

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Wednesday, 17th November, 1937.*

The Council met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. E. J. Waddington, C.M.G., O.B.E., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, (Acting) (Major W. Bain Gray, C.B.E.).

The Hon. the Attorney-General (Mr. J. H. B. Nihill, K.C., 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. W. A. D'Andrade, Comptroller of Customs.

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

The Hon. M. B. Laing, District Commissioner, East Demerara.

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

The Hon. B. N. V. Wase-Bailey, Surgeon-General (Acting).

The Hon. L. G. Crease, Director of Education (Acting).

The Hon. H. P. Christiani, M.B.E., Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus, (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. A. G. King (Demerara River).

The Hon. S. H. Seymour (Western Essequibo).

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

The Hon. H. G. Seaford, O.B.E., (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. W. S. Jones (Nominated Unofficial Member).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 16th November, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESTIMATES, 1938.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from revenue for the year ending 31st December, 1938.

MISCELLANEOUS—(B) SUBVENTIONS, ETC., OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL.

Item 4—Grant to Infant Welfare and Maternity League, \$13,324.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 23—Annual Grant to Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, \$3,600.

Mr. JACOB : I am only asking for information. I have a recollection that this contribution is to cease very shortly. It has been reduced from \$7,200 to \$3,600. I should like to know something about it.

Professor DASH (Director of Agricul-

ture): This item has been voted for a number of years. I think it began almost with the inception of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. I think Sir Arthur Shipley came down here and made a plea to Government and the Council for support of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, and Government and the people of the Colony agreed to support it as an educational institution in the Caribbean, where our students could be trained in Agriculture. We get a certain number of scholarships, as hon. members know, and the College is dependent on these grants to a large extent for its maintenance. It is a commitment, sir, and I do not think at this stage it would be a fair thing to drop it. It has been cut previously, and I know that that cut was seriously felt. We all know that the finances of the College are not too happy at the present time. Considering the important work the College is doing for agriculture generally in the tropics, I do not think the sum is large in relation to the benefits that it provides throughout the years.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 49—Grants to Village Authorities towards administrative expenses—Unity and Lancaster—\$15.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Major Bain Gray): I move that this item be increased to \$55 to provide for an additional Government building now necessary in this area.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 54—Vlissengen Rates, Police Station, Bourda, Lacytown, \$23.

Mr. DIAS: I raised the question in Select Committee, that this being a liability by Government to Government, the entire sum due should be put down on the Estimates and credit given to revenue rather than having it appearing annually. The rates are payable for a period of years by annual instalments. Rather than repeating this item, the total liability for next year might be put in and revenue credited with the sum, and the item would disappear from the Estimates altogether. I do not think the Colonial Treasurer would object to that course.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): What the hon. member has said is correct, but I do not think it would look any better to put the capitalised value of the outstanding rates on the Estimates. What the hon. member has said about item 54 also applies to item 53, the annual sum paid for Vlissengen rates in respect of the Law Courts. The Ordinance provides that at any date the capitalised value of the outstanding rates can be paid in and the annual liability thus written off. The capitalised value of the annual liability in respect of the Law Courts and the police station at Bourda would be something like \$5,000 or \$6,000, so that it would mean that that sum would have to be inserted in the Estimates and would eventually find its way into revenue, and the liability would disappear. The whole scheme ceases in 1945, but I have no objection to considering the matter for next year's Estimates.

Mr. GONSALVES: Do I understand that there will be no more Vlissengen rates after 1945?

Mr. McDAVID: That is so, sir. I am glad the hon. member thinks it is good news (laughter).

Mr. GONSALVES: I am glad to hear that, because I am constantly being asked about it.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think in the interval the Treasurer should examine the formula by which the computation has been made. I know that someone whom I represented wanted to anticipate payment, and it took a very considerable time to find the formula. Some search was made, and it was quite apparent that the officer himself who has charge of this particular account, was certainly in doubt as to whether the amount was correct, so that when you give the Council the assurance that the debt can be wiped out in 1945 it is based upon the existing liability. It will never do to find that it is ten years later.

Mr. McDAVID: The Ordinance under which the rates are collected definitely states that the liability will cease in the year 1945.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Not without reservations.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 55—Subsidy to Canadian National Steamship Service, \$40,800.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I ask that consideration of this item be deferred in the hope that the Hon. Mr. Jones may be present during the debate.

Mr. WALCOTT: I cannot hear the hon. member for New Amsterdam, (Mr. Woolford) and I should like to hear him.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I am asking that item 55 be deferred until the Hon. Mr. Jones can find it convenient to come here to-day. I would not like to make remarks in his absence, and not give him the opportunity of being able to reply to them. He is a Director of the firm which conducts the agency.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am sorry I cannot defer the item until the hon. member comes.

Mr. WOOLFORD: What I would like to say I can say at once. There has been during the past two or three years, some difficulty—I would not say it has been either considerable or insurmountable—in getting passages by these steamers, and as the Colony pays a subsidy by way of contract it is important that the allotment of space under the contract should be reserved. I have no doubt whatever that the agents do their duty in this respect, that is to reserve the allotted space to people in this Colony, but it would seem that owing to the increased number of people coming here from Canada, and the desire of the service to accommodate those passengers, that reservations are made for return journeys and by way of return space in Canada and New York. It would appear, therefore, that those agencies—I know there is one in New York—should be reminded of the terms of the contract. I think it is being overlooked that space bookings should not be allowed until they can ascertain whether there is any probability of that space being wanted by people here. I admit that there is very considerable difficulty about the matter. I know that Government officers and other people have been unable to get accommodation, and have incurred considerable expense by not being able to obtain return passages at Trinidad. This is a very important matter, and as

you are aware, sir, and as the Council knows, there is an intention to extend the service to Guadeloupe and Martinique.

I am not only speaking of the passenger accommodation. It very often happens that it prevents travelling by certain business men to those Islands at very important times. It does often happen that a shipper desires to go by the same boat that is carrying his shipment, but he has been prevented from doing so. In other words although Messrs. Booker Bros. are the local agents of the C.N.S., so far as this complaint is concerned they apparently have very little say in the matter, and we all know they desire to oblige as much as they possibly can, but the control that has hitherto existed in Trinidad has ceased. I do not propose to allow the people of the Colony to be controlled by the people in Trinidad, nor should the space allotment be controlled by anybody. It is a matter of contract and mutual understanding, and in any examination of the terms of renewal of the contract this matter should be strictly adhered to.

Mr. WALCOTT: The hon. member for New Amsterdam is perfectly correct. We are paying a fairly large subsidy to the Canadian National Steamship Service. I am afraid that I have to plead guilty to our paying to-day a larger subsidy than was intended when we first went to the Ottawa Conference in 1925, but I agreed, subject to the confirmation of this Council, that we should increase the amount, provided they gave us reservations of 20 1st class berths, and you will find that in the contract. But we had to give them notice 24 hours ahead of the arrival of the steamers here. That is a definite contract. We are paying more money for that, and if the Canadian National Steamships would not reserve 20 berths from here to Trinidad they are not keeping their part of the contract. I think they have given us a wonderfully good service. I want to be perfectly fair, but there is the contract. We made that contract and they have to keep it. If they wish to fill all their cabins with tourists and thus utilise the 20 cabins that we are paying for they should give us some consideration on the subsidy.

Mr. JACOB: I have no complaint as

regards the general working of this arrangement, but I believe it is subject to renewal next year, and I am asking that consideration be given to the question of freight rates. Certain rates are far too high, and there is a provision in the agreement that this Government can make representations to the Canadian Government for revision of those rates. I have a distinct recollection that I was given an assurance two years ago that certain disadvantages that I submitted here would have been gone into. Maybe they have not been gone into, but due note should be taken of these facts and when the contract is being renewed those disadvantages should be remedied. I do not think there is any use my making comparisons of the various rates; I have done so already. My point is that we are partners in this service; we are contributing towards the running of the service, and there should be reasonable rates of freight for all produce, irrespective of who the shippers are and what they ship. There should not be unfair discrimination, neither should there be unfair rates of freight, especially as regards products that are stored and loaded in the same way. I think a competent committee should go into the matter so that all parties might be fairly dealt with.

I have nothing new to say about the passenger accommodation, except to endorse what has been said by the two previous speakers. Very little consideration is given to us at certain times, but I do hope that by mutual arrangement that will be avoided. Maybe, too, the time has arrived when the subsidy ought to be reduced. I think the whole question should be considered, and I would advise that the next term should not be as long as the present one when the contract is renewed.

Mr. WALCOTT: I would like to say it is difficult to view this arrangement from 12 years back. In 1925 we were in the position that we had no decent connections between this Colony and Trinidad. Steamers came in and you might get a passage after some difficulty from Trinidad to London, but to get a decent steamer from this Colony to Trinidad was not possible. Twelve years later, reviewing the situation, you might almost think that we made a foolish contract, but at the time we made a wonderfully good contract for this Colony.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The points raised by the hon. member about the working of the contract in regard to passenger accommodation will be taken up with the agents, and investigations will be made whether the terms of the agreement are being carried out in this particular respect.

Mr. JONES: I am sorry I was not here in time to hear the remarks made by the hon. members with regard to the Canadian National Steamship Service. I think the Canadian National Steamship Service provides a service which is second to none. I have travelled from Canada to England and *vice versa*, and I can safely say that the passenger accommodation provided by the Canadian National Steamship Service is better than any steamer I have ever travelled on.

With regard to the mail service I think no member of this Council can at any time criticise the Canadian National Steamship Service. So far as I know—I have been with Bookers, who are the agents, for the past five years—at no time have these steamers been late. They have arrived here and departed with clock-like regularity.

I just arrived in time to hear a remark made by the hon. member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) about discrimination. I do not know what he was referring to, but I can tell this Council that there is no discrimination whatever. Everybody is treated alike. I do not know what other remarks were made.

Mr. JACOB: It is a pity the hon. member was not here before. My remarks were about the differences in freight rates between one commodity and another, and I made the point of the necessity for readjustment and more suitable rates being arrived at.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I would like to assure the hon. member that no remarks derogatory to the service were made. The service is said to be an excellent service. It is a tribute to the Canadian Government that not only did they fulfil their contract in building better steamers but in reserving space accommodation for all the Islands. They did that. There is no complaint, and there never has been any



complaint about the manner in which the service is being run. No allegations have been made about the conduct of the agency, but the statement has been made that although the agency tries to serve the particular communities they are unable to do so because the service is so excellent that everyone is attracted to it, and although it was intended to benefit everybody it cannot possibly be done at the present moment. But while the Colony has the right to complain that we cannot get reservations on this excellent service, it is because of its excellence that we do not wish any curtailment of our privileges.

Mr. JONES : I thank the hon. member.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### OFFICIAL RECEIVER.

Item 2—Miscellaneous, \$171.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I move that this item be increased to \$200.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

#### POLICE.

Mr. ELEAZAR : In this Department there is not much to complain about at this time, but the little there is to complain about is of great moment. I should like in passing to say that there are three or four cases of policemen who have died under very tragic circumstances. One man died suddenly while going from his station to his home. Another was on special duty in the Mazaruni river, and whilst travelling the boat capsized. He was in the water for several hours before he was rescued, and had to remain in his wet clothing for several hours. He died shortly after his return to Georgetown, after 17 years' service. The relatives of both of those men have petitioned this Council, but all they have heard is that their petitions have been received. In these days it is difficult to know what is happening as regards these petitions. I hope that Government will tell us something to-day with respect to those two petitions.

I desire also to refer to the question of house allowances to married policemen. Government persists in giving those men \$3 per month for house rent in George-

town. I would like to inform Government that \$3 cannot procure decent accommodation for a married couple, even a policeman and his wife, and far less if a policeman has three or six children. Government should know that a decent room cannot be rented at \$3 per month. It is appalling to see two or three families combined in one house. For years complaints have been made to Government in this matter, but no notice has been taken of them. Government cannot be excused in cases of this kind when it knows the conditions. One officer gets \$60 per month house allowance while another, because he is a policeman, gets \$3 per month.

With regard to item (1) I understand that it is the intention of somebody to remove Inspector Billyeald from the Mounted Police and put him somewhere in the country, and to justify that it is said he is getting promotion. Inspector Billyeald will feel satisfied to remain with his horses, and we want him there. We are very proud of our Mounted Force, and we are pleased with Inspector Billyeald's performance there. Why remove him from service he has done so well? He looks upon it not only as work but as pleasure. If Government thinks he is worthy of promotion, give him the promotion and let him remain there.

Mr. DE AGUIAR : I wish to make a few observations with regard to the new post of Warrant Officer. I raised the question in Select Committee, but I was not very satisfied with the explanation given to me, and I decided to raise it again in Council. First of all I do not think it was made clear to me what would be the duties of this new officer, neither was it stated whether the new post was desirable. The only point that was made, which perhaps might carry some weight, was that owing to the retrenchment policy of Government within the last few years, the posts of three Warrant Officers were abolished. The Department had five Warrant Officers at one time, but last year it had only two, and it is now proposed to increase the number to three. Whether that was a sufficient reason I must confess that I was not satisfied at the time. Since then I have heard the remarks of the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar), that one of the principal reasons is to remove Inspector Billyeald from the Mounted

Police. I have got that information from the horses' mouths. (laughter). I agree with the hon. member that that would be a retrograde step, and I will not say anything further. I would, however, like to know what will be the duties of the new Warrant Officer. If he is not going to look after the horses the Council should be told what will be his duties and further, whether there is no officer in the service who is able to perform the duties expected of the new officer. That is another question. If there are no special duties, apart from looking after the horses, the Department should be able to find an officer in the service to carry out those duties. I should like some information on that score.

