given in this Council are practically worth nothing. I have personal and practical experience in that direction.

I believe that the work of this Department can be done by sanitary inspectors at a lesser pay than we are asked to pay now. These highly paid officers may be all right in their way but, in my opinion and that of a large number of people, their employment is not desirable at the present time owing to the financial position of the Colony. I do not know if our recommendation is worth anything, but I think it should be recommended to the Secretary of State that one officer only be appointed until the financial position of the Colony improves when another can be appointed. I will not urge that the item be deleted altogether, but I recommend that only one Health Officer be appointed. I think the Medical Department is sufficiently strong to do supervision work without the help of another officer. If these highly paid officers are really to do work then we have to do other things. It is not by having more administrative officers that conditions in the Colony are going to improve; other things have to be done. I cannot stress the point too strongly that other than the employment of high salaried

officers has to be done in order to improve conditions.

Dr. SINGH: Owing to the War it may be very difficult to fill these vacancies in this Department. I have seen an advertisement in the British Medical Journal calling for applicants for these vacancies, but up to now no appointment has been made. Right here in British Guiana you have a man fully qualified for the post, except that he lacks experience. The appointment calls for a man of experience. After this man had qualified it was very difficult for him to get an acting appointment in the United Kingdom and he came out here, feeling that if he is taken into the Government Service in due time he would get all the experience required. I am talking of what I do know. There was an officer appointed in the Health Department who came to this country without any previous experience. Similar treatment may be meted out to this local man, who not only has the Public Health Diploma but various other qualifications and who is serving the Government already. Such a man should be given an opportunity to qualify with the assistance of the Senior Officers of the Department who have experience, and in time he would become a full-fledged officer capable of discharging duties in the Public Health Department.

Mr. WALCOTT: I cannot understand the reasoning of the last three speakers, with all due deference to my hon. friend, the Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar). I believe I have heard him say here before that we should always try to introduce new blood.

Mr. ELEAZAR: You never could have heard me say that.

Mr. WALCOTT: The hon. Member has said that in connection with agricultural appointments. If it is necessary to introduce new blood in respect of cattle and donkeys, surely it is necessary to introduce new blood in the case of human beings. All things being equal I am absolutely in favour of giving the local man the first opportunity, but we have to think of other things and we have got to bring in new ideas into this Colony. This is War time, and we are suffering from a glut of too much local ideas and not enough overseas ideas. I am a creole but I think, that at this particular time

when conditions may become very difficult for us a little later on in regard to health matters, we should bring into the Colony the very best that we can get.

I am going to support this item, and I am only hoping that Government will go a little further later on not only in respect of the doctors but also health visitors for the country districts of the Colony. It seems almost impossible that the Mayor and Town Council of Georgetown should be a long way ahead of the Government in providing health visitors for public health work. I do appeal to my old friend, the hon. Member for Berbice River, to withdraw his opposition.

Mr. LUCKHOO: This item appeared on the Estimates last year and, I think, the previous years, and one of the appointments was assigned to the County of Berbice. At one time we had a Government Medical Officer of Health in New Amsterdam whose services were available to the Town Council of New Amsterdam, and he had quite a large stretch of country to travel in order to carry out his duties under the Public Health Ordinance. I do not think there can be any difference of opinion on this point. There is great need for an officer who is properly qualified to direct operations particularly in the country districts. The health of the community means so much to the general economic life of the Colony, as such diseases as Tuberculosis etc detract from that virility which underlies the growth and prosperity of any country. I have always advocated and supported the appointment of these health officers, because I think a great deal of use can be made of them, particularly in the country districts where they may be helpful to the health visitors and the general population in giving them instructions on general health matters.

Some time ago I pleaded for the people in the country districts with respect to Health Shows. I thought it was very necessary that such efforts should not be confined to Georgetown and New Amsterdam only, but that there should be wider scope for the activities of the Public Health Department in going about the country districts, lecturing to the people and advising them on health matters. As far as I understand, certain rural health centres can be established, and these health

officers will be of very great use in that direction in getting all the sanitary inspectors, health workers and the general public to meet them there on certain days and be advised on certain essential health matters.

With respect to the appointment, it is for Government to decide whether we have a person in this Colony with the necessary qualification to fill it. If there is such a man, then I think prior claim should be given to him. If on the other hand there is none qualified to fill the position, then I take it, it is necessary to go outside and make the appointment. Scientific discoveries are making great progress at the present time, and I think we should do everything to encourage scientific men to come into the Colony and assist us with our health matters.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am sure I have often heard the hon. Member for Berbice River saying in this Council: "Prevention is better than cure." I believe, and he will agree, that if we can prevent illness or sickness in this Colony it is very much better than curing it. I feel too that if we have sufficient health officers, who are not going to be stationed in town but will be moving about the country districts—meeting the people and teaching them sanitary and other health measures—the health of the country as a whole would improve very greatly, and that the money we spend on such measures would come back after a few years in the form of less people in the hospitals and less people to be treated by Government for illness than at the present time. I think further that this is rather an unfortunate time to curtail expenditure on any sanitary measures, when we have institutions like the "Rockefeller" coming here and spending large sums of money on Malaria Research Work and the Yellow Fever Campaign with this object in view. I would not like it to go forward that we refuse to spend money on our health problems, when they are spending large sums to help us out of our difficulties in that direction.

I am not in a position to say whether there is a local man capable of filling the post. If we have people in the Colony who can do so, I am in favour of appointing them. As we are constituted, we should get the best men for the money we offer.

We know that at times we all like to help people whom we know and among whom we live, but if they have not got the necessary experience, I think, it is a waste of money to ask them to carry out the duties of a post which they are not in a position to fill.

Mr. JACKSON : I rise to express my regret that Government has not found it possible to proceed with the vote without the amendment moved by the hon. Colonial Secretary. There is nothing which cries out more for attention than the medical inspection of school children, and I regret very much that owing to the War it has not been found possible to have three instead of two Health Officers, so that the School Health Officer might be brought in. For years those of us, who have had to do with the education of children in the Schools, have been crying out for free medical inspection and treatment of school children. There is no doubt it would be a very great investment, if Government were in a position to have the School Health Officer instead of asking that one of the three appointments proposed here should be struck off. There is no denying the fact that any money spent on improving health conditions in the Colony would be money well spent, and I support with all my heart the vote for the two Health Officers, not without expressing my regret that Government has not had the temerity to ask for three officers instead of two. I hope Government would bear in mind that the necessity for free medical inspection and treatment of school children still exists, and as soon as possible opportunity would be taken to appoint a Health Officer for that purpose.

I will not address myself as to who may or may not be appointed. I feel that Government should do its very best in the matter. If there are local men with experience, I say, by all means Government should give preference to the local man in making the appointment. I am, however, more concerned with the appointment of these health officers for the benefit of the Colony generally. I am quite sure that Government would be creating a very great asset if these health officers were appointed.

Mr. DIAS : This subject has been treated by the hon. Members, who have opposed it, as if it is a new item introduced by Government into the Estimates for the first

time. As they will recollect, that is not the case. It is an old item which has existed for a long period, and the posts have been filled from time to time by gentlemen who have left the Colony on promotion elsewhere. This is merely the desire expressed by Government in the Estimates to refill those offices. If that is correct, then I fancy that the objection to the passing of the item is based on grounds other than those adduced by those who have opposed it. One hon. Member gave as a reason for opposition, that the health of the community has improved and therefore we do not want the officers. Another hon. Member said the health of the community has deteriorated and therefore it is no good having the officers. Then a third hon. Member said that on account of the War it is difficult to get suitable candidates from abroad to fill the posts. There is contradiction in the opposition by individual Members, but I do recall and remind the Council that I had heard from some of the hon. Members, who have spoken in opposition to the item, a clamour on behalf of their respective constituencies for the services of one of these officers in the division represented by them, and that was at a time when we had three Health Officers. In support of their contention they always pointed to defects which required attention and which should be remedied. That was done more than once on behalf of New Amsterdam and the County of Berbice and also on behalf of Essequibo. The idea, as far I recollect, in having three of these officers was that each County should be furnished with one. If that is so, it seems to me that the opposition should fall to the ground. The only ground which can be urged, perhaps, for not carrying this measure through is that of economy. Even if you are going to consider that point, you have got to consider alongside of it whether it is advisable on the score of economy to incur the risk of affecting the health of the community by saving the money involved. Hon. Members will see, that it would be a very great error to fall into if that was done, because the world recognizes today that preventive measures are far better than curative ones. I do hope that hon. Members will allow the item, which has been useful in the past, to continue and to produce more useful results.

Mr. JACOB : I think, there is a bit of

misunderstanding in this matter, and I have no doubt that those who oppose the vote will reconsider it in the light of deleting the item by one officer only. I have stated that the expenditure on this Department has grown considerably and that health conditions have not improved. I have a note under another Head about cremation. I would like to be advised whether Government has given any consideration to the question of cremation, and whether any recommendations have been made with regard to the disposal of the dead by methods other than the way in which it is being done at the present time. In the country districts which are always flooded out it is very difficult for burials to take place at some times, and as the result of such burials and flooded conditions the water service becomes polluted. Representations have been made to this Government during the last ten years and also forceful representation was made to the Royal Commission about cremation. While there is no definite law against it in this Colony, we know that people are prevented from cremating their dead or disposing of their dead in the way it is done in all modern places. That is one instance I may give to show that the Health Department has failed to act in the interest of all concerned and of health conditions generally.

