

DEBATES

IN THE

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF CEYLON,

On Friday, July 24, 1925.

Pursuant to adjournment the Honourable the Members of the Legislative Council met at the Council Chamber at 2.30 P.M. this day.

PRESENT :

- THE HONOURABLE COLONEL H. W. HIGGINSON, C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C., OFFICER COMMANDING THE TROOPS, *Presiding Member*.
- THE HONOURABLE MR. E. B. ALEXANDER, C.M.G., ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY.
- THE HONOURABLE MR. L. H. ELPHINSTONE, K.C., ATTORNEY-GENERAL.
- THE HONOURABLE MR. H. W. CODRINGTON, ACTING CONTROLLER OF REVENUE.
- THE HONOURABLE MR. W. W. WOODS, TREASURER.
- THE HONOURABLE MR. F. A. STOCKDALE, C.B.E., DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE.
- THE HONOURABLE SIR PONNAMBALAM RAMANATHAN, KT., K.C., C.M.G. (NORTHERN PROVINCE, NORTHERN DIVISION).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. L. MACRAE, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION.
- THE HONOURABLE MR. T. Y. WRIGHT (EUROPEAN RURAL MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. H. A. LOOS (NOMINATED UNOFFICIAL MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. W. DURAISWAMY (NORTHERN PROVINCE, WESTERN DIVISION).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. E. W. PERERA (KALUTARA REVENUE DISTRICT).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. E. R. TAMBIMUTTU (BATTICALOA REVENUE DISTRICT).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. A. C. G. WIJYEKOON (NOMINATED UNOFFICIAL MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. E. J. HAYWARD, C.B.E., V.D. (COMMERCIAL MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. W. L. KINDERSLEY, GOVERNMENT AGENT, CENTRAL PROVINCE.
- THE HONOURABLE MR. C. W. W. KANNANGARA (SOUTHERN PROVINCE, WESTERN DIVISION).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. N. J. MARTIN (SECOND BURGHER MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. J. STRACHAN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.
- THE HONOURABLE MR. W. T. SOUTHORN, PRINCIPAL COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS.
- THE HONOURABLE MR. K. BALASINGHAM (NOMINATED UNOFFICIAL MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE DR. J. F. E. BRIDGER, PRINCIPAL CIVIL MEDICAL OFFICER.

- THE HONOURABLE MR. A. CANAGARATNAM (NORTHERN PROVINCE, SOUTHERN DIVISION).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. VICTOR COREA (COLOMBO TOWN, NORTH).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. C. H. Z. FERNANDO (NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCE, WESTERN DIVISION).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. H. R. FREEMAN (NORTH-CENTRAL PROVINCE).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. T. B. JAYAH (THIRD MUSLIM MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. D. B. JAYATILAKA (COLOMBO DISTRICT).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. H. M. MACAN MARKAR (FIRST MUSLIM MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. G. E. MADAWALA (NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCE, EASTERN DIVISION).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. A. MAHADEVA (WESTERN PROVINCE, CEYLON TAMIL).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. A. F. MOLAMURE (KEGALLA REVENUE DISTRICT).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. A. H. E. MOLAMURE (RATNAPURA REVENUE DISTRICT).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. F. A. OBEYESEKERE (SOUTHERN PROVINCE, CENTRAL DIVISION).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. I. X. PEREIRA (FIRST INDIAN MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. S. RAJARATNAM (NORTHERN PROVINCE, CENTRAL DIVISION).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. D. S. SENANAYAKE (NEGOMBO DISTRICT).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. M. M. SUBRAMANIAM (TRINCOMALEE REVENUE DISTRICT).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. G. A. H. WILLE (FIRST BURGHES MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE SIR J. THOMSON BROOM, KT. (EUROPEAN URBAN MEMBER).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. W. A. DE SILVA (CENTRAL PROVINCE, URBAN).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. P. B. RAMBUKWELLE (CENTRAL PROVINCE, RURAL).
- THE HONOURABLE MR. T. M. SABA RUTNAM (NORTHERN PROVINCE, EASTERN DIVISION).

MR. J. A. MAYBIN, *Clerk to the Council.*

Papers laid.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY :—I lay on the table, Sir, the following paper :—

List of officers appointed to Class III. of the Clerical Service during the last three years.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS.