Mr. WALCOTT: If I remember correctly, in Select Committee the Colonial Secretary explained that, if possible, Inspector Billyeald would go on leave next year, and it was necessary to have someone who could fill his place. Therefore he might be promoted to a County Inspector and retained in Georgetown on account of his special ability in looking after the Mounted Police. I think it is absolutely necessary that the new Warrant Officer should be a man with horse sense, which very few of us have. We must have someone who could fill Inspector Billyeald's place, because it is essential that we should keep the Mounted Police up to the highest standard possible. I therefore appeal to hon. members not to interfere with this proposal.

Mr. JACOB: The question of house allowances to policemen has been raised here over and over again. It seems to me hopeless, if not useless, to raise it again, but I wish to make a point in that respect. I am always told that I make bad comparisons. I think this is a case where Government makes very bad comparisons. Government says that policemen are the best paid in their class in the Colony, and although their house allowance may be low they get it in salaries. It has been the policy of hon. members recently to urge on Government that it is a retrograde step to endeavour to reduce the salaries of the lower ranks of the Service. It would be far better, especially as the cost of living is rising, to maintain salaries or increase them somewhat. It is true that attempts have been made to do so, but they are so

few and far between that I do not think we would be doing our duty if we did not impress upon Government the necessity to increase the salaries of the lower ranks of the Service.

I should like to take this opportunity to correct something which appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* this morning with respect to sanitary inspectors.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am sorry I cannot allow the hon. member to speak about sanitary inspectors under this head.

Mr. JACOB: I am going to try to get it in somehow, sir. (laughter). I think an injustice was done to me by misreporting my remarks.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must speak only on the head Police.

Mr. JACOB: I am doing that, sir. I think it is necessary to ask once again that 4th class constables be abolished. We admit that policemen do get fair remuneration, but in order to hoodwink us, so to speak, a lower grade was introduced, and I see on the estimate 54 4th class constables at \$28, reducing the minimum salary from \$32 to \$28. Later on we will find that Government is not strictly correct when it states that policemen are so well paid. I am urging that 4th class constables be abolished. It was an innovation when the finances of the Colony were not very good, when there was need for economy, and when the cost of living was not what it is to-day. The cost of living is increasing, and I do not think it is quite fair or just to add to the grades so as to reduce the salaries of policemen. I think the policy as regards house allowances should be modified. I do not think it should be called a house allowance. We are told that policemen are given a certain sum in order to help them to live in decent surroundings. It is very necessary that they should be kept in a way somewhat removed from certain classes in the community, and I think any help in the direction of an increased allowance should be given further consideration. There is a difference between a sergeant and a lance-sergeant; I do not quite remember the details. When they are in a country district their work is the same, but one gets a higher rate of house allowance than the other.

As regards the Warrant Officer I am wondering whether the policy should not be modified—whether a policeman should not rise to the highest position in the Force. There seems to be a barrier which, under present conditions, should not exist. I will not say any more about it now. I am wondering whether it is not possible to appoint a local man to this new post of Warrant Officer. I do not know whether it is intended to import additional horses, and that someone from abroad would be able to manage them better. I think someone in the Force ought to be promoted, and Government should consider the matter in that light.

Mr. GONSALVES: I desire to join in the appeal for increased house allowances for policemen. I do not go to the extent of the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) who made the point that some officers got \$60 per month as house allowance. There must be some distinction drawn. It cannot be expected that everybody will get the same house allowance, but I think better consideration should be given to other ranks of the Service. I am wondering whether, having regard to the fact that the members of the Militia Band are considered part of the Police, some provision for house allowances should not be made for them.

With regard to the appointment of a Warrant Officer I heard reference made to Inspector Billyeald. It was rather amusing and interesting to me, because I recollect that some years ago when he was Riding Master and it was proposed to make him a Sub-Inspector there was strong objection to the appointment, but subsequently when it was proposed to appoint him a District Inspector it was carried. To-day there are fears of Inspector Billyeald being removed from the Mounted Police. There may be good foundation for those fears, but I cannot reconcile them with the item I see on page 52—Duty allowance to Riding Master, \$360. If the new Warrant Officer is to be Riding Master, why is that duty allowance, which was specially given to Inspector Billyeald, still on the estimate? It seems to me that it requires some explanation.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If it is correct that Government is getting a Warrant Officer only because Inspector Billyeald is going

on leave, it seems to me a very tall order. Is he going on leave forever? Has anybody asked Inspector Billyeald whether there is anybody here who can take his place for six or nine months? I do not think Inspector Billyeald's going on leave is sufficient ground for another Warrant Officer being engaged. If Government gives the assurance that it is not its intention to remove Inspector Billyeald I would not press the matter, but I doubt it very much, because I know Government.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In your opening Speech, sir, you assured the Council that it was not intended to remove Inspector Billyeald from his general duties or responsibilities with the mounted branch of the Police. That is the first point. The second point is that Inspector Billyeald at present is trying to combine his particular responsibility for this branch of the Force with the conduct of general Police duties, and it has been found very difficult for him to do so. Along with the training of the mounted branch there are the special duties of the Stud Farm, and anyone who has been connected with a mounted unit knows that the economy of a mounted unit—stores, fodder and so on—is a considerable responsibility on the person in charge, and it is very desirable that Inspector Billyeald should have an opportunity to use his abilities on strictly police work, and that he should have adequate assistance for the training and the work of interior economy in connection with the unit for which he is responsible. That is the starting point of this proposal to give him a trained and qualified assistant who will have passed through training with a mounted unit, and who will be able to assist him adequately in this work. It is not in the interest either of the unit or, as a matter of fact, of Inspector Billyeald himself, that his usefulness should be limited to the mounted unit alone. He is able and willing to carry out ordinary police duties, and it is desirable that he should have an opportunity to do so. He will, of course, have to go on leave. That is the particular aspect of the problem. He has had long service without leave, and that is one aspect of it, but not the dominating factor. That is the general position in regard to this Warrant Officer.

Mr. ELEAZAR: In view of the ex-



planation given by the Colonial Secretary the opposition is withdrawn.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item (p)—83 1st class constables at \$38, \$37,848; 92 2nd class constables at \$33.50, \$36,984; 294 3rd class constables at \$32, \$112,896; 54 4th class constables at \$28, \$18,144—\$205,872.

Mr. JACOB: I observe from the explanatory note that provision has been made for 12 additional constables. I understand it is the intention to re-open two or three police stations, or to re-open two and establish a third. If that intention is put into effect I think 12 men will not be sufficient. The Demerara River service requires a few more policemen, and Government would be well advised to increase the number of policemen, especially in view of the fact that 84 men were struck off three years ago.

THE CHAIRMAN: That point has been receiving consideration, but I did not feel justified in including a larger increase on the Estimates this year. Consideration of the matter has not been completed.

Item (t)—Female Turnkey and Searchers, \$350.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I was wondering whether I should say something about this item. I would like to be relieved of making any remarks on this subject.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am afraid I must apologise for not disposing of this enquiry. The papers were returned to me this morning by the Inspector-General, but I have not actually considered the matter yet.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 2—Transport and Travelling, \$13,470.

Mr. JACKSON: I made reference last year to the travelling facilities given to the seven County Sergeants-Major. I again referred to the matter in Select Committee and would like a statement as to what is proposed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is the intention of Government to put the

matter right. These officers fall into a particular group. There are one or two others of corresponding status in other departments who will be similarly treated. A list is being prepared now.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Some years ago Government found it necessary to reduce by 10 per cent. the salaries of Government officials, among whom were Police Inspectors. The time came when this Council in its generosity recommended to Government that Government officials should have restored to them what had been taken away. I understand that there are some officers who have not yet got back what was taken from them. I do not think Government should discriminate, and I am asking Government to enquire whether there is anybody in this Department whose emoluments were reduced as the result of the retrenchment, and have not had them restored. If there are any such officers justice should be done to them forthwith.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That question was raised in Select Committee, and Government is fully aware of the views of the unofficial members. The matter is receiving attention.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### POOR.

Dr. SINGH: I wish to draw Government's attention to the fact that East Indians in the country districts find it very difficult to obtain poverty and pauper certificates which entitle them to receive medical treatment at the Public Hospital, Georgetown. It is true that they can obtain those certificates from the Commissioner of their district, but that would only apply to those who live near to the Commissioner's office. Those who live at the far end of the district would have to break their journey in order to go to the Commissioner. I ask Government to assist in this matter by instructing the Immigration Department to appoint a sufficient number of officers to issue those certificates in the various districts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The point raised by the hon. member will be looked into.

Dr. SINGH: The people go to minis-



ters of religion who are not inclined to issue certificates where the applicants are not members of their church.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item (j) —Matron, Alms House, \$540.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This item is no longer required, having been provided for in the Medical estimates. I therefore move that it be deleted.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Although the Matron has been transferred, isn't she entitled to be placed above the line?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is not quite the case. She is being restored to her proper place under the Medical establishment, and it is intended to provide her with the privilege of a house allowance.

Item deleted.

Item (g)—re-lettered (f)—Poor Law Enquirers (3 at \$288 to \$480 by \$24, and 1 at \$240 to \$360 by \$24), \$1,560.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is a clerical error. I move that the item be amended to read:—(f)—4 Poor Law Enquirers (2 at \$288 to \$480 by \$24 and 2 at \$240 to \$360 by \$24), \$1,560.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (h)—79 Nurses and Servants, Alms House, \$17,462.

Mr. JACKSON: It is generally understood that the nurses at the Alms House do not receive any training at all, such as the nurses at the Hospitals receive. I suggest that a number of the best nurses might be selected from time to time to take a course of training at the Public Hospital for their benefit as well as for the benefit of the patients they have to look after.

I observe that efforts are being made to improve the status of the nurses at the Hospital. I have heard it said that a number of young women who have obtained School Certificates, and a few matriculants were applying for jobs at the Hospital. I think it is a very good thing; it will improve the quality of nursing. I

also think that the nurses at the Alms House might be given a chance to improve their knowledge, which would in a measure tone up the Alms House itself with respect to this phase of the work.

Dr. WASE-BAILEY (Surgeon-General): I think perhaps the hon. member is referring chiefly to the nurses in the Infirmary part of the Alms House. With the advent to the Medical Department of the Matron the result will be that the Divisional Sisters and Nurse Superintendent will embody inspection and supervision of the Matron at the Alms House, which is not now done. In consequence of that we propose to look into the question of additional training of nurses in the Infirmary, but the matter is only under consideration now, and it will take a little time for the Nurse Superintendent to include supervision of the Matron and the medical aspect of nursing work at the Alms House. I am not in a position to say just what the result will be.

Item 12—Out-Door Poor—Demerara, \$11,500.

Mr. JACKSON: It is extremely difficult for the poor to receive attention with respect to the allowances that are given from time to time. I know that many deserving cases have had to be turned away by the Local Board of Guardians on the West Coast of Demerara because of orders that they were not to exceed a certain amount. I do not know whether that obtains in other centres too. I was thinking whether Government could not see its way to increase the vote in order that deserving cases might be helped. The cost of living is going up considerably, and those people who have been in a position to help their dependents or friends are not in a position to do as much for them now. I do ask that this matter be given some further consideration.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hon. members will observe that there is an increase of this vote already, not quite for the reason the hon. member has suggested. In fact the position at the moment is that Government has not received representation exactly of the kind he has made. Grants have not been refused solely on the ground that funds are not available.

Item put, and agreed to.

## POST OFFICE.

Mr. ELEAZAR: This is a Department into which Government is bound to make thorough enquiry at no very distant date, because confusion is confounding itself in this Department. It is the worst department in the Service, so far as I know, and I know a great deal. These men have had further cause to complain in that they have been drafted into the company of unclassified Government officers. That is a wrong thing. They were in a particular classified class by themselves, governed by an Ordinance, and could not really be considered unclassified. They seem to feel—and it does appear so—that the only reason why they were drafted into the unclassified service was for the purpose of reducing their emoluments in the first instance, and in the second instance, of depriving them of the benefits which were held out to them when they joined the staff of the Department. There can be no doubt about that. The foundation of the Department had been well and truly laid by no less a person than Sir Frederick Hodgson who was trained in the London Post Office, came here as Postmaster-General and eventually returned as Governor of the Colony. When Sir Cecil Rodwell came to the Colony he pronounced it to be one of the best Post Offices in the Empire, apart from the London Post Office. His immediate successor, the late Sir Gordon Guggisberg, told the late Postmaster-General that he wanted the expenditure of the Department reduced by so much, and by one stroke of the pen the expenditure of the Department was reduced, regardless of the fact that its efficiency was also being reduced. At the same time the Postmaster-General complained when his own salary was not increased, although he was getting more than any of his predecessors. He nevertheless carried out the retrenchment in the hope that he would have had his own salary increased, but not having got it he was disgruntled until he left the Colony.

No fewer than 13 post offices have been converted into postal agencies. The Carmichael street post office was regarded as a prize office, the emoluments of the postmaster being between \$70 and \$80 per month. In order to carry out the scheme of reckless reduction that post office was converted into a postal agency, and a man who had served his full term and received

his lump sum bonus was installed to carry on the same work at a salary of \$10 per month with a free house. A relief clerk who had reached the maximum of his class would have been glad to carry on the work at the same salary and with a free house. Government is saving money at the expense of men who joined the Service and looked forward to promotion. Is Government not satisfied that it is doing wrong to those men? To make matters worse, the men have been included among the unclassified officers and their salaries regraded. A man will get \$37.50 as a minimum salary, and any amount he receives above that will be considered as an allowance, which will not count when the time comes for him to get a gratuity. He will never get a pension. With one stroke of the pen the hopes of those men have been dashed to the ground.