I am not objecting to the appointment of Health Officers, but I am submitting that one officer is quite sufficient at the present time. Another hon. Member brought up the question of the prevention of Tuberculosis, and I would particularly like to refer him to item 9 which has been passed without objection. We are, however, objecting to item 10 because, as I have already said, we have to do other things first before making such appointments. In this Colony we are always being told that officers will do wonders, but the real practical work is hardly ever done by them.

Mr. GONSALVES: I think there should be no objection to this item, when one bears in mind that it is in effect carrying out a recommendation of the Medical Reorganisation Committee. That Committee recommended the supplementing of that particular service by two officers and this item, as I see it, is for the purpose of carrying out that recommendation. I had intended on Friday

afternoon last to ask whether the appointment of the Health Officer (Tuberculosis) means that officer will be doing exclusively Tuberculosis work. The item slipped through before I could have done so, but I think I can ask it under this item. If the officer cannot do exclusively Tuberculosis work, then at least the greater part of his time should be taken up in that work. That makes the necessity for the appointment of the two Health Officers proposed in the item we are now discussing. There can be no doubt that the area which has to be covered by the present health officers is far too great, and it is impossible to get satisfactory work done; therefore anything that can be done in regard to increasing the staff will be beneficial to the public health work of this country. The point made by one hon. Member with regard to school inspection is a very good one and, I think, it is time that Government take the matter up seriously. If these two Health Officers are appointed they should be expected to include in their duties school inspection, which is very essential in public health. I think it is a matter which should be given some attention.

With regard to the question of appointments, I think that when these appointments are being considered some regard should be paid to the claims of local men who are qualified. Unless that is done, it would seem to be very unfair to have remarks made that local men are not appointed because they have not the qualification necessary for appointment. The qualified local man—whether resident in the Colony or not—should be given first consideration. After all, the man who has left here and gone abroad and qualified at the expense of his parents in the Colony should in all fairness be given an appointment. As regards experience, I do not think that any man who is appointed, whether he is a local man or otherwise, will be a person who has just come from school to take up the duties here, but will be one who has done some practical work either in England or here. It is said that there is a local man who has got the qualification for the post of Health Officer and who, it will be found, has done some sort of public health work in this Colony. I do not know who is the particular officer referred to, but I know of such local men who hold the Public Health Diploma and have practised in

this Colony. I know one or two who have acted on occasions for the Medical Officer of Health of the City of Georgetown. If reference is made to any of these men, it cannot be said that they have no inside knowledge of the work. I agree with the plea put up in connection with the appointment of the local man who holds the diploma, whether he is resident in the Colony or in England, that he should be given first consideration for appointment.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to remind the hon. Member for Berbice River of something which should make him withdraw his opposition, otherwise I do not know how he would face the New Amsterdam Town Council at its next meeting. During the early part of this year, Government received a protest from the New Amsterdam Town Council against the removal of the Health Officer from New Amsterdam and was asked to send back one as soon as possible, if not immediately. I hope the hon. Member in view of that reminder will withdraw his opposition.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I desire only to ask that first consideration be given, as I know Government will do, to the local man in making the appointment. If one looks at certain districts of the Colony one cannot agree that all is well in regard to health measures. For example, the district which I represent happens to have two Medical Officers who have to travel over a considerable area, and one of these officers do what little public health work is done in the district. What seems to be overburdening is that officer has to travel from Suddie to Charity and back within a day. I say without fear of contradiction that it is impossible for that officer to do his duty if he meets with several calls on the way, and at the same time attend to public health matters. It is humanly impossible for him without some assistance to do the inhabitants of that district justice.

Mr. ELEAZAR: All I have heard has simply left me cold. Apart from anything else I deplore the shortsightedness and short memory of hon. Members of this Council. It was only in 1934 the Government stood up and fought like Trojans to make a separate Health Department and to take it away from the aegis of the Medical

Department. At that time I said it was only a ramp in the interest of a particular officer. The Departments were separated and the officer appointed. No sooner was that done than New Amsterdam which for 130 years did not want a Health Officer must have one too. Certain people of whom I have never heard before came and beseeched the principal Medical Officer in those days for it, and even ladies joined in support of it. That officer was appointed for the town and he remained in New Amsterdam twiddling his thumbs. Dr. Pottinger stated openly that he thought there would have been work for him to do but there was none. After six months he was removed to Georgetown and was never seen in New Amsterdam again. Hon. Members of this Council were asked to appoint a successor to Dr. Pottinger in New Amsterdam. Dr. Sneath succeeded him and he, too, remained for about six months during which time he had very little to do. I fail to see how the post is an absolute necessity to New Amsterdam when you had two officers paying them this monstrous sum, who only spent about twelve months altogether in New Amsterdam within a period of five years. I cannot see the absolute necessity for the appointment, and that the position is such that the post cannot be done without.

As regards these appointments, one hon. Member, who is interested in that kind of thing, disclosed that an advertisement was put in the *British Medical Journal*—I did not read the advertisement and it can hardly be expected that I would—and the condition "European Preferred" was mentioned in relation to the post. Certainly that does not apply to those people here, who are Creoles but would like to be called "Europeans" while others would not have them to be called that way. It does not apply to anybody from this Colony. Dr. Pottinger told us he thought there was no qualified man in this Colony as the advertisement went a-begging for two years. It was because only a European was wanted. One hon. Member spoke of improved health conditions in Georgetown, but the Chief Medical Officer of Health in Georgetown is a Creole. How does that stand against the argument that you must get people from outside because they have experience? Where do they get their experience from? My recollection is that Government, at a time when it thought it suited its purpose

to have "European Preferred," had established the principle that no appointee would be considered unless he had the Diploma of Public Health and even made us pay money here for men in the Service to go and qualify, but I have lived as a Member of this Council to see several men appointed who had no such degree. It had suited Government to do so because that principle gave too much chance to the local man. I would like to ask Government even at this present moment while this advertisement is going a-begging in England, whether there is no man known to Government in the Service who is properly qualified and can do this job? Those are things one knows and there can be only one way to look at it, and that is Government is making appointments for people from abroad. Am I to understand there is not a single individual in the Colony now with all the qualifications necessary, why no appointment is made? I cannot accept that, when I know that this is the deliberate act of somebody or other to get somebody or other from outside to come in here. "European Preferred" can have no application to the men of British Guiana. I do not want to trespass upon the motion to be moved by the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh). There is no doubt about it, that the only opportunity for the local man is at home, because opportunities are absolutely glutted outside and the only field for appointment open to him is in this Colony.

As regards the Medical Re-organisation Committee's recommendation about a third officer, the hon. Member who made that remark, I am sure, forgot the controversy which took place in this Council because the person who had proposed the Committee to Government was never appointed on that Committee. What can you expect from such a Committee? A Committee made in that way—composed of those who Government wanted to have on it and those who Government did not want on it were kept out—cannot be taken as a criterion. They talk about experience. Where the men from abroad get their experience from? Such a man coming to British Guiana will have the academic qualifications but no knowledge of local conditions. You get an officer from Little England (Barbados) coming here and asking the East Indian farmer why he does not

reap that grass (referring to the man's growing rice field). That officer was employed by Government because he had experience as a great agriculturist and was brought here to teach the benighted East Indian and Negro people agriculture. We bring them here to the detriment of our local men and say they are experienced. Where do they get the experience from? Experience is a very wide term. Some men live for three-score years and ten without any experience, and others live for thirty years and manage to get experience all the way.