Certificates of Quiet Possession.

THE HON. MR. H. R. FREEMAN (North-Central Province) :—I give notice, Sir, of the following question :—

Arising out of the debate on July 23, will the Government be pleased to say how many certificates of quiet possession are shown in the certificate register in the Kurunegala Kachcheri as having been issued between the years 1890 and 1905 to people who may be fairly described as capitalists, and what is the total acreage ?

Are not some of the certificates for lands from 100 to 300 acres in extent ?

Buffaloes run over on the Railway.

THE HON. MR. H. R. FREEMAN (North-Central Province) :—I give notice, Sir, of the following question :—

Arising out of the debate on July 23, will the Government be pleased to say how many buffaloes have been reported run over on the Maho-Batticaloa Railway since its opening to Kekirawa?

Is not this described as a food production railway, and do not the trains run during daylight, and is there need for hurry in the jungle, or could drivers be instructed to pull up for buffaloes seen lying on the line, and to go slower round curves?

The North-Central Province.

THE HON. MR. H. R. FREEMAN (North-Central Province) :—I also give notice, Sir, of the following questions :—

(a) Will the Government be pleased to say whether the statements in the Administration Report of the North-Central Province for 1924, that the Province experienced a good year, and that it was generally prosperous, are reasonably probable, in view of a report dated January 1, 1925, to the Provincial Surgeon on villages inspected by a Medical Officer, and of a report made on or about March 27 on villages inspected by another Medical Officer?

(b) Will the Government be pleased to read out the first medical report to this Council?

(c) Does the second report attribute the condition of the villages to want of food supply and want of suitable clothing?

(d) Are fine grain, vegetables, and clothing ordinarily obtainable through chenas in the dry zone?

(e) Is there any probable connection between the food state and empty barns referred to in these reports, and the mortality, which the writer of the Administration Report describes as extraordinarily high?

(f) Can the seven persons referred to in the paragraph on the profits of chenaing be named? Is it a fact or is it not a fact that most of the kurakkan barns in what is known as the "settled" area in Nuwarakulawiya were empty in 1924?

Dismissal of a Sub-Overseer.

THE HON. MR. C. E. VICTOR COREA (Colombo Town, North) :—I give notice, Sir, of the following question :—

Will the Government be pleased to table the papers connected with the dismissal of Sub-Overseer Godagama Kuruppu Don Lewis of the Badulla Jail, and the order not to re-employ him in any Government Department?

Criminal and Civil Courts, Trincomalee.

THE HON. MR. M. M. SUBRAMANIAM (Trincomalee Revenue District) :—I give notice, Sir, of the following question :—

In view of the marked increase of work in the criminal and civil courts in Trincomalee, and in consideration of the growing importance of the town and the desirability of the revenue officers devoting more time and attention to the needs and development of the district, will the Government be pleased to relieve the Assistant Government Agent and his Office Assistant of their judicial duties and appoint a senior officer unconnected with revenue duties to attend exclusively to judicial work?

Village Tribunals in Trincomalee Local Board Area.

THE HON. MR. M. M. SUBRAMANIAM (Trincomalee Revenue District) :—I also give notice, Sir, of the following question :—

In view of the importance of the town, will the Government be pleased to abolish the Village Tribunals exercising jurisdiction over the Local Board area of the town of Trincomalee?

QUESTIONS.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY :—The replies to questions Nos. 83, 90, and 124 are ready. The replies to the remaining questions are not yet ready.

Recruits for the Subordinate Clerical Service.

THE HON. MR. E. R. TAMBIMUTTU (Batticaloa Revenue District) :—I rise, Sir, to ask—Will the Government be pleased to furnish a list of all persons appointed to the Subordinate Clerical Service by the Heads of Public Departments, both Central and Provincial, in the Island, excluding the Customs and the Railway, during the last three years, showing age, race, and educational qualifications at the time of appointment ?

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY :—A statement giving the information desired by the Honourable Member is laid on the table.

Post-mortem on the Body of an Indian Muslim.