In other respects the men have cause to complain, because I notice that the pay of the Postmaster at New Amsterdam is fixed at \$1,284 to \$2,280 by \$72. It will take the Postmaster about 13 years to reach his maximum of \$190 per month, and when he gets there he is usually 55 or 56 years of age, and he will not be allowed to remain there one day after he is 60 years, so that he will never be able to reach the maximum. Government has done that and considers it clever. Government has put retired men in charge of the postal agencies to block the way of the junior men. I should like to know what would be Government's attitude if some day it is faced with a big loss in the Savings Bank branch of one of those postal agencies. It would be unfair for Government to seek to punish a man who is being paid a salary of \$10 per month, but Government would do it. This is a case where honesty is the best policy, but when a man acts on that principle he is not an honest man.

My real complaint is that things are not working well in this Department. I see a suggestion that messengers are to be employed between the ages of 14 and 18, and then dismissed. Somebody said that something of that kind is being done in England, but there are millions of people in England, and when people are thrown out of employment they get unemployment dole. Can the same system be applied here? No employee in the Post Office to-day will ever reach the maximum salary of

his office under this unclassified scheme. It is a subtle move to reduce the status of those people. Things have been going wrong even before the present Postmaster-General came to the Colony, and since he has come the situation has been intensified.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I have risen to support the hon. member. I think Major Bain Gray must take the blame for all the sins and errors that may be in his report. There are employees of the Post Office who have served 17 years and have to serve another 9 years before they reach their maximum. Telegraph operators who previously got \$24 to \$38 are now to receive \$24 to \$40, with no pension rights. The salaries of travelling sorters have been reduced to \$24 rising to \$40. Relief clerks will have to wait a long time for an increase of \$2 at the tail end. Third-class postmasters who got \$50 per month will now rise from \$37.50 to \$50, no increase whatever, but a reduced minimum. All these things call for more careful consideration.

Telegraph operators have no doubt suffered in respect of promotion as the result of the establishment of postal agencies. I agree that there are postal agencies in England, and that there is nothing against the policy of creating them, but where Post Office employees' promotion is blocked by the establishment of such agencies they should be given some consideration. Government should review the whole matter and give those men an opportunity to reach their maximum salary in a shorter period. It is better to have a satisfied Service. I am quite sure they are willing to accept what is proposed. I do not think they object to being put on the list of unclassified officers, but they would like better remuneration, which brings joy to life.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I wish to join in the appeal of the two previous speakers, that further consideration be given the officers of this Department. I thought Government was considering the question of increasing the salaries of postmasters, but they have suffered under the unclassified scheme, and those who will come after will suffer more because they will start under the new scheme. There were about nine grades of postmasters under the old

system, with salaries ranging from \$56 to \$120 per month, but under the proposed scheme they will be reduced to four grades. I think the difficulty would be met if the grades were further reduced from four to three. I happen to know that the difficulty was caused by the fact that post offices which should have been put on the higher grade remained on the lower grade. In point of fact I think it is the post offices that are being graded, and that is the reason why four grades have been created. Some post offices on the lower grade are doing as much business as those on the higher grade. Enquiry should be made into the matter, and those postmasters should receive what they deserve. No post office should be reduced in status because of the fact that Government wants to reduce the salary of the postmaster.

Mr. JACKSON: I would like to draw particular attention to the point made by the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) with regard to the period which it takes a postmaster to reach his maximum salary. The minimum salary is \$107 and the maximum \$190 per month. In Select Committee a proposal was made that the incremental rate should be increased from \$72 to \$96 per annum so as to give a postmaster an opportunity to reach his maximum. After a good deal of discussion it was suggested that the incremental rate should be \$72 for the first five years, after which it should be increased to \$96. That arrangement would give some little relief and enable a postmaster to reach his maximum a little earlier. Under the present arrangement he would hardly reach it. I make the suggestion by way of a compromise, and with some confidence, because I cannot believe that it is the intention of Government to place the maximum salary at such a height as to make it impossible for a postmaster to reach it. I ask that the suggestion be considered with a view to giving some relief in this respect.

Mr. JACOB: I have already spoken about the Post Office employees, and I have merely risen to support the remarks of the previous speakers.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I may say for the benefit of the Hon. Mr. Jackson that previously the minimum salary was \$156 and the incremental rate \$96 per annum, and



it was deliberately reduced to \$107 with an incremental rate of \$72. Therefore it was done deliberately that postmasters should not reach the maximum.

Mr. WALCOTT: It has given me some amount of amusement to listen to my dear friends, the elected members, increasing the cost of Government the whole time. A year or two ago things were the reverse: they were criticising Government for too much expenditure. I am only a nominated member, but I think we are making a mistake. We are not thinking of the poor fellow who is not employed by Government—the poor East Indian, the poor Negro and the poor white man, and everybody else who has to toil and try to make enough money to pay the taxation which is demanded by Government for this increased expenditure on the Civil Service. It seems to me that things have gone wrong. I would have expected my hon. friends, the elected members, to be criticising you, sir, for bringing forward such a big budget as you have done, but I find myself in the position of having to criticise them for asking for an increased budget all the time. Something is wrong. What are we going to do? Can we do something to increase the earning power of the field labourer? If the Imperial Government is going to pay for everything, it is all right, but if we have to find the money here then I, as an ordinary taxpayer, object to increasing the cost of government, and I think I am right in doing so. I appeal to hon. members not to go on increasing the cost of government at the expense of the poor taxpayers.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The hon. member has spoken ironically; I do not think he was serious. We are asking Government not to rob Peter to pay Paul. We are merely asking for common British justice and fairplay for postmasters.

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

2 p.m.--

Mr. F. J. Seaford present.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I should like to join those hon. members who appealed to Government for some consideration for some of the employees of the Post Office

Department. I particularly refer to postmasters in the second and lower grades. I think there is room for improvement in that direction, in view of the heavy responsibility of the work of those men, and the fact that they have no holidays and enjoy no special benefits as other employees of Government do. In his report Major Bain Gray admitted that there were some anomalies, and probably this is one of those cases in which Government might consider the position of postmasters in the country districts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The discussion which we have had this morning has turned mainly on the question of the salaries of postal officials, postmasters and postal clerks, and the grades below those. Reference was also made to the question of postal agencies. The older members of the Council will remember that some years ago there were approximately a dozen post offices abolished or replaced by postal agencies, and that is of course still present in the minds of members, and probably to a greater extent in the minds of the employees of the Post Office. It is, however, quite inaccurate to say that the salaries of the Post Office staff have been reduced. There is no individual whose salary has been reduced, nor is it true to say that the pensionable status of anyone has been reduced. The suggestion has been made that it is connected with the figure of \$60 per month. In another portion of my report I did suggest that as a figure, but no decision has been come to, and it is still open to the Government to fix any other figure.

If you look at the staff of the Post Office you will see that there are three main levels of employment—postmasters, postal clerks, letter carriers and those of similar grade. In making this report I did not suggest any increase for postmasters. The amount to be spent on that grade is practically the same, but it is a fact that owing to the adjustment of the staff a number of postmasters have received increases, and actually this year an amount of \$412 has been paid in increases to postmasters under the new arrangement. The postal clerks have also benefited. In their case in 1937 the increase has been \$746. Below that again on the lower level there has been a substantial increase, which brings the total up to over \$3,000

for the Post Office Department as a whole, and I suggest to hon. members that that is not an unreasonable addition to the salaries of the Postal Department. With the operation of the scale suggested the total increase on the Post Office will be approximately \$10,000.

Along with that goes the policy in regard to promotion in the Post Office which will counterbalance the previous effect of reducing the number of post offices and replacing them by postal agencies. I have recommended, and Government has accepted the recommendation, that as far as possible the number of classified officers in the Post Office should be reduced, and as vacancies arise they should be filled by promotions from those who have entered the Post Office as unclassified officers. Actually there are 26 classified officers employed in the Post Office at present, so that even if in years to come only 50 per cent. are replaced by unclassified officers the previous opportunities for promotion which were provided by the fact that there were post offices which are now agencies, will be fully replaced. The operation of that is not possible yet. Actually I think there is only one change on the Estimate this year, but it is an important change, and a matter which will benefit the subordinate staff of the Post Office considerably in years to come.

Other members referred to the difficult question of boy service in the Post Office. The nature of the work in the Post Office requires a considerable number of boys under 18 years or under 20 years. That applies to post offices in all countries, and no post office has been able to solve that question satisfactorily. It does seem to Government to be fair to a boy entering the Post Office, that he should be clearly informed that if there is no vacancy for him in the adult establishment of the Post Office he would be required to leave the service at 18 years, rather than be retained as a man in age and receiving a boy's pay. I do not think the policy that has grown up in the Post Office of having men employed and receiving the pay of boys is at all suitable, and one that Government can continue indefinitely, therefore for the last month or two any boy joining the Post Office knows that there is that possibility. Government will try to relieve that, if possible,

by opening other avenues of employment, but it is necessary that it should be clear from the outset that boys, for whom there is no vacancy when they reach the age of 18 years, may be required to leave the Post Office.

The question of postal agencies has received the attention of Government, and there are two cases in particular which Government is considering with regard to restoring or establishing post offices in the place of existing postal agencies, and those are Kitty and Carmichael Street. Government has decided that one of these will be established next year.

With regard to the salaries of the senior postmasters at Georgetown and New Amsterdam (items 8 and 9) the point was made that the incremental scale was unsuitable or impossible. That question was raised in Select Committee, and it has been considered by Government. When those items are reached I shall move that the incremental scale be increased from \$72 to \$96 per annum, which will remove the difficulty to which members have drawn attention. Those, I think, are the present aspects with regard to the staff of the Post Office, to which hon. members have drawn attention, and I wish to make it clear that the opportunities now provided are the best Government can make in the organisation of the Post Office without actually expending funds on posts which are not needed to carry on the Post Office.

Mr. ELEAZAR: What I am complaining about is what is to become of the boys who are there now? Some have been there six or seven years, or more, with the hope that eventually they will become postmasters. I am pleading for the men and boys who are there now, whose promotion has been blocked. What sort of boy will Government get now to work at the Post Office? Boys from proper homes will not go there to work as messengers. There is no policy in that. Merely for the sake of saving a few dollars Government is smashing up a foundation which was laid by able men. This continual removal of the ancient landmarks is doing the country no good.

Item (5)—3 Class II. Clerks, \$1,864.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is

proposed to include in this item the post of Superintendent, Parcels Office, and to restore that officer to the classified service. I therefore move that the item be amended to read:—"4 Class II. Clerks, \$7,086."

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (6)—Superintendent, Parcels Office (\$1,248 to \$1,800 by \$72), \$1,864.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be deleted.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Does it mean that the next holder of the office will never be able to get the salary the present holder is getting? I understand that that is what is intended.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This change has been made at the request of the officer concerned. He was a member of the classified service, and has asked that he be restored to the service largely because he wants to qualify for a Service Allowance. It is largely for his benefit, and there is no intention of the kind suggested by the hon. member.

Item deleted.

Item (7) renumbered—Postmaster, New Amsterdam (\$1,284 to \$2,280 by \$72), \$1,464.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the incremental scale with respect to this item be increased from \$72 to \$96 per annum, and that the provision for next year be \$1,488.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am always thankful for small mercies, but this is a very small mercy. Will the Colonial Secretary say how long will it take the officer to reach the maximum?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Between 9 and 10 years.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It means that the officer will never reach the maximum, because he is seldom sent there under 55 years of age. Why not raise the minimum salary as well, so as to make the period shorter?

Mr. WOOLFORD: I would like to say

in support of those remarks, which I have heard over and over again, that there is one point which the hon. member has omitted to emphasise, and that is that the duties attached to the post have been considerably increased. I think I am correct in saying that there was a time when the officer had not any parcels post work to do at all. His predecessor, who received a much higher salary, did not have to deal with import duties of any kind. That, of course, is added responsibility, and I think if Government adds to the responsibilities of an office and at the same time reduces the pay attached to it, it is doing not only the officer but the Service an injustice. It is clearly a case for recognition of the value of the post, irrespective of the person who is the holder of the office. His predecessor established a reputation there which gave the office prestige. He was indeed a very capable man. For some time there was great difficulty in finding a successor, but now that he has been found Government must in some way reward the post rather than the officer.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Government has considered the matter and regrets that it is unable to announce any further increase. An increment of \$96 is the maximum figure that would be appropriate for a salary of this grade. The hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has assumed that the age of the officer would be about 55 years. Government has no reason to think so. It is possible that it would be 50, but there is no reason to anticipate that it would be as high as 55.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (8) as renumbered—Postmaster, Georgetown (\$1,284 to \$2,280 by \$72), \$1,584.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the incremental scale with respect to this item be increased from \$72 to \$96 per annum, and that the vote be increased to \$1,608.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (9)—34 Postmasters—5 at \$912 by \$48 to \$1,200; 10 at \$672 by \$48 to \$960; 14 at \$570 by \$30 to \$720; 5 at \$450 by \$30 to \$600—\$29,154.