The question to-day is whether Government feels that our health conditions are so bad that if we do not get these officers we would not live for another day? I cannot conceive of Government saying that, having regard to the fact that we have been doing without them all the time. The next thing, which I cannot forget and may mention for the benefit of the hon. Director of Medical Services, is that in the old days every Medical Officer in a district was responsible for the health of his district. As soon as this Department came into vogue or a little before, Sanitary Inspectors were put in the districts, and the Medical Officers had nothing more to do with the work. The Medical Officers complain over and over that they go into districts and do not see the Sanitary Inspectors. It is not because the Government Medical Officers have no experience of public health work in the districts that the work was taken out of their hands, but in order to make room for other people to be employed. The Government Medical Officers are still there, and the Sanitary Inspectors are still there, but you want more Medical Officers of Health. Hon. Members of this Council have gone out of their way to tell us of the utility of the Government Medical Officer of Health. No one doubts that. That is why we have Dr. Wishart in Georgetown. I do not know, however, if we go on increasing the number of them it would make things better. If anything is required in that direction, then we should get more Sanitary Inspectors to go into the districts. We do not want 20 Medical Officers of Health and 10 Sanitary Inspectors. I do not for a moment agree with that.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias,

like myself, is becoming an old man and his system of legal logic is getting very weak and bad. He used some legal logic there that if so and so is correct it naturally follows that it is correct, but if it is not correct it naturally follows that it is incorrect. As a matter of fact he was not correct when he said that the Medical Officers of Health were put on the Estimates because the people had clamoured for the appointment. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, made a little *faux pas* when he confused the quarantine work of the Medical Officer of Health with the inspection of school children by Medical Officers. Government had found it necessary to do away with the inspection of school children and I myself was alarmed at it; but you are piling on officers here who are not necessary. It seems to me that with the support Government is getting this item will go through, but for all that I am not going to withdraw my opposition to it. I move its deletion because there is no necessity for it. From 1934 to the present time there have been only two such officers in New Amsterdam, and they only served together twelve months in the place. Is that such a necessity? A man can only believe that, because he wants to believe it. Unfortunately I cannot believe that at all; it does not worth the breath which expressed it or the paper on which it is written. I remember I said in this place that we in New Amsterdam know exactly what health measures we require for the town, but we have not the money to carry them out. Government acceded to our request as it tended to assist us, and a large amount has been spent in New Amsterdam to assist us with our drainage. We did not need Sanitary Officers to tell us what we wanted.

When items are put on the Estimates they are put there to be carried, but as long as this item is there I will protest against it and tell the world that after all we have a Crown Colony Government and when Government says you are dead, you are as dead as a door nail. (laughter). In this instance that is what I conceive Government is going to do. Government and its supporters want these men, for what reason I cannot tell. We do not want anybody from England, because we do not know what was mentioned in the British Medical Journal in respect of the appointment. This could be

explained if the condition "European preferred" was not in the advertisement. Government actually has men in this Colony and has actually gone to the trouble of paying for those men to get this particular qualification, but Government is now discarding all that and sending outside to get two other men for appointment. Government is doing that not necessarily in the interest of the health of the Colony but rather to find employment for people outside the Colony.

Dr. MACLENNAN: Your Excellency, I am indeed surprised to hear there is opposition to the appointment of Public Health Officers in this country. I tentatively suggested at this Session (1938), when I had only been in the Colony for a short time and had not been able to make a study of the Colony's Budget, that this Colony had been concentrating in the past on the curative side of medicine in preference to the preventive side. That is very obvious to anyone after studying the statistics and comparing what is spent on public health work with what is spent on medical work. It is very difficult indeed to assess where health work begins and medical work ends. The two are merged into one another. In working out the figures for the Royal Commission I think I established the fact that only 12 per cent. of the total Medical Budget was spent on preventive measures. This, in my opinion, is definitely false economy. This Colony wants a progressive health programme absolutely of its own, and unless we do that we will never get any further in public health improvement. We will have to keep on adding to our hospitals and keeping them full. This is false economy in the long run, and has been proved in other countries where progressive health programmes have been carried out.

I frankly admit that this Budget for 1940 is definitely disappointing. We cannot help that. I had hoped this year to put into operation a public health programme for the Colony to cover a period of years. I had anticipated introducing it in the 1940 Estimates, and had hoped that we could have started some of the more essential public health services in a minor way and gradually added to them as the years went on. I refer to School Medical work, Infant Welfare work, the

establishment of Rural Health Centres, and more intimate contact between the people of the country and the Medical staff. We have had to cut our losses on account of the War, but we do hope eventually to be able to do something a little better when these difficult times are over. During the past year the Department has been definitely understaffed, and I am afraid that our health work in the districts has not been carried out in the way I would like to have seen it done. It will be realized that Sanitary Inspectors in rural areas cannot do justice to their work unless there are Health Officers to supervise them. What this Colony requires is a Health Officer in each of the main provinces—one for Demerara, one for Berbice, and one for Essequibo. I do feel that Sanitary Inspectors, left alone without the possibility of consulting Health Officers and being at some distance from headquarters, are not really given a fair chance. I am sorry we are not able to make greater contact between headquarters and the sanitary areas, but the Department is definitely understaffed on the public health side of its activities.

I would like to mention that during the past year we have made some progress, and I would like to refer particularly to the considerable improvement made in housing on the estates. The Sugar Producer's Association met the Central Board of Health and agreed to a programme of housing on a long range policy. The old ranges which are insanitary will all eventually disappear and a new and sanitary type take their place, which the members of the Royal Commission proposed when they were here.

Relative to the remarks of various hon. Members, I would like to point out that the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) is a member of the Central Board of Health and he has not this year been able to attend any of the meetings. I realize how difficult it is for him to attend the meetings as they are held on days when it is not convenient for him to attend. If he had attended the meetings or probably read some of the minutes of the meetings, he would have realized what really good work that Board did during the year and what an enormous amount of work that Board has to do. I think the hon. Mem-

ber for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) and the hon. Nominated Member on my left (Mr. Austin) will agree with me on that point. We cannot carry on with the staff we have. I can tell this Council that if I can get good Health Officers to back me up provincially, I can promise this Colony that we will by means of contact with the rural population do a great deal of work. You do not require a large amount of money for public health work, since the ordinary health routine work is merely the education of the public, and as the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) pointed out last year and this year, intimate contact with the public is a great essential. The essentials are good first class officers. I guarantee that if we get a good staff this country will show great improvement in health matters.

I would like to refer to the establishment of Rural Health Centres which comes under the Head "Public Works—Extraordinary". These centres are really to provide that intimate contact with the public in the rural areas. We are merely asking for four, but I should think that this Colony will probably require anything between 12 and 20. Each health centre will provide a permanent health rendezvous where the Health Officer will meet the public for clinical work, and educational health work will also be undertaken. I do feel that in the districts there is no suitable meeting place. The Infant Welfare and Maternity League is carrying on good work but has to hold its clinics in schoolrooms, offices, and all sorts of inconvenient places. It ought to have definite premises of its own where the public can attend and discuss health matters with the Health Officers, where the children can go and there is someone to take an interest in them. It is proposed that the Sanitary Inspector of the district should have an office for himself for a certain period of the day, when people could go there with complaints and have them settled. The Health Officer will also attend there on certain days of the week. I feel that if we can secure such contact with the public we can really improve health matters very considerably.

I would like to make mention of the Nutrition Survey, which has been carried out during the year and is still going on. I think one hon. Member referred to the question of nutrition. Already from the

valuable data available we have been able to improve the diets in the various medical institutions, and we hope to do so in the Prisons and at the Onderneeming School. I regret very much that we have not been able to introduce in our Budget for 1940 some service for the Aboriginal Indians of this Colony. This is a feature that we have definitely neglected. I would have done so, had it not been that the Chairman of the Royal Commission had commented on the subject of medical work among the Aboriginal Indians, but I shall wait until the report of the Royal Commission comes out. I feel we ought to do something for these people. My latest information is that the death rate is high and that certain diseases have been introduced which they had not before, and it is possible that their numbers will decline. I do hope that the Royal Commission will report favourably so that we can carry out some work of a preventive nature. I actually discussed this question with members of the Royal Commission, and the impression I got is that probably some assistance will be forthcoming for this work outside of Colony funds.

Despite the disappointment about the 1940 Budget there are two schemes to which I wish to refer; one is the Malaria Research Programme which I have instituted this year. This research is one of our most important public health efforts. At the moment we know so little about the malarial problem in this Colony, that if we were given money to spend on anti-malarial work we could not use it advantageously. It is necessary to know where we stand and how to spend money on anti-malarial work. The programme we have is a \$15,000 a year programme for two years. Of that amount \$5,000 annually is to be contributed by the Sugar Producers' Association, which I think is very generous of them, \$5,000 annually by the Rockefeller Foundation and the other \$5,000 annually from the Colonial Development Fund. The other scheme is the Yellow Fever Programme. I need not go into details in respect of that except to say this. I consider it of great importance among our problems—I do not want to alarm the people in any way—though we have been sitting back very happily for years without a Yellow Fever epidemic the danger is definitely there. That is not only my opinion, but it is that of the experts. The

International Bureau of Health, situated in Paris, know about it. The Colonial Advisory Committee know all about it, and I consider that if at a time of financial stringency like this the Colonial Development Committee advise a grant practically amounting to \$50,000 annually for this work, it must be considered a serious matter. It is our public health problem No. 1 at the moment. I hope hon. Members of the Council and the people in the districts will support this measure. If hon. Members would mention it in their constituencies and tell the people how important a work it is, I would be very grateful indeed.

I think, I have dealt with most of the remarks made by hon. Members already. The hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) raised the question of cremation. In this Colony that question is a little difficult, but there is no objection to it provided it is done in a proper manner. It must be done along modern sanitary lines and approved by the Department. Government can have no objection if that is done, but it cannot allow indiscriminate cremation in the villages. I must thank the hon. Nominated Members, Mr. Walcott and Mr. Dias, and the hon. Members for Eastern Berbice and for Georgetown North for helping me in this debate. I do not need to refer to their remarks in my reply. I regret I cannot help the hon. Mr. Jackson at the moment, but I would like to refer to the question of school medical inspection. This is a very special branch of public health work and to do it properly requires men with special training. I do feel that it is possible to secure an officer here to learn the work and to be able to do it well. I actually had in mind an officer to be placed in charge of that work after going through a course of training in England or in Jamaica where excellent work is being done in that direction. The Rockefeller Foundation have offered a grant for an officer of that description to take the course, but unfortunately we have to postpone it at the moment because of the financial situation.