In the absence of the Hon. Mr. S. R. Mohamed Sultan (Second Indian Member), the Hon. Mr. H. M. Maçan Markar (First Muslim Member) asked—(1) Is the Government aware that a post-mortem examination was held at Kalutara on March 14, 1925, on an Indian Muslim body in spite of the concessions granted to the Muslims in Ceylon ? (2) Was the body refused burial in spite of the earnest appeals of all Muslims of the town ? (3) Was the Government aware that such indiscreet action on the part of the authorities concerned very nearly culminated in serious disturbances ? (4) What steps, if any, has the Government taken or does it propose to take to prevent a recurrence of such actions ?

THE HON. DR. J. F. E. BRIDGER (Principal Civil Medical Officer) :—(1) Government is advised that a very limited examination was made to enable a specimen to be taken for bacteriological diagnosis. The results of this examination were positive for plague, and thus showed the necessity for it in the interests of the community. This did not conflict with concessions granted to Muslims.

(2) Government is advised that the body was not refused for burial—no appeal was made by the Muslims of the town in this connection.

(3) The answer is in the negative. The Government is informed there was no dispute, and no question of any serious disturbance or, indeed, of any disturbance at all.

(4) It is not the practice to hold any post-mortems on Muslims, apart from examinations ordered by judicial authorities, except in suspected cases of dangerous infectious diseases where the interests of the community as a whole necessitate investigation for diagnostic purposes, and in such cases only a very limited examination is made. Under these circumstances Government does not consider any action necessary.

Increments and Promotions to Officers of Excise Department.

THE HON. MR. M. M. SUBRAMANIAM (Trincomalee Revenue District):—I rise, Sir, to ask—Will the Government be pleased to state—(a) Whether complaints have been received after 1920 from officers of the Excise Department *re* increment to their salaries and promotions to higher ranks? (b) How many Inspectors in the said Department did stagnate on the same salary for a considerable period for want of an incremental scale of salaries? (c) What relief was granted to them? (d) Will the Government be pleased to inquire into their grievances and grant suitable redress?

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY:—In connection with the transfer of Excise Inspectors to the new salary scale recommended by the Salaries Commission, representations were received in 1921-22 that a period of stagnation prior to the grant of an incremental scale to these officers in 1919 should be taken into account. These representations received the careful consideration of the Salaries Revision Committee and of Government, and it was finally decided to improve the immediate and future salaries of these officers by placing all grades of Inspectors on a continuous time scale and by raising their annual increments. The salary scale at present in force was then adopted. Since the adoption of this scale, no complaints have been received by Government from the Excise Inspectors as to the scale of their salaries. Government does not consider that any further relief is required in their case, nor that any further inquiry is desirable at the present time.

The Supply Bill, 1925-26.

The debate on the Supply Bill, 1925-26, was resumed.

THE HON. MR. E. J. HAYWARD, C.B.E., V.D. (Commercial Member):—I wish, Sir, to make a few remarks on Budget matters, but I do not propose to enter into statistics or figures which will occupy the time of the Council. I think these are better reserved to the Select Committee. At the debate on the last Budget I recommended the advisability of an increase of the fixed reserve. I know that this is not an idea which is very popular with many of my honourable colleagues, but I feel constrained to refer to it again now. The wise business man or business concern adds to its reserve in times of prosperity, so as to have something in hand in times of difficulty—to have something in hand for a rainy day; and it should be the same with a Government. This country has before now had to fall back upon its reserves, and it was fortunate that the reserve was strong enough to meet the call, and it may have to do so again. I cannot think that the sum of ten million rupees is sufficient security for this Colony in view of its many obligations. We have been going ahead rather rapidly with our expenditure, especially in the direction of education, medical services, roads, and buildings. It is true that we have had the money for everything which has been provided, but it has got to be remembered that all this means a very heavy tax indeed in the future for maintenance. Now, while our revenues are sound, and we have surpluses in hand, I say, Sir, that we as wise business men in charge of a