Mr. ELEAZAR: I am asking whether Government cannot see its way to treat this item in the way suggested by the hon. member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus). Instead of having five men at the top it is suggested that there should be 10, a second grade of 15 and a third grade of 9. The last five men in the present grade will never have a chance of rising at all; the distance is too great for them to travel. I cannot understand the system, unless it has been arranged to prevent them from rising.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The adoption of a suggestion of this sort would mean a very considerable increase of expenditure which really could not be justified by the work being done. The hon. member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) suggested that the five postmasters on the lowest grade should be put on the grade rising to \$720. I did consider that point when the original report was being prepared, but there were a large number of officers similarly situated, and if they were all treated in the same way there would have been a very considerable increase of expenditure. Working the scheme on those lines, the whole thing would have fallen down by its own weight. This is an effort to provide reasonable salaries without an extraordinary increase of expenditure. Most of the increased expenditure is on the lowest grades, which I am sure is the desire of members of the Council.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That answer cannot satisfy anyone, for the reason that those men were taken out of a class in which they were better off, and are now described as unclassified. Government is only giving them back some of what it took away.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: It would appear that the postmasters have been graded, but in point of fact the post offices have been graded. Five of the ten post offices in the second grade are doing as much business as the five in the first grade, therefore I think they might be added to the first grade. I am also informed that four of the 14 post offices in the third grade are doing just as much business as those in the second grade. If the post offices were re-graded in that way it would automatically improve the grades of the postmasters.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Take the case of the Nigg post office. It serves all of the most important estates in Berbice, from Albion on one side to Port Mourant on the other side, yet it is a lower grade post office than that at Leonora on the West Coast, Demerara, which is not doing half the work. This is an arbitrary arrangement; there is no grading at all. The post office at Skeldon, which is doing so much more work, is in the third grade.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that the position of these postmasters, as with the rest of the people in the Service, has improved as the result of this report. I think that anybody listening to the debate would have gathered the impression that some of those postmasters have suffered something as the result of this change. That, of course, is not the case in any way. Nobody has suffered anything, and actually under this new arrangement there will be five posts among postmasters running to a maximum of \$1,200, apart from the two special posts in Georgetown and New Amsterdam. In the past there were three, but there are now five, and the prospects of employees in the Post Office are better under the revised proposals than they were in the past. I do not wish members to get the impression that postmasters have suffered anything; they have definitely gained.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That is why I ask Your Excellency to be good enough to make enquiry. It will prove to you conclusively that this apparent advantage does not exist.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 10 as renumbered—25 Postal Clerks—1 at \$912 by \$48 to \$1,104, by \$48 to \$1,200; 2 at \$672 by \$48 to \$864 by \$48 to \$960; 5 at \$570 by \$30 to \$720; 17 at \$450 by \$30 to \$600—\$16,258.

Mr. WOOLFORD: The explanatory memorandum with respect to this item reads:—" . . . One post (Relief Clerk) transferred below the line, *vide* sub-head 1 (16)." I think Government is aware of the very peculiar position that has arisen with respect to this post, and in the circumstances I would ask that until you can

give the matter your personal consideration, the item should be retained above the line. I have seen the letter which was written to this man who relinquished his post to take up this appointment. This officer's claim to be on the Fixed Establishment is abundantly clear. It amounts to nothing less than a breach of contract to deny him this. I recognise that the object of Government is that in future appointments to this position should not be on the Fixed Establishment, but that does not disturb the equitable claim of the officer to be on the Fixed Establishment. It is a very curious case and a very unfortunate one, but I cannot give any further details. I believe the acting Colonial Secretary knows of it, and that the matter is being investigated. If the officer's claims are to be recognised the item should be amended to provide for 26 Postal Clerks.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have verified the facts. This officer can be included.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item (13) as renumbered—12 Probationers, \$4,789.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that this item be amended to 11 Probationers and carried out at \$4,549. Item (15) will be correspondingly increased from 12 to 13 Postal Clerks.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (15) as renumbered—12 Postal Clerks—2 at \$450 by \$30 to \$600; 10 at \$288 by \$24 to \$480—\$6,188.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be amended to read:—“13 Postal Clerks—2 at \$450 by \$30 to \$600; 11 at \$288 by \$24 to \$480—\$6,476.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (19) as renumbered—45 Rural Letter Carriers (\$168 by \$12 to \$240), \$8,880.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the total of this item be increased to \$9,080. There has been a clerical error.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Will that mean that a letter carrier will never be able to rise; will he remain always at \$20 per month?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Those letter carriers are eligible for promotion. I have indicated already that opportunities for promotion are greater than they have been for years.

Mr. JACOB: I understand that rural letter carriers are to be given additional uniform in this way, that coats will be substituted for capes, and they will be given boots as well, and probably caps. A request was made that they should be given the same uniform as letter carriers in the City. I think there is to be some modification of that request, and I would like to know what is the exact position.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That point was raised and considered. They do get the essentials, caps, capes and leggings, and Government is unable to increase the vote.

Mr. JACOB: I think a promise was made to change the capes for coats.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That point can be arranged; coats can be provided instead of capes.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item (22) as renumbered—Extra Messengers, \$228.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be amended to read:—“Extra Messengers and rural letter carriers—\$478.” This provision is being made to enable postmasters to give leave to this class of employees—seven days' vacation leave with pay and seven days' sick leave with pay if required during the year. There has been no provision for leave in the past.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (25) as renumbered—Overtime \$2,600.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The Postmaster of New Amsterdam gets no overtime pay at all, yet he is supposed to be at work on holidays and Sundays if mails come in. His subordinates get overtime pay,

and he is supposed to be there to supervise their work.

Item put, and agreed to.

#### POST OFFICE—TELECOMMUNICATIONS

##### AND ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS' BRANCH.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Certain anomalies have been created in this branch of the Post Office as the result of the acceptance by Government of recommendations made in the Bain Gray report, and I wish to make a few general observations for the consideration of Government. I may mention that in one particular case I brought the matter up in Select Committee, but I regret to say that the explanation offered was not altogether satisfactory. I will invite the attention of Government to one of the offices on the Fixed Establishment, the salary of which will be carried out at \$570 to \$720, and to a similar post on the maintenance staff on the Unfixed Establishment, the salary of which is \$672 to \$960 per annum. I am credibly informed, and I have every reason to believe that the statement is true, that the particular officer concerned is the senior officer of the Department. He has given 18 years' service, and must be a very senior and a very responsible officer to have found his way at some time on the Fixed Establishment, yet in regarding the post on the Unfixed Establishment a junior officer will in time draw a higher rate of salary than the particular officer concerned.

I am also informed that the overtime allowances paid to these men either have been withheld altogether or have been considerably reduced. It is well known that these linemen have to work in all kinds of weather, and on public holidays and Sundays, and there is no doubt about it that their grievance is justified in respect of the overtime allowances. I think these two matters might well be re-examined in the light of the criticisms I have offered.

There is one other point which I would like to be cleared up, and that is the position of the apprentices. There again it seems to me that an anomaly is likely to be created unless the matter receives further consideration. I think there were 11 apprentices at salaries of \$25 per month. Under this arrangement it is pro-

posed to transfer (quite a good thing, I admit) 6 apprentices who are considered to be efficient, to the maintenance staff. But what do we find? Under sub-head (10) there are 15 apprentices at \$288 to \$480 by \$24. I know it is proposed to increase the number from 15 to 19 and under sub-head (15) it is proposed to reduce the number of apprentices from 11 to 6. What I do not understand about the promotion is that it seems to me to be a bit Irish. If an apprentice is in a class rising to \$480 I think his minimum salary should be \$360.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The minimum in these scales applies to new entrants. If anybody is promoted from a scale below, the maximum of which is greater than the minimum of the new scale, he goes above his maximum.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: What is the position of those who have already given 12 years' service and are at present in receipt of \$29 per month?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: They will get \$30 during 1937 and \$32 per month next year.

Item (9)—8 Radio Operators—3 at \$570 to \$720 by \$30; 2 at \$450 to \$600 by \$30; 3 at \$288 to \$480 by \$24—\$4,674.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is proposed to reduce the number of operators in this item from 8 to 6, as two reserve men are no longer required. One post is actually vacant, while the other man will be transferred to another sub-head. The item will therefore read:—“6 Radio Operators—3 at \$570 to \$720 by \$30; 2 at \$450 to \$600 by \$30; 1 at \$288 to \$480 by \$24—\$3,714.”

Mr. ELEAZAR: For years there have been complaints that the New Amsterdam office was understaffed, and when the situation became acute Government decided to send a 2nd class postmaster, but forthwith withdrew a clerk. The position has remained the same until now. There has always been pressure there because the office is one short.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This item refers to radio operators.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.



Item (10)—Maintenance Staff—2 at \$672 to \$950 by \$48; 2 at \$570 to \$720 by \$30; 5 at \$450 to \$600 by \$30; 15 at \$288 to \$480 by \$24—\$12,100.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the last line of this item be amended to read "19 at \$288 to \$480 by \$24; 6 Apprentices at \$240 to \$360 by \$24," and the total carried out at \$15,228. The intention is to include the present apprentices in the maintenance staff.

Mr. WOOLFORD: It is, I believe, a fact that a lineman who is obviously on the Unfixed Establishment, is performing duties in New Amsterdam, while the lineman who is under item (5), and who is his senior and an officer on the Fixed Establishment, is stationed somewhere on the East Coast or in Georgetown. The fact remains that this gentleman is drawing considerably more than the officer on the Fixed Establishment. I do not understand these things; they are problems to me. What I feel about the Service, which I am glad I do not belong to, is that I do not quite realise how an officer who has had years of service is transferred to some post at the will or whim of somebody in the Department, while another man who does not enjoy his status is allowed to reap the benefit of a post which the other man can ably and capably fill. This is not a question of oversight, and I would rather not hear the official explanation of the exigencies of the Service, because that covers a multitude of sins and omissions. It does not seem to me to make for satisfaction that there should be an officer in that position. What we will be told, if that man dies or retires, is that the post has always been filled by a man on the Unfixed Establishment. The point is that some man on the Fixed Establishment can do it, and one of these days it is going to happen that this man will eventually receive higher reward for his long service than the other man who has been there years before. It does not seem to me to be right.

In other cases overtime services are performed and not paid for. Why should a man who has to work on Sundays and public holidays not be given overtime pay? It is a fact within my knowledge that certain officers are not getting overtime pay. I know the matter is going to

be enquired into, because the Postmaster-General himself told the Select Committee that, and I know he possesses sufficient strength of character to be able to examine it closely and not allow his judgment to be obscured by side issues. This is a particular case, and it requires close examination. I would like to know how it is possible for a man to receive nearly double as much as another who has been his tutor.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is an admitted anomaly in this member of the staff being on the pensionable establishment. I drew attention to it in my report. I have not had time to trace the history of it. It establishes the need for some principle as regards placing people on the pensionable establishment.

Mr. WOOLFORD: You have not answered my enquiry. I am not concerned with the anomaly. What I am concerned about is that gentlemen on the Unfixed Establishment are gradually replacing him and all others in that position. Let's try to forget anomalies.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (15)—11 Apprentices, \$2,760.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be deleted. It is no longer required, as apprentices have been provided for already.

Item deleted.

Item (16)—73 Telegraph Messengers (\$72 by \$12 to \$180) \$9,804.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have a recollection that some time ago this Council passed a resolution that no messenger should get less than \$10 or \$8 per month, but I find that the new Postmaster-General is engaging messengers at \$6 per month.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No member of Government is aware of such a resolution at the moment, but enquiries will be made. Both the Treasurer and I have never heard of it.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Please enquire. If I live long enough I will find it and show you. I am not surprised at your not

knowing about it, because u are all newcomers.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item (16) as renumbered—Extra Telegraph Messengers, \$200.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I move that this item be increased to \$450 in order to provide for leave for telegraph messengers.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item (31)—1 Apprentice, \$192.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : I move that this item be deleted.

Item deleted.

#### POST OFFICE—SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. H. G. SEAFORD : What I have to say I must admit should rightly come under Head XXIII. (Miscellaneous), but last night I looked at the wrong column. My objection to the expenditure of \$14,000 on the working of the Savings Bank is twofold. First of all I think that, to quote the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar), Government is robbing Peter to pay Paul. A man of substance puts his money on the Government Savings Bank and Government pays him a higher rate of interest than it can afford, but in order to do so it taxes the poor man who has no substance, and nothing to put on the Savings Bank. I also oppose it on the ground that it is subsidised competition with the Banks operating in the Colony. The Banks say they can only afford to give a certain amount of interest on deposits, and Government is really taking away trade from those Banks by giving a higher rate of interest at a loss. I remember the time when Government wanted to construct a dock at Mazaruni in competition with Messrs. Sproston, and the Combined Court was very strongly against it, and in my opinion quite rightly too, because it was contended that Government had no right to enter into competition with private firms. As long as the Banks give what is really a fair rate of interest on call money I do not think that on the score of thrift Government should enter into competition with them. I use the word "thrift" advisedly, because I understand that one hon. member is very strong on the subject

of the Government Savings Bank. He thinks it encourages thrift among the poorer classes. If it were only the poorer classes who had their money lodged in the Savings Bank I should perhaps agree with it, but many people have money lying in the Government Savings Bank who are simply waiting to try to make a better investment.

Furthermore, in another part of the Estimate I see a sum of \$5,000 for transferring money. There was a time when one could transfer money much cheaper, as the Treasurer knows, but he would not do it, and quite rightly too, because it was interfering with the business of the Banks. I cannot see why in one instance Government will not interfere with the Banks' business when it is costing the Colony \$5,000, but it will interfere with the Banks' business when it costs the Colony \$14,000.

Mr. DE AGUIAR : I appear in a different role from that of my friend who has just taken his seat. I desire first of all to congratulate Government on separating the accounting side of this Department, because I must confess that during the few years I have been a member of this Council I have always been at sea in finding out the position of the Savings Bank Department of the Post Office. I am glad to see an attempt is being made to have separate accounting so that from year to year the deficit or surplus on the working of the Bank will be clearly shown.

I do not agree at all with the remarks made by the hon. Nominated Member with regard to the Savings Bank. I think Government ought to be congratulated on having such a Department, even although on the surface it appears as if there is a deficit. I think Post Office Savings Banks are recognised as a means of encouraging thrift among a certain class of people, and even although at the present moment the rate of interest paid by the Post Office Savings Bank is slightly more than is offered by the established Banks here, I think it is a very good thing indeed.