With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) relative to item 9—"1 Health Officer (Tuberculosis)"—we have not got to the stage to be able to afford a full time man for this work, and so the officer

appointed will have to carry on a certain amount of public health work in addition. I, however, feel he should devote a great deal more of his time to Tuberculosis work than he does at the present. There is no need to worry about that. With a strong T. B. Society and the additional value of this officer Tuberculosis work in the Colony is receiving as much support as Government is able to give at the present.

As regards health work in Essequibo referred to by one hon. Member, as I have stated, it is proposed to have a Health Officer in that county eventually. I agree with his remarks that the ordinary Medical Officer in going around the district has not much time for public health work. I have tried to get many Medical Officers to do public health work and they have been very willing and anxious to do it, but their time is not their own. It is at the disposal of the public doing general district work and they have no time to do it and to supervise the work of the Sanitary Inspectors.

On the question of the Diploma in Public Health, the fact that a man possesses it is a necessary thing for the appointment, but for provincial Health Officers one requires men with some experience of health work as well. I do not care who he is, as long as he is a good, sound, practical man and has public health experience in this or any other country. I do want a man with one or two years' experience in the practical side of public health work before appointment. Public Health is a very special branch of medical work and requires men with special qualification and men with practical experience to do the work. I am sorry if I have omitted any of the points raised. I think I have fully covered most of them.

Mr. Eleazar's amendment for the deletion of the item was put, and not agreed to.

The Colonial Secretary's amendment for the reduction of the item was put, and agreed to.

Item (11)—24 Medical Officers (\$2,400 by \$120 to \$3,360), \$77,034.

Mr. JACOB: This item together with item 20—"District Surgeries—Salaries to Medical Practitioners, under contract

\$2,400"—make a total payment to Medical Officers of \$79,434. I would just like to get an explanation as to whether these Medical Officers have the right to refuse to visit any patient, especially when requested to do so and told that the fees would be paid. A case has been brought to my notice where the Government Medical Officer of a district refused after repeated requests to visit a patient. Representation has been made to the hon. Director of Medical Services and, I think, to the hon. Colonial Secretary in the matter. I do not know what has happened, but I saw a telegram despatched either to the hon. Colonial Secretary or the hon. Director of Medical Services requesting that the G.M.O. be made to visit a patient. I would like to be advised if a Government Medical Officer who is receiving taxpayer's money should refuse to visit a patient when asked to do so.

Dr. MACLENNAN: Government Medical Officers are required to visit patients when called. The particular case to which the hon. Member refers I really do not know the details of. It may possibly be that the officer was not able to make the visit or he was not at home at the time when called. The hon. Member may see me on another occasion and I will go into the case to which he refers.

Mr. JACOB: I am very surprised that the hon. Director of Medical Services is not aware of the case to make a clear statement here. I think it is necessary that officers of Government realize that they are servants of the taxpayers. I do not want to call the name of the officer, but I shall certainly refer the hon. Director of Medical Services to the case. I would like to remind him that he has been written to about it.

Dr. MACLENNAN: From time to time I have received complaints in which Government Medical Officers are said to have refused to visit patients, and that is why I do not know the particular case to which the hon. Member refers. I carry out investigation in these cases, and usually find that some mistake had arisen or there was some misapprehension on the part of the officer or of the patients themselves. In this particular case I would be glad if the hon. Member refers it to me personally so that I may enquire into it at some other time.

Dr. SINGH: I would like to say something about the manner in which the last appointment was made under this item. In my opinion that appointment was contrary to the recommendation of the Medical Re-organisation Committee which reads:

The Committee is of the opinion that in future no Medical Officer should be appointed to the Government Service unless the candidate is in possession of a diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, the certificate by itself not being a sufficient qualification under present conditions.

An appointment was made this year and, I think, it was an injustice to the person who had been acting, and that is the reason why I have brought it to the notice of Government and of hon. Members of this Council. "A," the winner of a Guiana Scholarship, went to Edinburgh University where he qualified eventually as an M.B., Ch., B. He returns to British Guiana and makes application for an appointment in the Medical Service and is told that his chances would be much more favourable if he obtains a diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. "A" goes back to the United Kingdom and qualifies not only by obtaining a diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene but also a diploma in Public Health. Returning to the Colony he secured an acting appointment last year. Dr. "B" comes on the scene two or three months after and he also obtains an acting appointment. I am not quite sure that "B" is in possession of the D. T. M. & H. degree. I am not quite sure whether "B" is a resident of this Colony, or had been born here but had been away for many years. Yet "B" has been appointed in preference to "A", a Guiana Scholar who has qualified. That is an injustice, and the whole medical profession is watching the matter.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not think the hon. Member should have a lone hand in this matter, as it was one that exercised the mind of the public considerably, much more than might be known to hon. Members of this Council. No. 1, a doctor acting in a certain institution of this Colony, was the first among four men who held acting appointments. No. 2 has the same qualification as a doctor as No. 1. No. 3 has a superior qualification to the other two, and No. 4 has the same quali-

fication as the first two. I may mention *en passant* that Nos. 1 and 4 are of a particular nationality, and Nos. 2 and 3 are of another nationality. Two appointments were made, and Nos. 2 and 3 were left still acting. That does not sound like correct treatment. It savours of racial discrimination. That should not be. You have the man in the middle who is third on the list with a superior qualification to the other three but he has been skipped to take No. 4 of the same nationality and qualification as No. 1. That does not seem to be the correct thing to do, and it seems to be deliberate discrimination in favour of Nos. 1 and 4, if not to the individuals themselves to the members of the particular community to which they belong. That kind of thing cannot work in this cosmopolitan place of ours. It does not look like a fair field without favours. I am saying that these are facts which cannot be disputed at all.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon recess until 2 p.m.

2 p.m.—

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I had thought that hon. Members who have spoken would have made some suggestion which might have assisted somewhat in the attack which they made on the increasing cost of this Department. One appreciates the fact that there are certain contracts and certain obligations on the part of Government to these officers, therefore I am not suggesting that they should be deprived of their just dues, but I would suggest that perhaps if the extra amounts received by these officers were commuted in some form or another and the fees were paid into the Treasury the instances mentioned by the hon. Member might be obviated.

There is also under this head the question of house and duty allowances, and if I may be permitted to refer to item (24), which deals with duty allowances, I would point out that those allowances are no doubt permanent to the officers concerned and to the posts. The officers concerned, are very able men, and if they are entitled to this extra remuneration as duty allowances, why not add the amounts to their salaries? Of course I will be told that that would mean that the amounts would become pensionable.

With regard to the question of house allowances, why does Government confine an officer to a specific amount for house rent? Why is it not incorporated in his salary? If Government wants to make an allowance for house rent it should be added to the officer's salary, leaving him free to pay what rent he likes. These are matters which a Committee should investigate and make recommendations, and the anomalies would automatically disappear.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member has lost sight of the fact that a duty allowance is payable to the officer actually performing the duty. The same thing applies to a house allowance. It frequently happens that an officer, while holding a particular appointment, draws a house allowance, but he may be removed to a part of the Colony where there is a Government house which he can occupy. If that were not so he could carry with his salary a duty allowance or house allowance wherever he was transferred.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not suppose that applies to the Resident Surgeon?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I assume that when the Resident Surgeon is not performing those duties, if he is on leave, the officer performing those duties draws a duty allowance.

Dr. MACLENNAN: That is so.

Item agreed to.

Item (19)—2 Assistant Medical Officers (\$1,680) each, \$3,360.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be reduced to \$2,520 so as to provide the salary of a new Assistant Medical Officer for six months. It is extremely unlikely that one will be appointed before the middle of the year.

Dr. MACLENNAN: I would like to explain about this proposed appointment. We all know that the Medical Superintendent of the Leper Hospital will eventually have to retire, and it seems that the time has come when we ought to be training one of our men here to fill that post when he retires, and also to fill the post when he is on leave or ill. It is a large and important hospital, and a very important and specialized branch of medicine

which requires some special training. I do not think anybody would be more capable of giving that training than the Medical Superintendent himself, who is a man of international reputation in his particular line. As the estimates were not approved before May we think we could effect economy by merely providing salary for an officer for six months. I am definitely worried about the future of the Leprosy Hospital unless we have somebody to succeed the Superintendent.

Mr. JACOB: I take it that it is a permanent appointment.

Dr. MACLENNAN: That is the case.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Am I to understand that we are going to have a permanent officer as an understudy to Dr. Rose? To what purpose? The unfortunate people up there are never cured, and I do not see why Government should appoint an understudy. What has been happening all the time Dr. Rose has been there? People leave the institution and say they are cured but they are not cured at all. They have to go back.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member will realize that he is pitting his opinion against the results of the best medical research in the world. Does he realize that?