sound business concern should take some of this abundance and put it to our reserve. We shall then be able to look the future in the face; we shall be able to go on with our schemes; we shall be able to discuss the reduction of taxes and other measures which mean a loss of revenue with a certain degree of equanimity. I commend this, what I consider a most important matter, to the attention of the Government. With regard to the surplus balances themselves, it is always very nice to find that one has a surplus and not a shortage. Well, I do not think our large surpluses are sound finance. They have consisted to a large extent (I say this with deference to the Honourable the Director of Public Works in reference to what he said yesterday) of unused amounts from votes which have been passed for special purposes. In other words, the money which has been voted, after very careful consideration, for one thing has, in the end, been used for something of an entirely different character. I think the time has come when we should ask Government to show each year the unused amounts of the departments in detail, so that they may be, as far as possible, carried forward to the following year to be used for the purpose for which they were originally intended. One thing that we should be particular about is to see that we do not vote any money for big works beyond what there is reasonable expectation of spending during the year. If from mistaken retrenchment the departments are short of supervising officers and sanctioned works cannot be completed, then let us acknowledge our mistake, appoint the necessary additional officers, and get along with the work. I think we all consider—that is, the Unofficials consider—that the present Budget of expenditure is of a rather inflated nature, and the explanation seems to be apparently that as we have an abundance of revenue, it has got to be spent somehow or other. There is ample room for considerable reduction in the proposed expenditure, and I have no doubt that this will be effected in a reasonable way when the individual items come before the Select Committee. There is also considerable room for a reduction of the taxation, which was increased under other circumstances and which is not now needed and which only tends to promote this excess of revenue. The honourable speakers who opened the debate on the first day referred to this reduction of taxation principally with regard to foodstuffs. I should like to suggest that consideration should be extended to other necessities of life and also to the postal and telegraph rates.

The commercialization of the railway is a great step forward. If it is adopted, we may perhaps be able to see a fair proportion of the earnings of the railway put back into that concern in the form of a reserve for extraordinary requirements. If that is done, we may then be able to arrange a programme of capital expenditure spreading over a number of years which, I think, will be a great improvement upon the system of more or less erratic votes which are now applied for. The railway is apparently rapidly losing ground as a passenger carrying facility, and perhaps it will be good policy now, as proposed by the speakers on the first day, to reduce the passenger fares which were increased in time of need; and although there may be a chance that this reduction of passenger rates as well as some reduction in goods rates may mean temporary loss of revenue, yet, as indicated in those speeches, there is every chance that the reduced rates will lead to increased traffic, which will more than compensate for the reduction.

The harbour has again proved to be the principal source of our revenue, as shown in the Budget, and the time is now getting riper and riper for our expanding harbour and shipping to be controlled by a Port Trust. The big ports near Colombo, that is, Bombay, Calcutta, Karachchi, and Rangoon, are already controlled by such fully responsible institutions. As far back as 1906 the desirability of a Port Trust at Colombo was pressed upon Government, and the continually expanding business of our port makes the necessity for a Trust greater and greater.

A good deal of attention has been given lately to research schemes into our three principal products, and which would, of course, cover the minor products too. I hope that this attention will materialize in the next year or two in liberal votes for that purpose. The importance and usefulness of these research schemes, I feel, need not be pressed any more than they have been.

All the speakers, so far, have referred to the question of education, and I expect all the remaining speakers will also have something to say about it. I should also like to make one remark, and that is, that while we are liberal with our votes for educational purposes, we must be careful that the children of this country are educated so as to become useful members of the community. It is no good educating our boys, if, when they leave school, they are only prepared to enter the legal and medical professions. These are already overcrowded. There is ample scope for many men on the land, provided that improved methods of agriculture are introduced. That is a matter to which we must give our careful attention, I mean not only the educating of the boys, but also the educating of the villagers into a better and more intensive system of raising their crops. Very little has been done so far in the way of increasing food production. There has been a good deal of talk, and action has been taken in certain directions, but the real result is very little. I therefore think that our efforts next year should be concentrated on giving this need and safeguard of the country a really good, decent start and a strong push forward.

On the question of the taxation of food, I heartily support the idea that we should reduce or remove the tax on the food of the poorer classes. Of course, if those reductions are made they will not benefit the poorer classes only but all classes, and we shall have realized our object if we really see that some benefits do accrue to the poorer classes. When I use the term "poorer classes," I do not want Honourable Members to think for a moment that I endorse the description which one Honourable Member yesterday gave to the poorer classes or the peasantry. I cannot conceive them to be the wretched, downtrodden, desolate individuals writhing under the wheels of the juggernaut of Government. I think that is an exaggeration of language. Other Honourable Members of this House should be in a better position to say whether the description given yesterday is true or not.