What I am concerned about is this : I have carefully examined the expenditure and revenue statement that has been prepared in respect of the operations for 1938, and I must confess that I cannot entirely agree that the out-turn will result

in an actual deficit of \$14,000. On the other hand I am quite prepared to admit that the position is not as rosy as I would have liked it to be, but perhaps that may come in time. If members look at the total expenditure set out in Appendix E they will find that the total expenditure for the year 1938 is \$101,236. As against that the income is \$87,205, resulting in a deficit of \$14,031. The only income of the Post Office Savings Bank is interest on investments, which is put down at \$87,000, and a few petty amounts, but if you examine the expenditure you will find that out of a total of \$101,236, \$14,000 is under the head of personal emoluments which we are now going to vote, and a further \$13,570 representing departmental entries. It seems to me that of the total sum of \$28,000 there is a wrong—and I emphasise the word “wrong”—apportioning of those figures, and while I am not prepared to embark on any lengthy controversy, I suggest that those figures be carefully examined in 1938, because I am particularly anxious to see that the Savings Bank Department is put on a permanent basis and is a paying proposition. I submit that if \$28,000 out of a total expenditure of \$101,000 represents personal emoluments, there must be an adjustment somewhere, which will probably account for a substantial portion, if not all of the deficit.

Mr. F. J. SEAFORD: I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar). Of the \$14,000 deficit members will observe that \$7,000 represents postmasters' salaries. Those postmasters would be there in any case, whether Government runs a Savings Bank or not. I am not prepared to say whether the proportion is correct or not. The fact remains that if Government abolished the Savings Banks it would cause very great inconvenience and hardship to people living in the country who deposit their money at the Post Offices. If the Savings Banks were closed they would have to deposit at the Banks in Georgetown or New Amsterdam. It would be a great pity if Government ever contemplated such a step, and I cannot see that the Savings Banks are really running in competition with the commercial Banks. In my opinion Government is in a position to pay a higher rate of interest than the commercial Banks who expect to make

money out of their transactions. I hope Government will never have any idea of making money out of the poor people who deposit money in the Savings Bank.

Mr. ELEAZAR: There is something in what the Hon. Mr. Seaford has said, but the convenience of the public must be considered. The Post Office Savings Bank does encourage thrift among a certain class of people, and the small amount of money spent to encourage it is well spent.

Mr. JACOB: With regard to the sum of \$87,000 shown in Appendix E as interest on investments, I would like to know what is the amount invested and at what rate of interest. I have a recollection that last year and the year before large surpluses were shown in the Savings Bank account. Perhaps the Treasurer has those figures with him; he might tell us what was the surplus for the last two or three years.

Mr. McDAVID: I have listened with no little surprise to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Seaford, because I remember that in 1935 when I moved a motion here to reduce the rate of interest from 3 per cent. to the present rate of 2½ per cent. I was faced with argument submitted by the hon. member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, of which I think the Hon. Mr. Seaford is Vice-President, urging that it was the wish of the commercial community that the rate of 3 per cent. should be retained, and showing very strong argument why Government should pay a higher rate than that of the commercial Banks, which was at that time 2½ per cent.

It is quite correct, as the hon. member for Georgetown North (Mr. F. J. Seaford) said, that of the deficit of \$14,031, the sum of \$13,570 represents an assessment of overhead charges for postmasters' salaries which goes back into public revenue, and much of that money would have to be expended in any case. The \$7,000 for postmasters' salaries is a special charge on a unit basis for the transactions carried through each Post Office, and of course I cannot urge that it is an absolutely correct assessment. That means, therefore, that the deficit, but for this new move to arrive at the results of



the Bank, would be only something like \$1,000.

In considering the position we have to take into consideration the transactions that took place between 1932 and 1934. During those years there was considerable appreciation of the investments held on behalf of the Savings Bank, and public revenue gained to the extent of no less a sum than \$344,000. That sum of money was taken out of Savings Bank funds and put into general revenue as an extraordinary item of receipt. Had that sum remained in the Post Office Savings Bank it is just possible that it would to-day have been earning income which would have liquidated the deficit now shown. That sum of \$344,000 must certainly be taken into account in arriving at the true position in regard to the Savings Bank. While the principle on which the Bank is going to work is that it should pay its way, I do not think Government can face a situation for a long number of years in which the Bank is working at a deficit.

In your Address, sir, at the opening of the session you pointed out that the matter was under consideration, although Government had no immediate intention of interfering with the rate of interest paid to depositors at the Savings Bank.

The hon. member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) asked what was the sum of money held in investments, and the rate of interest. From the last report of the Colonial Treasurer he would see that the total sum of money held in investments on behalf of the Savings Bank is \$2,546,701. It is a somewhat higher figure at the moment. That money is invested in a variety of securities earning different rates of interest, and it is not possible for me to say what is the average rate, but I suppose it would be between 3 and 4 per cent. The figure I have given is the market value of the investments.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I must ask the Treasurer to bear this in mind. I want Government to watch the time when surplus funds of the Post Office Savings Bank begin to accumulate, because I am hoping to see the day when, in spite of all the fancy entries which are made debiting the Bank with various items, the Bank will show a surplus, and a fund ought to be

created in order to put it on a more satisfactory basis. There are hard times coming again.

Mr. McDAVID: You also indicated in your Address, sir, that a new Savings Bank Bill would be shortly introduced in this Council, and provision will be made for dealing with surplus funds and the creation of a reserve fund.

Mr. JACOB: The point raised by the Hon. Mr. Seaford opens up a very delicate question—that Government is working in competition with the local Banks. Government is providing facilities for the inhabitants of this Colony, and it is continually borrowing money. It is not like the commercial Banks which invest their money, and it would be a very dangerous thing for Government to compare its Savings Bank with the commercial Banks. If Government had money to invest it would be a very different matter. The suggestion that Government is running the Savings Bank in competition with the commercial Banks can only come from certain people. I think some notice should be taken of it. The commercial Banks charge exorbitant interest.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss the rate of interest charged by the commercial Banks.

Mr. JACOB: The matter has been opened. It is not fair to say that Government is running the Savings Bank in competition with the commercial Banks. It opens up a very delicate matter.

Mr. WOOLFORD: For the benefit of the hon. member I recall the time when both Banks established Savings Bank branches in various districts. That was an element of competition, but they soon closed them.

Mr. H. G. SEAFORD: It was not my suggestion that Government should close down the Savings Bank. If Government is giving a higher rate of interest at a loss to the Colony it is unfair competition. As regards the Treasurer's statement that in 1935 the Chamber of Commerce opposed the lowering of the rate, I am glad to hear it. I was a boy then; it was two years ago, and I now see the error of my ways. (laughter).

## PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am sorry I have to take up the time of the Council again in order to make reference to the Bain Gray report on the salaries of unclassified officers, but there are certain anomalies and hardships created by the adoption of some of the recommendations in that report. It will be found that in some of the cases I will cite, what has been referred to by my hon. friend the member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) as a contract by Government has been actually ignored in order to meet the recommendations put forward in the report. I will take item (21)—Drawing Office Assistants—1 at \$672 by \$48 to \$960; 1 at \$240 by \$60 to \$60 to \$480; 1 at \$240—\$1,488—in order to bring to the notice of Government something within my personal knowledge in respect of the re-classification of this item—\$672 by \$48 to \$960. I think that post is referred to as the Senior Drawing Office Assistant of the Department.

The history of the case, briefly put, is as follows: At a time when the late Director of Public Works was rather in a quandary for Drawing Office Assistants the services of this particular officer were employed for sea defence purposes. After he had served in the Sea Defence Department for some time he was drafted into the Public Works Department as the result of the amalgamation of the Sea Defence and the Public Works Departments. It was then arranged, and quite definitely too, that within a certain period—certainly a shorter period than is indicated in the Estimate—the officer would reach his maximum. Under the present arrangement this particular officer will have to serve a period of four years before he reaches the maximum of the post. I may say that that will be twice as long as the arrangement made with the officer concerned. It was a definite arrangement made by Government. I was somewhat diffident to refer to the matter because the case is very well known by the Head of the Department. I have only referred to it in the hope that the position will be remedied.

With regard to item (25), I have made reference to the matter on so many occasions that I am reluctant to deal with it to-day. When the re-classification of

these Office and Stores Assistants was under consideration, the nature and importance of their employment ought to have received greater consideration than it seems to me was done. There are eight of these officers drawing \$288 to \$480. I do not know whether I should be grateful for the slight increase afforded them, because I think the maximum was previously \$300, and it is now to be \$480. I am sure sufficient consideration was not given to the work that is being performed by those officers, otherwise a higher maximum salary would have been fixed. I do not know whether the case I have in mind is sufficiently clear to the Colonial Secretary. I do not know whether he clearly remembers the particular post I have in mind. For his benefit I will say that I am dealing with the Executive Engineers' Stores Assistants in the various districts. We know that they handle large sums of money and are responsible for stores and things of that kind, and it seems to me that Government has been somewhat niggardly in fixing the maximum salary of those posts at \$40 per month.

I have in the past referred to the question of the overseers, and I am sorry to find that although a half-baked promise was made, no consideration has been given to the representations made at the time, which had been made several years. I had hoped that an attempt would have been made to classify those officers in different grades, and in that way a definite policy would have been reached as to the nature of the promotion they would receive from time to time. I think at the present time some of them are known as overseers and others as assistant overseers. I had hoped that as soon as an overseer reached the first class he would automatically have been put on the Fixed Establishment. In that connection I would invite Government's attention to pages 9 and 10 of the Bain Gray Report where it is attempted to lay down the policy of Government in placing officers on the Fixed Establishment. Paragraph 34 of the Report states:—

"... I recommend, therefore, that only those posts which fulfil the conditions stated in paragraph 32, and to which is attached a salary of \$725 (£155) per annum or over should be placed on the permanent establishment."

It seems to me that on their salary scale alone those officers are entitled to

be placed on the Fixed Establishment. Paragraph 32 of the Report states :—

"It is necessary to lay down as far as possible the conditions to be fulfilled before a post is placed on the pensionable establishment. Certain of these appear to be essential. The post must obviously be a full-time one; it must be permanent; it must be included in a staff employed directly by Government; and it must be provided for entirely out of the general revenues of the Colony, exclusive of any specific or temporary form of receipt such as a grant from the Colonial Development Fund or other body, local taxation, fees, etc."

I do not think it can be contended that the post of overseer is not a full-time one, and is not permanent. It also cannot be said that overseers are not directly under Government control. I hope that the position will be re-examined in order to meet out justice to the particular officers concerned.

I have one more observation to make in respect of a very unfortunate case—a transfer made from one department to another. The officer concerned is a Class III. officer who has reached his maximum salary long ago, and is in receipt of a Service Allowance. He has been called upon to perform the duties of a Class II. officer. I know Government's difficulty in the matter. I realise that at the present moment there are no vacancies in the Service. I draw Government's attention to the matter in the hope that as soon as an opportunity presents itself the merits of this officer's case will not be overlooked. The post is a very important one, and without saying too much I think Government would be well advised to give the officer in charge of that particular work the salary attached to the particular post. I cannot suggest that the number of Class II. officers should be increased, unless Government in its wisdom chooses to do so, but if Government considers that advisable in order to give immediate effect to the promotion of this particular officer I would feel that I had done my duty in this matter.

Mr. F. J. SEAFORD : I do not know of the facts stated by the hon. member with regard to the particular officer, but as Chairman of the Sea Defence Board I know he was taken on in that office last year, and I believe it is correct that he was promised certain emoluments at that time. If that is the case I feel that Government can hardly go back on any

promise made to the officer. I think the hon. member said it would take him four years to reach his maximum, but I make it six years. He happens to be in the Department with which I am connected, and I would not like anyone to suffer or receive less than what was promised to him at the time he was engaged. I am sure that is not the wish of Government.

As regards the other point raised by the hon. member, I do not know to whom he referred, but I can see the difficulty if those posts are all filled.

With regard to the overseers I know that some of them do extraordinarily good work in sun and rain, and are on a lower scale than men who are put to sit in an office. These men can never **qualify** for pensions. Those who have **qualified** for their positions deserve rather **better** treatment in some cases than they are getting now. I come into contact with them very often, and I know what work they have to do, and when I speak I do so with all the sympathy I feel.

Mr. CASE (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences) : With regard to the question raised by the hon. member, I wish to point out that I was not here at the time, but I believe the statement made by the hon. member is correct.

The only other question raised by the hon. member was that the clerk at the Public Works yard is at the maximum of Class III. and there are no vacancies.

With regard to the rates fixed under the scheme, I was not here at the time they were gone into, and do not know exactly how they were worked out, but I think I will probably be able to give some information on the subject later.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : This is the first time I have heard of this matter. I have no recollection of any document bearing that information coming before me, but the matter will be looked into and the position adjusted if necessary.

With regard to the Drawing Office Assistants, that was one of the many minor conundrums presented to me by the various departments, and it was a point whether the scale for those clerks should



be \$480, but I did qualify the matter in a note on page 51 of my Report to the following effect :—

“ The employees known as Office and Stores Assistants, of whom there are at present 5 with a fixed rate of \$300 per annum, have been placed in the grade rising to \$480 and included in a group of 9 which contains one post at \$720 and one at \$600. When the present Office and Stores Assistants have reached \$480 the number of posts rising to \$800 should be increased by at least 2. There is an increase on the maximum annual expenditure of this group, a decrease on the cost of the Overseer group, and an increase on the Drawing Office Assistants.”

If matters go on normally, they will probably all reach the maximum at the same time, and I personally would be inclined to say they should all be allowed to go to \$600 if I had any say in the matter. It seems reasonable that they should proceed to the maximum of \$480 first. The note was put there because I did not regard \$480 as the maximum.