Mr. ELEAZAR: Yes, sir, my experience is that a leper has never been cured, and all attempts to make him so have been unsuccessful.

Dr. SINGH: What is to become of the laboratory assistant after this appointment is made?

Dr. MACLENNAN: The post of laboratory assistant will be abolished when this appointment is made, because the new medical officer will be able to carry on the laboratory work necessary. It is no use having two men doing it. The medical officer will be able to understudy Dr. Rose and do the necessary laboratory work.

Mr. JACOB: I was wondering whether we would be told that the officer would be dismissed, retired or sent somewhere else.

Dr. MACLENNAN: I think that is already noted on the Estimate. The officer will be retired and will be granted a pen-

sion or gratuity. He is not far from the retiring age, I understand.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) said that patients are not being cured at the Leprosy Hospital I cannot possibly allow that statement to go unchallenged. I must invite the hon. Member to visit the hospital and see photographs taken of patients when they are admitted and when they leave. I was amazed when I was shown over the institution. A certain female attendant was pointed out to me and I was asked to take notice of her when I passed. Dr. Rose then took me to his office and produced a photograph taken when she was an inmate of the hospital. If you saw her condition when she entered the hospital and her present condition you would be amazed.

Dr. MACLENNAN: I would refer the hon. Member to the various reports of the Medical Department. Unfortunately, I have not the figures here showing the number cured. It is really amazing.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I would like to know what service has this officer given and what is his present age?

Dr. MACLENNAN: I must have notice of that question.

THE CHAIRMAN: The officer has two or three years to run before he would be pensioned in the ordinary course. The Director will obtain the exact information.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: If the officer has not yet reached the pensionable age I am asking that some consideration should be given him. According to my information he is quite a young man, and it is very unfortunate that his post should be abolished. I think in the circumstances Government should see whether there is a vacancy in any other branch in which his services could be utilized, at least until he has reached the retiring age.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to say that for every one patient discharged as cured, as it is referred to, I have seen ten come out as cured and go back into the institution.

Item as amended agreed to.

Item 2—Transport and Travelling—(a)

Travelling allowances \$5,000; (b) Subsistence allowances, \$1,280; (c) Transport of goods, \$600—\$6,880.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be amended by reducing the amount for travelling allowances from \$5,000 to \$4,584 and carrying out the total at \$6,464.

Item as amended agreed to.

Item 9—Fees for approved courses of study (Medical Officers), \$240.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the deletion of this item. It is not expected that any medical officer will be undergoing a course of study next year.

Item deleted.

Item 13—Passages, \$1,152.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be renumbered 13 and the amount reduced to \$768.

Item as amended agreed to.

BACTERIOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

Item *d*—2 Technical Assistants, 1 at (\$450 by \$30 to \$600) and 1 at (\$288 by \$24 to \$480), \$762.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be amended to read "2 Technical Assistants, at (\$288 by \$24 to \$480), \$672." Instead of having one assistant on one grade and the other on another grade they would be both on the same grade.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: May I enquire what has happened to the other assistant?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It had been proposed to appoint one at \$450 to \$600, but it was decided that they should remain at the existing scale.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I was under the impression that one assistant was on the higher scale and the new one was on the lower scale. What is worrying me is whether it is proposed to change the salary of the former assistant.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: On the estimates for 1939 the item is shown

at \$288 to \$480, and that is the amendment which I am now suggesting.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is proposed to leave it exactly as it is at the present time.

Mr. JACOB: I am wondering whether they are not being treated a little unfairly. An ordinary probationer joining the Service without any technical qualification starts at \$30 per month. I observe that in all of these Departments where a technical man is employed he begins at a lower salary than a probationer. I think there is something grossly wrong. Take the case of the man whose post is to be abolished. No doubt it will be said later on that Government cannot place him anywhere. I think the system is bad. Technical people ought to be paid better than those with ordinary qualifications.

Dr. MACLENNAN: There is something in what the hon. Member has said, but it must be realized that in this particular branch of the Service we have no training school. The junior men in the laboratory are really learning their work in this lower grade. It is entirely different from dispensers and sanitary inspectors who have had several years' training before they are appointed. In this case these assistants are actually learning the work and will have an opportunity of rising to the higher grades in the Service. My idea is eventually to have in each of the larger hospitals, and in all the hospitals in the districts, one of these laboratory assistants, and they will all be on the staff of this Department because they are doing invaluable work.

Item as amended agreed to.

HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not know whether Government imports its own medicines, but I know that there are some ailments which call for specific medicines. For instance, I understand that cases of anaemia require a specific drug, a small bottle of which costs 20/- here, while I am informed by a medical man that it only costs about 5/6 in England. I would like to know whether the Colony is being well served in this respect. Perhaps it is on account of the Customs duties that the cost of this drug is so high. Government should enquire

into the matter in order to see what can be done to cheapen the cost of the drug.

Dr. MACLENNAN: Government purchases all its drugs through the Crown Agents and not locally, except in special cases when we run short. I am unable to inform the hon. Member why this particular drug costs five times as much in this Colony as it does in England. In the case of this particular drug for anaemia and other similar drugs it is proposed to pass a Bill shortly in this Council to enable them to be introduced duty free. I hope that the Bill will shortly be introduced and that the price will be reduced.

M. JACOB: I was particularly glad when the Director said just now that dispensers and sanitary inspectors who have had special training were not like technical assistants in the Bacteriological Department. Looking closely into the estimates I find that there are 16 dispensers, men who have been trained and have qualifications, but they are in no better position than those technical assistants. I understood that when Major Bain Gray investigated the question of unclassified officers no hardship would be meted out to officers who were already in the Service. In fact his investigations were intended to improve their positions, but actually they are suffering several disadvantages at the present time, and I hope I will be able to name them all just now. One disadvantage a dispenser suffers is that before Major Bain Gray's scheme came into operation his commencing salary was \$30 to \$40 per month within five years. To-day the commencing salary is \$24 to \$40 in nine years. It is inconceivable to expect a dispenser, who acts as a Government medical officer in outlying districts and has to perform onerous and responsible duties involving life and limb, to be content with a salary of \$50 per month. Of the 16 dispensers under item (8) one gets \$100 per month, six get \$80, five get \$60 and four get \$50 per month.

That is not all the disadvantage they suffer. I have not been approached by any particular one of these officers, but in order to make out a clear case I should like to point out that the assistant dispenser at the New Amsterdam Hospital I do not know the individual; he has not approached me—gets \$24 per month, I

understand. He has had special training, and I do not think it is reasonable or fair that a dispenser in an institution like that should receive such a small salary. Another dispenser at the Mental Hospital gets \$30 per month. When these dispensers are transferred from one place to another they have to rent houses and pay their travelling expenses. On the whole their condition is not at all satisfactory. The case of these dispensers is a very deserving one, and I propose to discuss it later in more detail with the Director. I do urge that something be done immediately for those unfortunate people.

Dr. MACLENNAN: I agree in many ways with the various points raised by the hon. Member. I do think this lowest grade of dispenser does not receive remuneration really in keeping with his training and his work. Government considered this year the re-grading of this group of dispensers, and had it not been for the war we would have made a new grade. I hope when better times come that will be one of the first things I will recommend to Government. I would refer the hon. Member to the notes in the margin. He will see that many of them receive house allowances, and I have free quarters. They also receive fees as postal agents and vaccination officers, so that their position is not as bad as it appears by merely looking at their salaries.

Mr. JACOB: I do not want to generalize. The moment you do that you do not make a point. If we particularize we find that several men are suffering. It is true that some of them receive a house allowance of a few dollars, but when they are transferred from one place to another they suffer some disadvantage. This question has been raised here over and over again. During the Bain Gray investigation it was stated that their position would be improved. We are told to-day that the war has prevented certain things being done. I do not think it is fair. They are giving valuable service and can be depended upon. Their services can be utilized to a greater extent, and I think their case should be investigated promptly. We cannot expect a dispenser in charge of a district to live on \$1 per day. Some of those men have wives and children.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member would speak on the specific cases with the

Director he would be only too glad to discuss them with him. On the general question I wish to say, in fairness to the Director, that these particular posts were the subject of representation by him this year for increases, but I felt it necessary to keep them as they are, in the same manner as I did with several other cases put forward for increases. At this particular time when war is on Government has not been able to give consideration to increases in salaries to public servants. The case was very strongly represented by the Director, and I think I ought to say so. Further consideration will be given the matter later.