The Hydro-Electric Scheme I see is asking for Rs. 2,500,000 for next year. I hope that means that good progress is going to be made, and that the work will ultimately be finished in the specified time. There is only one point in connection with the scheme on which I should like to touch, and that is the desirability of the earliest measures being taken, so that when the time comes the existing services can be switched on to the hydro-electric supply without even the smallest amount of dislocation. Everything that

can be foreseen should be foreseen. For instance, the voltage of the hydro-electric current must be capable of being used with or transformed to the fittings which will at that time be in use. At the last annual meeting of the Chamber of Commerce I said: "It is perhaps not necessary to suggest that Government should take the fullest and earliest steps for the transference of the public power and lighting services from the present system of distribution to the hydro-electric system so as to save the chance of considerable dislocation and inconvenience later on." I do not think it is out of place to repeat those words here again. Honourable Members may think it unnecessary, especially the Director of Public Works, but I am justified in making that point, because I have received a good number of expressions of uneasiness about it.

In studying the Budget I was very much struck with the complication brought into our financial affairs by some of the salaries being shown in sterling and some in rupees. This is a rupee country. We buy and sell in rupees, we think in rupees, and salaries are paid in rupees. Then why keep up the old custom of keeping some salaries in sterling. I hope that in future Budgets all salaries will be shown on the rupee basis. The matter, I think, only requires a certain amount of adjustment at the start, and should offer no difficulty as regards new recruits from Home. More and more Ceylonese are filling the posts of Government, and I believe they would prefer to have their salaries on a rupee basis. I would go further and say that every post of Government, from the highest to the lowest, should have its fixed rupee value, and that when any of those posts are filled by Europeans, or Europeans are imported, then, as mentioned by one Honourable Member who was expressing the views of the Unofficials, a colonial or overseas allowance, on a fixed scale, should be added.

One speaker on the first day of the debate—I think it was the Honourable Member for the Colombo District—referring to the Government workshops, deplored the fact that all the labour was not Sinhalese.

THE HON. MR. D. B. JAYATILAKA (Colombo District):—I said Ceylonese, not Sinhalese.

THE HON. MR. E. J. HAYWARD, C.B.E., V.D. (Commercial Member):—The Director of Public Works referring to this said that even if it was the wish of departments to employ only Ceylonese, the latter were not available. I think the Honourable Member must know, as others know, and I know myself as an employer of labour, that there are classes of work which are not congenial to Sinhalese labour, work to which they do not adapt themselves; and in our business concerns it is absolutely necessary to import labour. I could give Honourable Members an instance of this from my experience, but I do not want to take-up the time of Council over it.

When I spoke on the Budget last year, I said that we should not be stingy with regard to one department if that department required strengthening. That was the Attorney-General's Department. At that time there were a large number of Bills of public importance held up, and the only information we could get about them was that the Attorney-General's Department was so pressed with work that they could not get them through. I believe that

since that time the staff of the Attorney-General's office has been strengthened, and I see that the present Budget also provides for an addition. There are a number of Ordinances of considerable importance to us, for controlling and regulating public actions, and it is very desirable that they should be brought in as soon as possible. Many have been held over for years, among them being the Companies Ordinance, the Vehicles Ordinance, Bankruptcy, Public Holidays, Trade Marks, Old Metal, Bills of Exchange, Food and Drugs, Mortgages, and the Municipal and Housing Ordinances. Of these, the Companies Ordinance is waiting until the old Ordinance, upon which it is based, is revised. The Vehicles Ordinance is at present, I understand, being tackled. The Companies and Public Holidays Ordinances, the Trade Marks, the Old Metal, and Bills of Exchange Ordinances are now in their draft form, but we are still waiting to see something of the remaining ones, the Food and Drugs Ordinance, which, I believe, deals with the question of rubbishy teas, the Fertilizers Ordinance, the Bankruptcy Ordinance, and the others I have mentioned. If, therefore, the Attorney-General wants more assistance in his department, I feel certain that he has only to ask for it.