With regard to the overseers, I have much sympathy with what has been said, but it is desirable that some policy should be adopted in the matter. The whole tenor of my Report on the pensionable establishment reminds members that individual officers have been put on the pensionable establishment in the past, without regard to any principle, and I do hope that some principle will be adopted, which ought to include the salary level, and these and other posts will get equitable treatment, without regard to any particular post or any particular department.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Although I observe that there is an admission that the salary of the Stores Assistants should in time reach \$600, it seems to me that it is an admission by Government that the particular post is deserving of a salary of \$600, and I cannot follow why the recommendation was not put into effect. I will let the item go through without further discussion, but I make a strong appeal that the matter be further considered and the salary increased to \$600.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The hon. member has left out something, and he does not know it. As far back as 1884, so long as Government employed anyone in a particular post, as soon as he got \$12 per month he was automatically put on the Fixed Establishment. It was realised that when

an officer reached 60 years he was thrown out, and it was not considered fair that an officer who had served Government all his life should be thrown out at the last moment without pension. An officer was therefore put on the Fixed Establishment without even knowing it.

The Committee adjourned at 4 p.m. until 8.30 p.m.

#### EVENING SESSION.

8.30 p.m.—

Mr. LEE, member for Essequibo River, was present.

#### PUBLIC WORKS—ANNUALLY RECURRENT.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I would appreciate it if the Director of Public Works would give me some idea as to the works contemplated to be carried out in Essequibo on Government buildings, and the amount to be voted.

Mr. CASE: The vote for next year is the same as that for this year—\$74,586—for the maintenance and re-conditioning of public buildings. This year \$2,200 has been spent on the Essequibo Coast in re-conditioning buildings. Next year it is proposed to allocate \$10,000 to the re-conditioning of the Suddie Hospital, which is in a rather bad state.

Item 4—Artesian wells and distribution lines, \$2,050.

Mr. LEE: I observe that the hon. member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) has asked certain questions with respect to pipe lines at Uitvlugt. I have been approached by residents in the vicinity to ask Government to extend the pipe lines a distance of not more than 300 rods from the Magistrate's Court. Apart from that there is a school along the road, and the service would be beneficial to the children. The villagers have among themselves subscribed towards the cost of the stands, and are asking Government to extend the pipe lines towards the village.

Dr. SINGH: I brought the matter up in Select Committee and said I was prepared to write the Colonial Secretary to the effect that a verbal promise was made to me by the late Director of Public Works in the presence of the District

Commissioner. I have not done so, but I hope to do so. Apart from that, the people on the lower West Coast find it very difficult to obtain a pure water supply during the dry season. There is a well at Parika, but the flow is very small. At a recent mass meeting which I attended I was requested to ask Government to provide them with a well, and one gentleman, Mr. Hugh, stated that there was a definite promise to that effect when the well-boring programme was instituted. I took the question up last year, and Your Excellency promised to look into the matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: This vote, of course, really deals with maintenance of existing pipe lines, and has nothing to do with new pipe lines, but I allowed members to bring the matter up under this vote. It appears again under Colonial Development Fund.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: With regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh), the position is as he stated, that he made enquiries as to whether Government gave a definite promise through the Director of Public Works, but no record of that was found. The hon. member informed me that he proposed to address Government further on the subject, and as he said, we are awaiting that communication.

On the general question, hon. members will realise that Government is working to a definite programme in regard to these wells, and any amendment might have unfortunate results for the other districts already on the programme. Any request of that kind can only be considered when the present programme is completed.

Dr. SINGH: I am quite satisfied.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 6—Engineering Surveys, \$2,700.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$3,200. This is due to the variation of the programme rather than an actual increase.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 11—Transport \$10,000.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The question was

raised in Select Committee whether information with regard to the revenue received under this sub-head would be made available. I promised at the time to table a question, but unfortunately I have been unable to do so. It was pointed out that most of this money for transport is recoverable in revenue, and I think I am right in saying that the Treasurer promised to give information on the subject. I do not know whether he will insist on a formal question being tabled.

Mr. McDAVID: I have not got the information which the hon. member wants, but as I told him in Select Committee, the item of revenue is under head IV.—22—which stands at \$10,000, the whole of the sum recovered in respect of transport. If, however, the hon. member wants the precise figures I can give him at some more convenient time.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 15—Roads, Rivers, Creeks and Portages, \$213,090.

Mr. LEE: I had occasion to write the Director of Public Works in respect of a culvert on the public road at Fredericksburg, Wakenaam, and his reply was that the proprietors were supposed to do the portion facing the estate. With all due deference to the Director's opinion, I think it is the duty of Government to see that the public has safe conveyance. In my opinion, although I am not an engineer, the culvert is very dangerous because one side which has been repaired by Government seems to have been properly done, while the other side, which the Director says the proprietors must do, is sunk and in a dilapidated condition. Unless Government compels the proprietors to do the side facing the estate it would be a waste of public money, because in time the portion done by Government will subside and Government will then be compelled to repair the whole culvert.

With regard to the overseer in charge of the district, I would like to draw Government's attention to certain facts, and I am suggesting that in the interest of the efficiency of the Department that officer should be transferred to another district, for the reason that he employs, or is permitted to employ relatives under his supervision. This is a case in which

I find that although I made complaints Government has taken no steps to remedy the matter. A letter was sent to me in which it was stated that a certain resident, by profession a mason, (laughter)—I am surprised to hear hon. members laugh; perhaps I take the matter too seriously, (laughter). That man lives on the island and has worked for the Public Works Department and given satisfaction. There was masonry work to be done on the island, but he was not employed to do it. He wrote to me complaining that although he had at all times given satisfaction to the Public Works Department, because of a certain incident between the overseer and himself, in no way connected with any work or the efficiency of any work, he had been told he would not be employed any more. I wrote the Department on the subject, and to my surprise Mr. Allen, on behalf of the Director, replied stating that he would like to know where the large masonry work was being done. I went to the spot and found that there was not much work being done, but that the overseer had sent to Georgetown for his brother who was employed as foreman of the work. Is it in the interest of the efficiency of the Department that that should be done?

I have sent in a statement signed by certain people complaining that things were not being done in a proper manner, and I am asking Government to consider the matter and transfer the overseer to another district. Residents of both islands feel that Government would get better results from the expenditure if the overseer was transferred. If the Director is not satisfied with the remarks I have made I am prepared, if he deposes somebody, to take that person to the island to hear verbal complaints from the residents. If that person is satisfied with the complaints I would urge that it would be in the public interest to transfer the overseer to another district.

Mr. F. J. SEAFORD: I do not rise to grind anyone's axe in regard to this vote. I wish to deal with the roads of the Colony generally, which are in an extraordinarily bad state of disrepair. Towards the end of each year the roads are in this condition, and we hear the same complaint year after year. I do not blame the Public Works Department, because it has

not the funds to do the work. We are spending on maintenance an average of about \$500 per mile on roads with no foundation whatever. We build roads in this Colony on mud, and in places very bad mud, with a trench on each side, so that there is no balance for the road, and we expect the Public Works Department to maintain them at \$500 per mile. The previous Director of Public Works pointed out year after year that it was quite impossible. We were asking him to make bricks without straw, which could not be done. I have travelled on the East and West Coasts and on the East Bank, and I was in Berbice recently. I know that on the East Coast road about \$24,000 is being spent on two miles, and \$48,000 will be spent next year on another four miles. Unless sufficient money is spent on the maintenance of that road, the money we are spending now will be thrown away. That is only six miles of the Colony's roads which, excluding the North West, Mazaruni and Cuyuni districts, consist of about 280 miles. I do not know one strip of that road which is really good to-day. When I was on the Corentyne Coast two months ago and complaints were made against the road there I said it was one of the best roads of the Colony, but they told me that it was as bad as the East Coast road in places.

It seems a great pity that we never have money towards the end of the year to maintain the surface of the roads. A stitch in time saves nine, and if we could do ordinary repair work I feel sure that the actual expenditure on maintenance would be reduced. There is practically nothing being done on the majority of the roads to-day because no funds are available, and at the beginning of the year we will have to spend about ten times the amount that would be spent ordinarily. Therefore I am appealing to Government to increase the vote very substantially. I feel inclined to ask Government to double the amount on the main roads of the Colony. I regard it as investing money and not spending money. That money will save a lot in time to come. Last year and for several years before I realised there was no money, and we had to wait for better times. From your speech, sir, at the opening of the session things seem to be a little better, and I am asking Government to use some of the anticipated surplus on the mainten-



ance of the roads. I would ask Government to make roads if possible, but if that cannot be done I would ask Government to repair those roads we have now and try to keep them in better repair. I am sure the Director of Public Works will agree with me that it is quite impossible to maintain the roads on the amount voted.

Dr. SINGH: On the question of roads I wish to say that Pln. Hague on the West Coast belongs to Government. There is a rising settlement there of about 600 persons. About ten years ago when Hague was supervised by the Department of Lands and Mines representation was made to the late Mr. Mullin, then Commissioner of Lands and Mines, and a promise was made to build a road there. I have seen the correspondence. An effort was made, and I think two miles of roadway was metalled. The remaining portion is just the same. The road is uneven and vehicles can hardly go over it. In fact I do not believe any vehicles go there at all. It is very difficult for pedestrians, and in times of sickness it is very difficult to get the doctor to go there. There was a recent case of illness which resulted in death, and the patient was not seen by the doctor. There was a definite promise by the Department of Lands and Mines to build a road piecemeal. I hope the matter will be considered next year.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to support the remarks of the hon. member for Georgetown North (Mr. F. J. Seaford) and ask Government to double this amount, and when that is done, to allocate some portion of it to be spent on the roads in East Berbice and on the East Bank of the Berbice River, for the simple reason that there is no other mode of transportation at all in Berbice. In other parts of the Colony there is a railway as an alternative mode of travel. As I have said over and over again, the public road in Berbice is just a corrugated sheet at certain times of the year. I am afraid to go up to Springlands now. On the East Bank of Berbice, travelling to Mara, sometimes there is no road at all. If Government cannot find sufficient money to do these roads, there is something else that can be done. The roads of the Colony were never intended to carry the traffic they are carrying now. From what I see in them, those tre-

mendous lorries must be between 10 and 20 tons. (laughter).

Mr. JACOB: Five tons.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not know that it is not ten times five. It is a common thing on the Corentyne road. Government must address itself to the problem of those lorries which damage the roads and bring nothing into the country.

Behind roads I see rivers. I do not know how much money is spent on the rivers, but something should be done for the banks of the rivers. When a river breaks away any portion of its banks Government says it is river defence, and it is not excluded in the sea defence works. For sea defence everybody is taxed, even the man on the river who never sees the sea. I know one village which is almost depopulated. The river is continually breaking its bank, and as the result of that the people are leaving the place because they are told it is river defence which they must pay for themselves. I refer to the village of Edinburgh. I do not think Government can afford to allow villages to be wiped out in that way. Whether the river or the sea is responsible for erosion the work should be done by Government. Two villages on the East Bank and one on the West Bank are in danger of being wiped out.

Mr. JACKSON: I would like to join in the appeal for a larger amount of money to be spent on the roads. It was my intention to remark that I was pleased to see an increase of \$700 on the present year's vote, but that I thought the increase might have been \$70,000, but the hon. member for Georgetown North is a little more hopeful than I, and so he asked that the amount be doubled. When the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) joined in that appeal I expected that he would have asked for a larger amount because he talks in millions. (laughter). I think Government might well consider the absolute necessity of improving the condition of the roads generally in the Colony. I have noticed on the occasions of high tide the water from the river flowing across the public road on the lower West Coast, and particularly on the East Bank of the Essequibo and the West Bank of the Demerara river.

Reference has been made to the fact that while Government regards the sea defence as a colonial question it does not so regard river defences. I think the roads which are swamped from time to time by water flowing over them from the rivers are Government roads and should be maintained by Government. I therefore think it would be very sound policy for Government to make good the river defences and so save the roads. It has been said that the bulk of the roads of the Colony have no foundation. It is painful on a very hot day when vehicles are flying along the roads, to see our roads being blown away in dust, and I think Government might well consider the necessity of obtaining a large loan for the purpose of putting the roads in perfect order. I think the days of burnt earth roads are over, and while the cost will be heavy, if a large loan was obtained Government would save a good deal in maintenance of the roads. I join whole-heartedly in the appeal that consideration be given the matter in order that something might be done to save the Colony's roads and to protect those who have to use them.

On the matter of river defence I, like the hon. member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar), cannot see the reason why river defence should not be made a colonial question, but I am a bit hopeful that Government will take some notice of the river defence, because I understand that the Director of Public Works, by invitation, has been inspecting some of the defences on the West Bank. Possibly, out of the kindness of his heart, he may see his way to make out such a case as to cause Government to take the matter seriously at heart and do the best that can be done for the benefit of the people living in that district.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I endorse what has been said about spending more money on the roads of the Colony, but unless Government takes some definite action in controlling the vehicular traffic passing over that road the experimental work which is being carried out on the East Coast road will prove a failure. I would suggest that Government take a census of all vehicular traffic passing along a certain section of the East Coast road, not necessarily a census of the number of vehicles but a census of their weight. It would give

some idea of the class of vehicles travelling over that road. In addition there has been improvement in speed all over the world. Most of our roads have no foundation, and under the weight and speed of vehicles passing over them they must spread. It is amazing to see the dust that is thrown up by vehicles travelling along the roads at high speed. It is no use putting down reinforced concrete strips on the road unless we study the weight per square inch that it has to bear. It is a fallacy to think that a road will stand up to the heavy traffic without the necessary foundation.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Lest it be thought from my silence that I am not in sympathy with the eloquent appeal of the hon. member for Georgetown North (Mr. F. J. Seaford), I have risen to support the request he has made to Government for an increase of this item in order to improve the condition of our roads. I have spoken on so many occasions about the condition of our roads that I am quite sure if I attempt to say too much on the subject I would be repeating some of the remarks I have made in the past. One thing that has prompted me to speak to-night was the statement made by the hon. member for Georgetown North that he would not ask Government to build roads but to repair them. I should like to say that I would not ask Government to build roads or repair them, but to save the few miles of roadway we have, because there can be no doubt about it that if a serious attempt is not made by Government to save the few miles of roadway we have it will not be very long before we shall have to use canoes in order to paddle our way along.