Dr. SINGH: I am quite satisfied with the explanation which has been given.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am quite satisfied and very much pleased to hear that it was the intention to raise the status of these men, but the decision arrived at by Government, that owing to the war it cannot be done, is not logical. It is for that very reason why it ought to be done, because the war has increased their expenses. I hope Government will go into the matter soon and give these men something more.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not only these posts. There were several other posts which came under consideration in the same way.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I was rather pleased to hear the Director say that this matter was given consideration, and it gives me an opportunity to refer to the question of fees. Unfortunately I note that these amounts have not been totalled so as to give hon. Members some idea as to what these emoluments in the aggregate cost the Colony. I totalled up the first page which amounted to \$10,000 roughly, and there are about 5½ pages. It would appear that these emoluments amount to something in the vicinity of \$48,000, which seems rather a considerable sum, and that is why I suggested that some consideration might be given to the re-arrangement of these scales.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Government would be misleading hon. Members if the totals were inserted, because all these amounts do not come out of the Treasury, as I think the hon. Member is aware. Perhaps he is suggesting that they should be separated.

Mr. JACOB: I observe that the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. King) is not present. I was requested by some of the residents at Canal No. 1 to make reference to a promise which had been made for the extension of the Dispensary there. I think there was some promise that they would be given a better service. I do not know what is the position.

Dr. MACLENNAN: If the hon. Member will turn to page 82 he will see an item there for the construction of a new building at Canal No. 1. I think that was what the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. King) wrote Government about and approached me some time ago. The building at present used is inadequate and requires re-building.

Item 19—Motor ambulances, and lorries' \$2,470.

Dr. MACLENNAN: For the information of the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) I may mention that recent advices state that the ambulance for Berbice is on its way.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item 30—Renewals and additions to electric power plant, Leprosy Hospital, \$1,500. It will be necessary to spend about \$2,900, and on the third supplementary estimate, which will come up shortly, a further sum of \$1,400 will be asked for to complete the work.

Item agreed to.

GOVERNMENT HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Mr. JACOB: I observe that there will be no Head of this Department next year, but I am wondering whether we will not see a Head appearing in the following year. I really do not follow this amalgamation at all, and I think it would be better if the whole of this Department was put under Medical. I rose to make the point that the sanitary inspectors' position should be improved. The arguments I adduced in respect of the dispensers can be applied in this case, though perhaps to a lesser extent. I put the dispensers ahead of them because they have to do more responsible work. I think the services of the sanitary inspectors could be better utilized to the advantage of the whole community if properly

supervised. I do not say that they are not properly supervised, but I urge that they be better supervised. We would be able to improve health conditions generally better than by the appointment of medical officers with large salaries. I am very concerned about health conditions, but I am equally concerned about living conditions. While I make a plea for the sanitary inspectors I do want to urge on them to be tactful and discreet. I do not think a good many of them are tactful or use any discretion at all. I have just raised the point here so as to have an opportunity to speak about them later on.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: May I ask the hon. Member whom he expects to supervise those sanitary inspectors? If I remember rightly I think when some other head was being discussed—I believe it was the appointment of two Health Officers—the hon. Member attacked the appointment. I would like to ask who, he suggests, should supervise these sanitary inspectors?

Mr. JACOB: For the information of my hon. friend I may point out that I objected to two Health Officers being appointed; I thought one was sufficient. I did not suggest that the item should be deleted entirely.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not know whether the hon. Member has been so mystified that he has not seen that the officer has been transferred to the Medical Department with £200 added to his salary. I do not think it is fair to give a sanitary inspector \$24 per month after five years' probation, during which he has to work as if he was being paid. I think a good many of these sanitary inspectors have secured the highest certificate they can obtain locally.

Dr. MACLENNAN: The same remarks I made with reference to the dispensers apply to sanitary inspectors. Government considered the question of re-grading them but was forced to withdraw it. Considerable consideration was given the matter, and I do feel, as I have always felt, that they are generally rather poorly paid. But that applies not only to my own Department, and we have to consider the whole Service. I hope that when better times come I shall endeavour to persuade Government to re-consider the question of re-

grading the dispensers and sanitary inspectors.

Mr. JACOB: On page 31 we have a Deputy Director of Medical Services, while page 40 begins with 3 County Sanitary Inspectors. I do not know who is going to supervise, and who is to be the Head of the Department. That is why I made the point.

Dr. MACLENNAN: The two Departments have been amalgamated for the purpose of better administration. As you know, there is no dividing line now, or ever was really, between health work and medical work. The two merge into each other. A great many items which appear on the medical side are undoubtedly health matters. The idea in amalgamating the two services was for better office control and administrative control. The original Health Department was merely a side-line of the Medical Department, and in making this amalgamation we considered the question of moving the whole of this page into the Medical head, but this year we found it rather difficult to do so. I think that in the 1941 Estimates this page will disappear altogether, and the entire estimates will appear under the most appropriate head.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It is regrettable that in making this merger the two estimates were not put together. I must confess that I am a little bit confused, not only with this head but with other heads. I am not quite clear whether we have a Health Officer or we have not got one. Under this head we have three Assistant Medical Officers and a Tuberculosis Officer. With the promotion of the Medical Officer of Health we were left with two Assistant Government Medical Officers of Health, one of whom has been promoted to the post of Government Medical Officer of Health, and now Deputy Director of Medical Services. I also know that the other Assistant Medical Officer of Health is likely to be Tuberculosis Officer. Where are the Government Medical Officers of Health at the present time? Provision is made here for two new appointments of Health Officers. Passages are to be provided, and I presume the officers are coming from abroad. Altogether we have lost one Health Officer, but that is what I am not clear about. It seems to me that we

are only going to have two Health Officers instead of three.

Dr. MACLENNAN: Actually the position is this: the last Medical Officer of Health was transferred to Barbados, and his post has never been filled. In the 1939 Estimates there was provision for the appointment of an additional Health Officer, so that there will be actually two vacancies in 1940, one caused by the transfer, and the other by the appointment which has not yet been made. The third officer is in existence in the Colony at present.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I understand that some temporary arrangement was made whereby the Assistant Medical Officer of Health was the officer who would perform the duties of Senior Medical Officer, but whether it was done I do not know. Nevertheless we have provided here for the salary of a Deputy Director of Medical Services, and that is why I suggested that that post should also be designated Senior Medical Officer of Health. I have either been misinformed or I do not understand the position at all. I understood that Dr. Sneath would take the place, and in fact did take the place of the officer transferred on promotion. On that understanding I supported the amount fixed as the salary of the Deputy Director of Medical Services, but it seems to me I am wrong. Do I understand that it is intended to appoint not only two more medical officers but three? If so, where is the provision in the estimates?

Dr. MACLENNAN: I do not think I can explain it any better, but if the hon. Member would see me later I would endeavour to do so. I admit that it is a little confusing when items are transferred to another head like this.

THE CHAIRMAN: Shortly, the position is that the number of posts is exactly the same this year, but there are two vacancies.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: We have not got a Tuberculosis Officer at all. If we have we have deprived the Health Department of an officer.

Dr. MACLENNAN: The position is that at the moment we have a Deputy Director of Medical Services, formerly the

Government Medical Officer of Health. We have on the estimates three Health Officers, one of whom is existing at the moment. If we get the two officers for whom there are two vacancies, the existing Health Officer will become a Tuberculosis Officer and Health Officer. We have three appointments for Health Officers for whom there are two vacancies

THE CHAIRMAN: I think if the hon. Member had been in his seat this morning he would have understood the position. He could not have been present when Dr. MacLennan explained the duties which the Deputy Director of Medical Services will perform. He explained that there will be three Health Officers, one of whom will devote himself to the work of a Tuberculosis Officer although he will devote some of his time to health work.

Dr. MACLENNAN: That is the case, sir.

Item 6—Education—Propaganda and Health Campaigns, \$1,000.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I observe that the item has been increased. May I have some explanation of it?

Dr. MACLENNAN: It is felt that as Georgetown has a Municipality and a health service of its own and runs Health Week campaigns, Government should do something for Berbice. I hope next year if I get a Health Officer for Berbice, to carry out a Health campaign there.

Mr. SEAFORD: I take it that in this case Government is going to the assistance of New Amsterdam. Is that right? (laughter).

Mr. LUCKHOO: The important villages in the Colony should have an opportunity to hold Health Week campaigns. It is true that it is convenient to have it in Georgetown and New Amsterdam, but the more populous villages should have Health Week campaigns in their own way. It is very important work, and I think it would be very educational to the people in the outlying districts.

Item 8—Surveys in villages and country areas, \$2,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the deletion of this item. Hon. members will recollect that the item has been transferred to the Department of Lands and Mines.

Item deleted.

MILITIA.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I would like to make a few observations under this head. Some time ago when the Financial Commissioners were here they recommended that the Militia Band was one of the things we should dispense with, and I think the Mounted Police also, but we said that they were as sacred as the breath of our nostrils, and we would not allow them to go. I understand that there are no apprentices in the Band now. I do not know of any Band in the world in which there are no apprentices. I am told that the only chance of getting youngsters in the Band now is when one of the Bandsmen dies or retires. I think provision should be made for at least two apprentices.