I appreciate the difficulties with which Government is faced in this matter. I have heard it said that it would be almost impossible for any attempt to be made to borrow a large sum of money, which I am sure will be required in order to put our roads in reasonably good order and condition. As I understand it, the reason for the difficulty in borrowing money is because the work that would be done on those roads would really be covering up arrears of maintenance work which should have been done over a period of years. I respectfully submit that our roads have reached such a state that even the word

"maintenance" would be too good to use with reference to their condition. I venture to suggest that perhaps a very good case can be made out by Government to obtain a sufficient loan in order to re-build each roadway in the Colony. I am not unmindful of the effort Government is making at present in order to spend \$5,000 this year and \$10,000 next year in connection with a strip of about six miles between Georgetown and Buxton. It is undoubtedly some attempt on the part of Government at least to put that stretch of roadway in fairly good order and condition. Whether \$12,000 per mile, which I think was the figure mentioned by my hon. friend on my right (Mr. F. J. Seaford) would be sufficient to do the work contemplated I am not in a position to make any definite statement, but judging from all I have heard it seems to me that even the sum of \$12,000 per mile it is hoped to spend on the six miles of roadway may not be found to be sufficient.

We have heard so much about what is going to be done on those roads that perhaps a little further explanation on the subject from Government's spokesman in reply to this debate would perhaps be of interest to members. I have heard the fear expressed in other places that what is contemplated to be done on this six miles of roadway will not be sufficient. The concrete strip that is proposed to be laid down on the six miles of roadway will by itself appear to be quite sound, but the fear has been expressed that as traffic must on occasions get off the concrete strips, very great strain will be put on the road, and later on it might be found that the money spent in laying down the concrete strips has been thrown away. That leads me to say that it is a pity and a matter of considerable regret that this Government is not in a position to emulate the work that is being done in Georgetown at the present time. The Municipality has a definite road programme which it is endeavouring to follow. It has laid down a programme over a period of years, and it is quite unnecessary, I think, to draw hon. members' attention to the attempt that is being made by the Municipality to put its roads in good order and condition. The few miles of roadway it has improved during the past few years reflect not only the ability of those responsible for the work, but a genuine desire on the part of

the Municipality to provide the City with good roads.

There can also be no doubt that building roads as the Municipality has done is more in the nature of an investment. I am sure the maintenance of those roads has been very small indeed, and I venture to suggest that it will continue to be small. In that case it can be argued that the Municipality, instead of spending money on its roads, has actually invested the money. What is \$500 per mile for the maintenance of the roads of the Colony? When the truth is known, perhaps it is even less than that. The item refers to roads and bridges, and I am tempted to ask what was the amount of money spent on the 66 miles of roadway between Georgetown and Rosignol in the last few years? Those who travel on the East Coast regularly will tell you the number of occasions on which men are seen repairing bridges and not roads, and if the truth were known the average of \$500 per mile would be found to be only a calculation on the figures submitted. I can hardly think that even \$500 per mile is spent, particularly on the East Coast road. I earnestly join those members who have spoken in asking Government to face the situation, not as it exists to-day, but as it has existed during the past years, and make a serious attempt to improve the roads of the Colony.

Mr. JACOB: In Select Committee this question was discussed at very great length, and one hon. member was very strong in his criticisms of some of the methods adopted at the present time in re-building roads. I should like to say one or two things about that so that they may be on record. It has been suggested that the experiment that is being carried out on the East Coast is not being properly done, but one responsible officer of the Public Works Department assured the Select Committee that everything possible would be done to see that the experiment is properly carried out, and that we will have a very good road when he is finished with it. I hope that will be so, because we have heard from responsible members that all these years we have not been building or repairing roads, but just playing with the situation. If it is proposed now to re-build or to make six miles of permanent road on the East



Coast I do hope that when the work is finished the road will be permanent indeed. I referred to the concrete strips on the Sea Wall and pointed out that it was very difficult to keep a car on the strips. I was told that, being a narrow road, some faults were found after the road was built, and that from the experience gained the East Coast road would be properly built. I have just mentioned that to give those responsible some idea of what we are thinking, and that we trust when the road is completed it will be a very good and lasting road.

I would like to say something about the North West District. I observe that there is provision only for \$4,570, similar to what was provided last year. When it is compared with what is provided for other districts it appears to me to be very small indeed. That amount is probably sufficient to maintain existing roads there, but I raised the point with the Director that the new road built at the Barima-Barama from Colonial Development funds is in a very bad state of disrepair, with the bridges fallen down, and that it was necessary in order to provide travelling facilities there for at least 2,500 people in the district, that something be done to that road. I was given an undertaking, so to speak, that something would be done in respect of that road. When it is considered that the inhabitants of that district do not get a fair share of the money expended on roads—they use the rivers more or less—I think it is essential that prior consideration be given to that road which is going from bad to worse, and it should be attended to as promptly as possible. On account of the Public Works Department not having a responsible officer there the matter was over looked, but I think it has been drawn very forcibly to the attention of the Department. I urge that at least \$1,000 should be allocated to that stretch of road so as to give the taxpayers there some facilities for travelling and transporting their goods to the interior, which is a very expensive item.

Mr. CASE: With your permission, sir, I will deal first with the question of roads. I do not pretend to be an expert on roads, although I have known the roads of the Colony for a period of over 20 years. I am sure that hon. members will realise

that it is impossible to build roads to withstand the present conditions in the Colony without a really good road-building material. Burnt earth is utterly unsuitable. In dry weather it is blown over the land, and in wet weather it is churned into mud. In consequence the money which was provided last year has not proved quite sufficient. Before I go into the question of road construction I would like to say that I unhesitatingly endorse the views of hon. members, that a law should be introduced to reduce the weight of vehicles and also to control their speed. The existing legislation permits vehicles of 5 tons to travel at 30 miles per hour in certain parts of the Colony. I am of the opinion that the weight of vehicles should not be more than 50 cwt., and the speed not more than 20 miles per hour on burnt earth roads. I have talked the matter over with the Executive Engineer at headquarters who is responsible for the roads, and after considering all the factors involved I am convinced that the proposals for building the concrete strip road on the East Coast are sound. As hon. members are aware, the strips now being laid down are not the same as those on the Sea Wall or at Lilliendall, which have stood 3½ years with practically no maintenance cost. The new type is very much better. In the first place the strips are 2 ft. 9 ins. wide instead of 2 ft., which means that vehicles do not have to come off so often. The strips are of 50 ft. length and reinforced with steel rods. That means that each strip is in fact an independent beam, and if holes develop in the road those beams will carry the traffic across them until an opportunity arises to put the material back under them.

I would like to mention that included in this year's estimate is a sum of \$5,000 for experiments with clay from the Demerara river, burnt under scientific conditions. At the present time earth which is burnt in the old-fashioned way is hard in some parts and soft in others. It is hoped that when the clay is burnt under conditions allowing proper temperature it will result as hard as fire-brick, and that it will help in building roads at a reduced cost, which should be considerably less than stone. A sample of mud dredged from the Demerara river was sent to London and tested by the Building

Research Department, and the results were very satisfactory indeed. I would like to say for myself that I am strongly opposed to spending more money on maintenance next year if maintenance means patching of existing burnt earth roads. It is surely no use continuing to spend money patching the surfaces of roads which on the East Coast and some other places are undoubtedly unsuitable for modern traffic conditions. I have figures before me with regard to the section of road between Georgetown and Abary, a distance of 38 miles. In 1933 \$17,787 was spent on that section, an average of \$467 per mile. The expenditure this year will be approximately \$27,000, an average of \$700 per mile. That is only the average. At some points the amount is very small, but in the Buxton-Felicity section the maximum maintenance is about \$2,580 per mile. Unless a more permanent form of road construction, such as concrete strips, is used I feel that the maintenance cost will continue to rise. Money should be spent on an improved type of roads.

One hon. member has drawn attention to the fact that it is proposed to vote \$48,000 for continuing the concrete strip road on the East Coast this year. If that is done I would like to mention that what has been done this year and what is hoped to be done next year will save a considerable amount of maintenance money, because that section has been very heavy to maintain, and that money can be used for improving other parts.

There appeared to be some misunderstanding in Select Committee regarding the strip road under construction between Plaisance and Buxton. There is no intention to leave the existing road between the strips in a bad state of repair. The necessary repairs are already in hand where strips are being constructed.

Reference was made to the Hague road by the hon. member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh). A short time ago I had a look at the road and I do not think it is very much worse than a good many others, but it is under repair at the present time.

The hon. member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) referred to the state of one of

the paal-offs on the road at Wakenaam. The responsibility for its repair is on the owner, the notice has been served on him that if he does not do it within a fixed period the work will be carried out and he will be charged with the cost.

The hon. member for Essequibo River also referred at considerable length to the overseer on the Coast. One of the points he made was that there were two relatives of the overseer working in the district. In connection with that point, one has already been removed, and arrangements have been made for the removal of the other. Since my appointment as Director I have had to waste a very considerable amount of time enquiring into complaints made by the hon. member, either through the Colonial Secretary or direct to me. I sent an engineer, who did not know the overseer at all, to make enquiries. He reported to me that in his opinion there was no foundation whatever for the charge, and no one could be found to support it. I can give an example of a complaint which I personally investigated. One of the complaints made to me by the hon. member was that foundations at the overseer's house had been constructed with Government bricks purchased from the proprietor of Pln. Marionville. I went into the matter very carefully and found that we have never purchased any bricks. The owner of the plantation was asked if he had sold any bricks and he said "No."

Another complaint made was that a contract for sea defence work had been given to one of the drivers whose name was mentioned. I searched through the books and found that no such contract was ever made. I cannot find any reason for the complaints. I spent two days there and I came to the conclusion that the overseer was hard-working, trustworthy and reliable, and I feel that I must defend him in the best possible way, as he is not here to defend himself.

Reference was made to the fact that the river was overflowing and damaging the road. As far as the Sea Defence Board is concerned its duties are defined by law which sets out certain districts in which the Board is responsible for sea defences. The defences referred to are outside those districts, and therefore the Board is not empowered to spend money on them.

With reference to the river water coming over at Edinburgh, I visited the village and found that the water was coming over very badly. I am having a survey made now and will report to Government on the matter.

The hon. member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) made reference to the roads in that district. I have not seen them myself, nor has the Executive Engineer, but I can assure him that we will inspect them very shortly.

Mr. LEE: With respect to the statement made by the Director of Public Works about an investigation being carried out by the engineer, I think it is a case of having a case with Cæsar being tried by Caesar. If an impartial investigation is carried out by Government I would be prepared to be present, and the complainant, who was virtually the foreman at the time, will state his case and prove it.

Mr. F. J. SEAFORD: I would like to endorse the remarks of the Director and the hon. member for Western Essequibo (Mr. Seymour) as regards motor traffic regulations. It is perfectly correct that owing to the weight and speed of the buses and lorries it is impossible to maintain the roads. I brought the question up rather forcibly in Select Committee and the Chairman made a promise that the matter would be gone into. I recommend that Government should go into the matter immediately, and although it is impossible to take the buses and lorries off the road now, as it would be very hard on the owners, Government might go into the question of refusing to issue licences for buses and lorries above a certain size. I urge that Government take the matter up early.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Nihill): I am not surprised at the hon. member for Georgetown North (Mr. F. J. Seaford) having a somewhat vague recollection that there is a Road Traffic Committee in existence, because it is rather a long time since it has been appointed, and so far its report has not been published. I would like to say that the Committee has sat many times and has reviewed the whole traffic problem in this Colony. It has paid a great deal of attention to the

question of the weight of motor vehicles and the relation of weight to road damage, and a great number of views have been put forward. I have even heard the view expressed that the old-fashioned type of bullock cart with non-pneumatic tyres does more harm to the roads than the heaviest motor vehicle used. It may be a wrong view, but it is the view which has been put forward to the Committee, and not by a layman. That is one view and, of course, there are other views, and I am not attempting in any way to forecast what the recommendations on any particular point will be. I have only intervened to say that that matter is under consideration by the Road Traffic Committee and will be embodied in the report of the Committee, which I hope—I hope I am not too sanguine—will be ready for publication very shortly.

Mr. F. J. SEAFORD: I had not forgotten, because I seem to have heard of three Committees sitting for the last three years, and I happen to be a member of two of them.

Mr. WALCOTT: I would like to know whether the regulations will also apply to lorries owned by Government, because they are the real serious offenders. (laughter).

Item put, and agreed to.

#### QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am almost afraid to say anything lest I provoke discussion, but I must make one remark, and that is that I hope Government will seriously try to find a better place for the boys to attend. I do not like the idea of the College being practically closed to a large number of boys because there is no space. For five or six years Government has been unable to find space in the whole of this City to put up a new building for Queen's College. We want a new College.

Mr. F. J. SEAFORD: It is a matter of very great regret to me that I do not see on this estimate any sum of money for a new building for Queen's College. (Hear, hear). The question has been considered year after year by Government, and there have been olive branches held out, but we never get beyond that. Anyone who goes to Queen's College when the



classes are in progress will realise what the position is to-day. The building was formerly an orphan asylum, and I do not know of any architect who can convert it into a secondary school. The building is totally unsuitable for a college. To go from one class-room into another one has to pass through other class-rooms, and it is well known that anyone passing through a class-room distracts the attention of the students. The result is that the work done at the College is not what it should be. Not only are the rooms badly situated, but their condition is disgraceful. I am satisfied that the building at the back of the College cannot be repaired. To do so would cost as much as to rebuild the whole place. The main building itself is in a bad condition. If anyone asked any of the Masters he would tell you that the boys cannot get the tuition that is necessary in that building as it is to-day. It is rather hard on the Masters who are doing everything they possibly can for the boys, but they are up against difficulties which they cannot overcome. I thought a year ago, or even six months ago, that we had reached the turning point. A site was chosen, the playground removed, and I felt we would at last have a College which would have done credit to the Colony and the boys, but once again we were disappointed. I appeal to Government that if it can possibly see its way to do so in the near future, it should reconsider the question.

Mr. JACOB: I share the hope that sooner or later we will have a suitable building in which to house Queen's College. There are, however, certain aspects of the question which I should like to make clear. The Board of Governors—not an ordinary Board—published about 18 months ago that there was limited accommodation in the College, and that it was not possible to cater for all the students who would apply for admission. As a matter of fact they went further and reduced the age limit to  $11\frac{1}{2}$  years. That was a retrograde step—reducing the age limit at so short a notice. I pointed that out last year and the year before, but I see the same conditions existing. What is the position now? In the present building there is accommodation for 260 pupils. A few days ago there were only 236 pupils—in the Preparatory class 7; Form I, 22; Form II, 34; Form III, 36; Form IVb, 21; Form IVa, 29;

Form Va, 30; Form V, 32; Form VI, 25. Apart from the loss of revenue, the inconvenience is far worse, and I maintain that if in the first instance the Board of Governors had any fear that there would not be accommodation for all the pupils who would apply, immediately as they found out that they had accommodation steps should have been taken to notify the public in the same way as they were notified that there would not be accommodation, so that the College would have been filled. Instead we are running the institution without its full complement, while there are several dozens of children who would have liked to get into the College, but who did not apply because they feared that the institution was congested and they would not have gained admission. That is a serious state of affairs. While it is desirable not to have more than 260 pupils in the College I think the point could have been stretched so as to accommodate a little more than 260. But the school continues to have a lesser number all the time. It would be interesting to know what was the number last year. Perhaps Government will tell us that.

Apart from the question of accommodation, I do not want to say too much against the College which has done extremely well recently in giving greater education to the youths of the Colony, but if you look at the results of the Junior examination you will find that they have not been very satisfactory. It is true that the results of the Senior examination are satisfactory, but as regards the Junior examinations I do not think the results have been satisfactory for quite a long time. There has been some amount of dissatisfaction in the College which needs attention now if we are to progress. Attention should be given to those matters so that when the new building is erected there will be a foundation for giving the children of the Colony the kind of education that is required. I am not going to suggest what should be done; Government is competent to do that.

I should like to raise the general question that the curriculum in regard to secondary education should be changed to some extent. I mentioned the matter in Select Committee and suggested that Hindi should be included in the school curriculum at Queen's College. If that is

done it will be necessary to employ another Master, and I am afraid that is going to be the chief objection to it. My point is that Hindi should be included in the curriculum so that those who would like to be qualified in that language would have an opportunity to do so. It is a live language which is spoken by at least 200 millions of people, and sooner or later I hope it will supersede the English language. I think that would be the best thing for the world as a whole. (laughter). What I cannot understand is why should we be forced to learn French? At the present time a student cannot matriculate unless he passes in one foreign language together with Latin, and all the students choose French. I say it would be better and more convenient, to some of us at least, to learn Hindi, but there is no opportunity to do so now. All I am asking for is an opportunity, Hindi is included in the syllabuses in England and other parts of the world, and it ought to be included in the curriculum in a Colony like this in which 42 per cent. of the population are East Indians, the majority of whom would certainly like to qualify in that language so as to be able to speak it thoroughly. The matter is well worthy of consideration. I do not think it would cost Government money to start the teaching of Hindi if later on it is thought that part of the community should get some benefit out of it. I anticipate heaps of objections to this matter, but in spite of the objections I anticipate it has been the feeling, and my feeling for quite a long time, that an opportunity should be afforded the East Indians in this Colony to learn Hindi so as to be able to speak a language which is live and which I hope will go along with the English language.

I think the age limit of 11½ years should be revised and should not be enforced until the regulations governing the Primary Scholarship are revised. It is true that boys who have gained the Government County Scholarship, and who will be over 11½ years, will be admitted to Queen's College, but those who have not won are debarred to some extent. I know I will be told that as long as a candidate obtains a certain percentage of marks he would be allowed to enter, but boys should not be debarred from entering the best educational institution in the Colony by regulations which are ill-advised and ill-timed.

Mr. LEE: I asked Government to adopt certain principles, and I hope Government will consider them. I understand that certain Masters at Queen's College coach students in the evening for the British Guiana Scholarship. There may be certain people who can afford to send their boys to those evening classes, and it is unfair to other boys who are also competing for the Scholarship, whose parents cannot afford to pay for evening lessons. I feel that in a competitive examination like that which is open to every student who has reached a certain standard, candidates should have the same amount of tuition and the same opportunities. I am asking Government to adopt the principle that Masters of the College should not be permitted to hold evening classes for students.

In view of what I have heard with regard to the Mitchell Scholarship I am asking whether Government will not see its way to award three other scholarships, two for boys and one for girls. The cost would be only free tuition at Queen's College, the Bishop's High School, or some other recognised school.

With regard to the buildings, I heartily endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Georgetown North (Mr. F. J. Seaford). It was admitted over a year ago that it was necessary for the Government to provide larger accommodation for the students at Queen's College, and I do urge that steps be taken immediately to provide a new building and abandon the restrictions on admission to the institution. I would also suggest that in the new building provision should be made for a science department in order that other secondary schools may be privileged to send their students to join the science classes. It is an admitted fact that after doing a certain amount of elementary science a student must study advanced science in order to grasp and understand the practical part, and I am asking Government to permit students from other secondary schools to join the advanced classes at Queen's College.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I move that the question be now put, sir, and I suggest that you put the whole page to the vote.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Government is fully aware of the importance

of re-organising and re-establishing Queen's College in better surroundings. A site has been chosen, plans prepared and the matter is being pursued. With regard to the position at the moment I think hon. members are inclined to exaggerate the amount of hardship that actually exists. There were 30 new boys admitted to the College this year. Those boys came within the age-limit, or were just outside it as scholarship candidates. The age-limit is 11 years 9 months, and boys are admitted in September who were under 11 years in the previous January. In the case of boys who have entered for the Government County Scholarship the age-limit is relaxed further, and the boy who makes a good showing in that examination is admitted to the College even if he is above that age. In other words, boys of the proper age for entering secondary schools are normally admitted to the College.

There is still room in the College, as one hon. member has said, but all the accommodation is at the bottom of the school for the junior boys, which of course, from an educational point of view—quite apart from any question of building or staff—is the best place for boys to enter. I do hope that none of the parents concerned are deterred in any way by the existence of an examination to enter the College, because while an examination is necessary it is not an examination which is intended to deter boys from entering the College, but merely for the purpose of classification and the guidance of the staff in regard to the boys coming into the College. If the existence of the examination has deterred any boys, it is the wish of Government, the Board of Governors and all concerned that it should not be interpreted in that way, and we are most anxious that every boy of the proper age should be admitted to the College.

The actual numbers have gone up slightly since the hon. member asked his questions. Four boys have joined or rejoined the College, bringing the total up to 240 boys.

Hon. members raised two questions during the discussion in Select Committee which are being referred to the Board of Governors. One was the question of teaching Hindi in the College and the

other was a matter of policy, whether the staff should give private tuition to scholarship candidates. Personally, and I think I can speak for the Board of Governors, we are not great believers in private tuition for scholarship students, but it does exist and it is for the Governors to consider what conditions should be attached, so that when it is done it should be under the best possible circumstances. The matter will be referred to the Board of Governors for their advice before an answer is given to the questions of the hon. member.

The question of a Foundation to replace the Mitchell Foundation is a matter which will be given further consideration by the Education Committee.

I would like to assure the Council and the public that it is important that boys should enter the College at the proper age, and there are still vacancies for boys under the age-limit to enter the College in the Preparatory Form and in the First Form, *i.e.*, at the beginning of the School curriculum.

Mr. F. J. SEAFORD: With regard to the remark of the hon. member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) about the dissatisfaction which was felt in regard to the Junior examination results, I think they are rather a credit to Queen's College. Boys do not do well as soon as they enter the College, but later on. Might that not be due to a certain amount of cramming before they enter the College? There is a Preparatory Class at Queen's College, but not so many boys take advantage of it. The training in that class is conducive to better work in the College itself, and to better results at the Junior examination.

Mr. JACOB: I did not say there was dissatisfaction. I said that the results of the Junior examination were not quite satisfactory.

Mr. SEAFORD: I accept that.

Item (d)—7 Assistant Masters—4 at \$2,160 by \$120 to \$2,520; 2 at \$2,040 each; 1 at \$1,560 by \$72 to \$2,040—\$15,505.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$15,931 in order to provide for additional



expenditure. A vacancy arose and it was anticipated that an appointment might have been made at the minimum of the scale, but that was not possible.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

#### SEA DEFENCES.

Item 1—Maintenance, \$48,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$50,500 in order to absorb the item of \$2,500 provided under sub-head 4—Maintenance of Sea Defences at Onderneeming.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 3—New construction and replacement works—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item (vii)—Plant, \$20,000.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 4—Maintenance of Sea Defences at Onderneeming, \$2,500.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be deleted.

Question put, and agreed to.

#### SUPREME COURT.

Item 4—Expenses of Jurors, \$3,750.

Mr. SEYMOUR: I have already approached the Attorney-General in connection with the travelling of jurors in the Pomeroon river, Wakenaam and other places. It is impossible to get jurors to attend court at Suddie on the allowance given. They are only allowed \$2, and they have to travel to the Moruca mouth, thence by launch to Charity. The buses leave Charity early in the morning, and even then they would not reach court in time. It means that they have to spend a day and a half in travelling each way, and have to provide themselves with rations. I am therefore inclined to agree with the jurors' suggestion that they be struck off the list altogether rather than be involved in out-of-pocket expenses. They realise that they have a duty to perform as citizens, but they are against having to foot the

bill. Some arrangement should be made in order to facilitate travelling, and the accommodation at Colony House, Suddie, requires looking after.

Mr. LEE: The hon. member for Western Essequibo (Mr. Seymour) and I approached the Registrar some time during the year and the Registrar showed us regulations which did not permit of the payment of travelling expenses. There were two very hard cases in which men had to charter a boat to Wakenaam, remain there overnight and take the steamer the next day for Suddie. For those two days they were paid no travelling expenses. They contend that if they are not going to be paid travelling expenses or subsistence allowances they would like to be taken off the list of jurors.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It seems to me that the Registrar's Office is understaffed. When the late Registrar was in office and the present Registrar was Deputy Registrar there was also a third senior officer. The officer who was next to him has been removed, and he is carrying the weight of three men. He is too modest to ask for an assistant, but it is felt that provision should be made for another officer.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I think we are all in sympathy with the representations made by the two previous speakers regarding out-of-pocket expenses of jurors. I know that perhaps I will be treading on dangerous ground because it is a very debatable point, but it seems to me that the time is overdue for the whole position to be re-examined, because there can be no doubt that the recent change in the system as the result of which jurors do not receive remuneration for attendance at court has not given universal satisfaction. It must be borne in mind that under our present jury system there is a certain class of men who are bound to attend court because they are summoned. In some cases their names appear on the list whether they want or not. A large number of jurors are of the skilled labourer type, and some of them earn daily wages. My attention has been drawn to the fact that at the last session certain jurors had to forego their wages. That was bad enough, but the position was even worse when they attended one day to be told that they were not required that day; they must return on the Friday. In one

particular case a poor man had to go without earning any money during that week. I am not advocating that jurors should be paid in the way they were paid in the past, but I do urge that the whole position should be re-examined. I have no solution to offer at the moment, but later on I may be able to offer some suggestion.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not think I need say very much on this subject. The remuneration of jurors is at present governed by Ordinance 27 of 1931, which introduces a new Schedule to the Principal Ordinance, the Criminal Law Procedure Ordinance, and in that Schedule different rates are set out for the different judicial districts of the Colony. I am not satisfied myself that, particularly in the case of Essequibo, the rates therein set out are in every way fitted to the actual situation that exists, and I have very great sympathy with the representations which the hon. members for that Division have put forward. I have the revision of the Schedule under consideration. It is in an advanced state of preparation, and I hope to be able to put it forward to Government before long in the form of a draft Bill. The hon. members who have made those representations are aware that nothing can be done without alteration of

the law, and I think they are also aware that the matter is not a very simple one. Certainly the principle which we must not lose sight of is this: that jury service is an obligation on the citizen, and it may be an inconvenient obligation; in fact it is never anything else but an obligation and a duty, and we must not lose sight of the principle that payment for that duty or obligation, which should be performed cheerfully by the good citizen, is not to be encouraged. But while we must not overlook that principle we must also be fair to the jurymen and see that his out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed. I think as regards Georgetown, and possibly Berbice as well, the situation can be described as fairly satisfactory, but I think that Essequibo—and I know that Essequibo has its special grievances not only with regard to jury service—is in a slightly different position to other divisions of the Colony, and I do hope I shall be able to put forward shortly for the consideration of Government a revised schedule which will help to meet the kind of grievances which I know do exist at the moment.

The Council resumed and adjourned until the following day at 10.30 o'clock.