With regard to music and instruments I drew Government's attention some years ago to the fact that while Georgetown had the Militia Band and the Police drum and fife Band, Berbice had none, and Government allocated \$100 a year for a drum and fife Band in Berbice. Later on, as a result of private subscription, we converted it into a brass Band which is there now. I thought we were still getting the \$100 a year to assist us, but I understand it has been taken away since. I am told that the Band requires new instruments, and I suggest that if Government cannot see its way to increase the item of \$500 for instruments and music, it should direct that a portion of the money be allocated to the Berbice Band.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think I have heard the hon. Member say that a rose called by any other name smells just as sweetly. I think if he looks at item "i" he will see that provision is made for four boys for the Band.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am told that boys are not apprentices. Apparently they are porters who carry around the big drums.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I will look into that point. Having regard

to the salaries I imagine that they would be apprentices. I will also enquire into the possibility of supplying the Berbice Band with some money out of item 13, but I would suggest that the amount of the item be left as it is for the time being.

MR. ELEAZAR: Thank you; that is quite satisfactory.

Item 2—Capitation and Pay, \$3,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$3,410 which is the figure provided in the current year's estimate.

Item as amended agreed to.

Item 16—Purchase of Militia Reserve Stores, \$2,457.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be reduced by \$1,000.

Item as amended agreed to.

MINISTERS OF RELIGION.

MR. ELEAZAR: Under this head I would like to make a special plea. I am disappointed in the fact that the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) has not put his motion before the Council as he promised to do, and I see Government is carrying out the old policy which was introduced some years ago, about 1834 or thereabouts. I remember the time when \$189,000 was the amount allocated to the Churches in this Colony, and I have a vivid recollection of when it was mooted that Government should disestablish the Churches. I went so far as to suggest to the manager of the school of which I was headmaster at the time, that I should accompany him on a tour of the country to point out the mistake that was going to be made in withdrawing the money from the Churches. He said it was like beating one's own drum, and I retorted that one must beat his own drum very loudly and very long. That did not move him because he would get a pension. This vote has dwindled down until it is now \$5,000, and it is bound to do incalculable harm in regard to the religious life of the community. There are some parts of the Colony where the Christian religion is a dead letter. For a period of over 30 years the West Coast of

Berbice has not had a resident minister, and even on the East Coast of Demerara you will find that. There is a dearth of ministers because of a deliberate act on the part of men who wanted to show their independence and wreaked vengeance on the Churches, not knowing that they were wreaking vengeance on the whole community.

Christianity is at a discount in this country, and we call ourselves a Christian community. When this \$5,000 is gone we may as well go back to the time when there was no religion. I am of the opinion that a Committee was appointed some time ago, but as far as I know it has not functioned. I have a recollection of receiving a letter asking if I would serve on it, but I have not heard anything more about it. It is a pressing matter. Man cannot live by bread alone. We cannot consider our economic life and not think of our religious life. If some people do not have religion at all their civilization would be almost dead. It is the only thing that restrains a man from being a vile creature altogether. You ask why shouldn't the people maintain their churches? In the outlying districts it is impossible. The people are neglected because they cannot maintain ministers among them. What have we done with the money we have withheld from the Church? What have we to show for it today? Nothing except backwardness. No longer than last Friday someone assured me that there was no Christianity any more. It is dancing all the time. I am not a puritan by any means, but I think I can stand up and say that the religious life I was trained in has done me some good and cannot do anybody any harm. If you meet a man at any time who has had religious training you can always pick him out of the bunch. He cannot go the length of the other fellow. I hope the Committee will get to work quickly and report to Government in due time. Something has to be done before the candle flickers out. The sooner the Committee functions the better for all concerned.

MR. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I have risen to correct a few inaccuracies in what the hon. Member has said. He referred to this head and pointed to the figure of \$5,000 as being the sole amount which the ministers of religion receive

from public funds. That, of course, is not the case. The disestablishment of the Churches does not date as far back as 1894, but 1921, and in that year the Churches were issued bonds totalling \$189,000. If the hon. Member would turn to Public Debt he would see that public revenue is paying \$47,000 against those bonds which are due to mature in four or five years, and that sum of money will accrue to the Churches when the bonds are redeemed. The items below the line, which are shown in blank for 1940, were grants to Missions, and were gradually reduced by one-tenth for 10 years until 1939 when they disappeared altogether. It is really in regard to those grants to Missions that Government has appointed a Committee to report on the position and make recommendations in regard to restoring some of them, especially those relating to Missions in the interior, and with special reference to the work among Aboriginal Indians. That Committee is under the Chairmanship of the Director of Education and has started to function already. The position with regard to the Churches has been settled by an Ordinance passed in 1921.

Mr. JACOB: I agree in the main with what the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has said, and I trust he will be as generous to me as I have been to him. He is always opposed to people receiving assistance from Government. I cannot understand why other religions are not given assistance as well. Here we have it that public revenue is paying a large sum of money for the maintenance of certain Churches. After all this is a cosmopolitan community, and I am requested to say that representations have been made to Government already that something ought to be done to help other people who are carrying on religious work as well as educational work. The time is overdue when Government should consider the advisability of helping those people to some extent at least.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to thank the Colonial Treasurer for his correction, although my main argument remains the same. The Churches are now getting very much less every year than they got in the past. We have not the compliment of clergymen we should, and because of that the Churches are going down. I am pleading that something be done so as to

prevent their continuing to go down and our having no religion at all.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I would be glad to know for my own information, and as a member of the Committee appointed to enquire into the matter of grants to Missions, whether the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) suggests that Government should subsidize or assist non-Christian bodies.

Mr. JACOB: Yes.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to ask the Colonial Secretary if he could give me some idea of the aggregate amount appearing under this head throughout the Estimates, exclusive of the total amount which will be found on the last page of this particular head. I make that request because we may find some sums under Miscellaneous being spent without the Council being aware of the manner in which they have been spent. I would also ask the Colonial Secretary if he could think of some other method of voting these sums under Miscellaneous. My suggestion in fact amounts to this: that if we were told exactly in an aggregate sum what those various items were under the various departmental heads those particular amounts could not be spent in some other way.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not quite clear whether the hon. Member is suggesting that we should not have the head Miscellaneous. Most departmental heads have the item Miscellaneous, which is very necessary, but where we cannot place an item under any particular head I do not see how we could do away with the general head Miscellaneous.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think we might put item 23—Tourist Bureau and advertisement of the Colony in Canada and elsewhere, \$4,800—under a separate head. I am sorry that the Chairman of the Tourist Committee (Mr. Dias) is not here at present, because I am wondering how much of this money the Committee intends to spend on attracting tourists under present conditions.

Item 2*v*—Crown Agents charges for postages, \$650.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I seriously suggest that this item be increased. (laughter). My reason for that is that I think the cost of postage during the war is likely to be very heavy, and I am inclined to think that Government has not been generous enough in increasing this vote only by \$50. I know that the Crown Agents work very hard and earn so little that it would be unreasonable to ask them to bear a portion of the cost, but I observe that in 1938, before there was any talk of war and air mail rates to the United Kingdom, the amount spent was \$824. I realize that this is a token vote, and perhaps we ought to be a little more generous to them by giving them a little more money to play with, because we have agreed to pay them this money. But I may mention in passing that commercial firms do not pay postage for their agents in London. I do not want to press that because I know I would be out-voted. I think it is wrong in principle that Government should pay postage charges for the Crown Agents.

Mr. SEAFORD: May I suggest that the hon. Member defer his generosity until we are asked for a supplementary vote? (laughter).

Item agreed to.

Item 3—Public printing regulated by contract, \$36,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps the hon. Member will support my motion that this item be increased from \$36,000 to \$43,200. Government called for tenders this year for a five-year contract, but it has been impossible to get anyone to tender for a longer period than one year, 1940. Naturally the cost of material and labour has increased, and it is impossible to ask the Council for a smaller sum for 1940 than \$43,200.

Item as amended agreed to.

Item 17—Remittances—Commission on, \$4,500.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: In 1938 the actual expenditure on this item was \$3,137; in 1939 it was increased to \$4,500, but if I remember rightly there was a particular reason for that increase. I see, however, that the same amount is proposed for

1940. I do not know if the same reason exists, whether Government will have to remit a lot of money to the Crown Agents, because I observe that purchases through the Crown Agents are becoming alarmingly large, but I do not want to go into that point to-day.

Mr. McDAVID: I am afraid we have to remit a lot of money to these Crown Agents, people to whom the hon. Member is so generous and considerate. Regarding the item itself it cannot be regulated in accordance with any precise plan. It all depends upon whether we have money at the time the transactions take place in England. We might get money from the Colonial Development Fund which might not come in until another year. For that reason it is very difficult to estimate precisely for any one year what we are going to spend.

Item agreed to.

Item 19—Loss of public money and stores, \$200.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: This amount is very small, but what I am concerned about is the principle involved. I am not quite sure what occurs. If an officer contributes to the Public Officers' Guarantee Fund and he defaults, surely the Fund repays Government the amount of any loss. I am not quite clear what this vote is meant for. Perhaps the Colonial Treasurer will inform the Council.

Mr. McDAVID: There are very few charges against this vote because, as the hon. Member has said, there is a Guarantee Fund. If a public officer defaults the amount is usually recovered from that Fund, but the main charges under this vote are losses of public money at the counter which are charged against Government and not against the officer. There are a few items of that nature, and there is loss of stores. The hon. Member will find that if any large item is to be charged to that vote it usually appears under supplementary estimate, and comes before the Council item by item.

Mr. JACOB: I am wondering how stores get lost. Perhaps the Colonial Treasurer might tell us something about that. (laughter).

Item agreed to.

Item 20—Local allowance to officers performing temporary duty involving residence away from their headquarters, \$300.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: What exactly is meant by the note "Former provision inadequate?" Does it mean that the officers performing such duties were unable to receive adequate remuneration? There seems to be some inconsistency in regard to the amount.

Mr. McDAVID: This vote was not intended for any specific officer or office. It is a lump sum vote and is used for paying small remuneration to officers who are sent away from their permanent residence to some other district to perform temporary duties. An officer may be sent to New Amsterdam in the place of some other officer who has gone on leave, and he is given an allowance because of the extra expense to which he is put by having to live away from his home. We do not know how many officers are going to use this vote; none may use it.

Item agreed to.

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

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Tourist Bureau will not require as large a sum next year as it was granted this year. I therefore move that the item be reduced by \$1,000 and carried out at \$3,800.

Mr. SEAFORD: Are we not paying a trade representative in Canada?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, we are.

Mr. SEAFORD: I understand that we are doing so for a definite period. It was really a token vote, I think.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I am associated with the Tourist Committee, and I may inform the Council that the officers are under six months' notice of the termination of their services.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) is referring to the Trade Commissioner for the Eastern Branch of the West

Indies. The payment to that particular officer has ceased.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: When I said that the payment was continuing I did not refer to that officer, who was paid out of a different vote altogether.

Mr. JACOB: I take it that \$1,000 is just an estimate.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Tourist Committee are satisfied that they can do without this \$1,000. I have not the details as to how they propose to spend the money. Unfortunately, the Chairman of the Committee is absent this afternoon.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: It would be a great mistake to close the Bureau and then have to re-open it.

Item as amended agreed to,

Item 24—Labour Registration Bureau, \$540.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: What is the position of the labour registration at the Bureau? Is it in any way connected with the appointment held by the late Mr. Winter? If so, what arrangements are being made?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is the post, and the amount has been reduced. The matter was debated at considerable length at the last annual session. The salary of Mr. Winter's successor has been reduced from \$780 to \$540.

Item agreed to.

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

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I should begin my remarks by saying to Government. "I told you so." Some time ago when this Council was asked to vote sums of money to meet compensation charges I suggested that something ought to be done in view of Government's liability under the Ordinance. At the time there was some difficulty, and I have really risen to enquire how it was found possible to make satisfactory arrangements to cover Government's liability? I do not know whether this sum is put here to meet compensation, or whether it is in the

nature of an insurance. If it is in the form of insurance I would be glad to obtain further information on the point. If the information is not forthcoming to-day I would like to have it later on. I have always held the view that it is rather a risky thing for Government to have to provide compensation without obtaining cover. At that time I was told it was not possible. If it is now found practicable to cover Government's liability in that respect, and this sum is intended to pay the premium, then I have nothing more to say.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : It is to enable payment of compensation to be made. Periodically Government has had to come to the Legislature for small sums of money, and it is considered advisable to insert this token vote as it is described in the note. It is to meet compensation, not to cover insurance.

Item agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I move the insertion of a new item 27—Air Transport-Public Officers—\$1,800, with the following explanatory note:—"To implement the provisions of the contract entered into between Government and the British Guiana Airways, Ltd." Hon. Members will recollect that the Treasurer said there would be 30 flying hours used by Government officers in a year at \$60 per hour, hence the figure \$1,800.

Item agreed to.

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

Item 1—Estimated rates on Government properties, \$58,450.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : Unlike the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) who thought he should say "I told you so," I look towards the Colonial Treasurer who I know will say "I thought so." I would like to ask the Treasurer if he has by any chance estimated the rates to be paid on Government property at Eve Leary, I see a note "Subject to revision after the meeting of the Mayor and Town Council in November, 1937." I think that meeting has been held and that the Treasurer is aware of the amount the Council is asking. I think he is also aware of a certain docu-

ment which has been admirably put up on a sound basis.

There is one other point I would like to mention about the payment by the Town Council of the sum of \$2,500 for sea defences. Does that payment signify that Georgetown is more vulnerable to the force of the sea than any other part of the Colony? I ask that question because it is difficult to understand why Georgetown should contribute that sum when other parts of the Colony have been relieved of sea defence charges. I will ask Government to consider that question and relieve the Council of this payment.

Mr. McDAVID : I know that the question of Eve Leary sewerage connections is a matter that is very much in the mind of the hon. Member for some reason or another. The position is that Government has definitely agreed, and has so informed the Town Council, that in arriving at the annual figure to be paid by Government to the Town Council with respect to the operations of those connections, Government will not only pay the current figure but will allow it to be made retrospective to the date when the connections were first made. The reason why a settlement has been held up is because the Town Council is entirely wedded to the idea that Eve Leary and the properties there should be valued and should be rated for Municipal rates with regard to the sewerage scheme, and so long as that idea prevails I do not think it is possible to come very near a solution. I have been working along other lines. Government informed the Town Council that the Town Clerk and I should go into the matter, but I find it very difficult to come to a satisfactory conclusion because, so long as the question of valuation is brought in, I am afraid we will get no nearer. There are other means of arriving at a satisfactory solution, and I am preparing a short memorandum on the subject. I know that the Town Council has recently submitted a letter to Government which I have not seen, but I think the Council has put forward its side of the question. I am afraid the matter will have to remain in abeyance for some time.

With regard to the sea defence contribution, that amount is paid by the Town Council to Government in relation to sea defences, and is, of course, a statutory pay-

ment. The principle was fully debated in this Council not only at the time the Ordinance was passed but subsequently, and I think it out of place to re-open it each year whenever the particular head is reached. I do not think any useful purpose is served by discussing the question because, first of all, it has nothing whatever to do with the head we are now discussing.

Mr. JACOB: Item 2 provides for the supply of water to public institutions in Georgetown. I do not think it has escaped the attention of the Town Councillors, but I think the quality of the water that has been supplied not only to public institutions but to householders within the last few days, and on several occasions during this year, has been very bad indeed. I think Government ought to take up very seriously the question of providing Georgetown with a pure water supply. It has been discussed several times in the past and I believe estimates were even prepared. It is a very urgent matter and steps ought to be taken to provide public institutions with a better supply of water.

Mr. GONSALVES: With regard to the matter raised by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) and the reply of the Colonial Treasurer, it is difficult to discuss the point now in view of the admission by the Colonial Treasurer that although a letter has been received by Government he has not seen it. If he had seen it he would have known that a flat rate has been suggested by the Town Council to be paid by Government for its sewerage service. Government has not been told that it must pay a certain amount based on the valuation of its properties, but that a certain sum should be paid. Whether the method adopted by the Colonial Treasurer in arriving at the figure is different from the Council's method or not, so long as the amount agrees with what the Council is asking for that would be sufficient so far as the Council is concerned. I wish to add, however, that if the Colonial Treasurer finds that by his method Government will give the Council more I hope he will stand by his method. (laughter). However I appreciate that the item cannot be increased at the moment, but I do not suppose 1940 will be any different from 1939 in the matter of supplementary estimates, and I hope that when the first supplementary

estimate comes up it will contain an item to provide for the payment of this amount.

With regard to the question raised by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) I may say that a certain condition of things within the last few days has been engaging the attention of the Sewerage and Water Commissioners. I think the hon. Member can fairly well rely on the service he is getting.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I think it is necessary that the amount should be placed on the Estimate. The Colonial Treasurer is of the opinion that he has a different method of arriving at the sum that should be paid, but the Council is only endeavouring to get the actual cost of operating the system in that district, which has been put down at the moderate figure of \$2,000. I am of the opinion that the Treasurer must have seen in the newspapers the basis I have suggested—that the valuation should be fixed at \$200,000. I am quite satisfied that no matter who is sent from the Public Works Department to make a valuation, my valuation is a very moderate figure. Apart from that it cannot be contended by Government that \$2,000 is the real operating cost. We have not taken into account the cost of replacements, and I think if Government only paid \$2,000 it would be getting off very lightly.

With regard to the question of a pure water supply I desire to pay this tribute to you, sir, that from the time you came here you have been impressing upon the Council the necessity for it. Only this morning I was in consultation with Mr. Roddam who told me quite definitely that the dirty water which was appearing for a few days could never have made its appearance if we had a pure water scheme, because he would have had a reserve to last for several days. Mr. Seaford has spent a few hours inspecting it at night, and I am sorry he is not in his seat now. I am sorry that the Council did not agree with Your Excellency that the loan for the pure water supply scheme should be free of interest for five years, but tried to get it for 15 years and eventually came down to 7½ years. I regret that Your Excellency is leaving us before the scheme is an accomplished fact.

* The Council resumed and adjourned until the following day at 10.30 a.m.