There is one matter, Sir, which I did not intend to bring before this Council in the Budget debate, but having listened to the speeches of some of the other Members, and seeing the patience with which the Council listened to them, I am emboldened to put it forward because it is germane to the Budget. We have all read and heard of the impending expenditure on Queen's House and the Museum. Before large sums of money are actually spent on these premises, I should like briefly to make a suggestion which I have no authority to put forward. The suggestion comes from me. It is admitted that the present Queen's House nowadays is not a suitable residence for the Governor of the Island, and there have already been suggestions that a new home for the Governor should be found elsewhere. The Museum is too small for its purpose and congested, and it is too far away from the Fort to really serve the thousands who would like to inspect its many wonders. I ask, Why not make Queen's House the Museum and give the Museum to the Governor for his residence? The Museum, with a little alteration, would make a most ideal and dignified residence for the Governor. It is situated in an exceedingly fine locality, it is not very far away from the new colony which has grown up for the senior Government servants, it has park-like surroundings, and is in every way suited for the King's representative. The Queen's House, with certain extensions and adaptations, would make an excellent Museum, and from its position would be advantageous both for residents and visitors. There is room for the proposed aquarium, and I can assure this Council that it would be a very remunerative investment. Adjacent are the Gordon Gardens, which serve little purpose now apparently beyond being the sleeping place for coal coolies, but which might become the site for an opera house or theatre, which Colombo so badly requires. The remainder of the Gardens should be made an attraction and to provide conveniences for the thousands and thousands of passengers who come to our port, and for whom at present we do precious little. Then, incidentally, the widening of Queen street can be carried out almost automatically with this change and at a mere fraction of the cost now suggested for that work. I suggest, therefore, that before large sums of money

are spent upon these premises, or votes are asked for repairs and alterations and improvements, this scheme, which I have briefly sketched, might be considered after the arrival of our new Governor.

THE HON. THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL :—Sir, the debate has covered a wide range of subjects, some of general interest. I need hardly say I include among those of general interest a subject raised by the Commercial Member, and take this opportunity of stating that in my humble opinion the practice of raising in the Budget debate questions of general importance to the community, though not directly affecting finance, is a useful one. It is a valuable privilege, a privilege which, were I an Unofficial Member, I should jealously guard. Well, Sir, I conceive that privilege is possessed by Officials as well as Unofficials, and I wish to avail myself of it, and I wish to touch upon a matter of general importance. The debate has certainly been very useful to me. It gives me an opportunity of acquiring knowledge which I have very great difficulty in obtaining otherwise. Unfortunately, by the nature of my work, it is necessary for me to live almost exclusively in Colombo. Here I have many good Ceylonese friends, who give me information which has been invaluable to me, but as one would expect they are mainly of the professional classes. But the knowledge of Ceylon which I acquire from them is invaluable. The information is mainly legal and political. I feel myself that that is not quite as it ought to be. Sir, I feel that if an Attorney-General is to do his work properly here and be of real use, he ought to have a much wider knowledge of Ceylon than, I am sorry to say, the Attorney-General at present has the opportunity of acquiring. He should travel and meet people of all classes and descriptions and hear their views. He should endeavour to obtain at least a general knowledge of the country, its people, and their habits and customs. If he does not do so, he cannot efficiently perform his duties, and he will sooner or later—to use a colloquial phrase—“let the Government in,” and sometimes do something that the lawyers might approve of but which would be absolutely rubbish when applied to the conditions of the people of the country. Now, Sir, travel requires time, and at the present time, unfortunately, the Attorney-General has no time to travel. I will leave that matter there for the present. I have already suggested that I consider it a very valuable privilege of the Unofficial Members to be able to ventilate their views, and I will take this opportunity of saying something about my own department. In the first place, what are the duties of the Attorney-General of Ceylon? He is the legal adviser to His Excellency the Governor. He is ultimately responsible for all those prosecutions which fall to be tried by a District Court or the Supreme Court. He is also expected by tradition if not by law to keep an alert and roving eye over the minor judiciary, and last, but not least, he has to endeavour to keep our administrative and executive in the path of virtue, by that I mean in the straight and narrow way of *intra vires*. Well, Sir, if the matter ended there I would not have to trouble the Council. The duties I have mentioned are but the ordinary routine of every Attorney-General. Fortunately I am blessed with an able and hardworking staff, who relieve me of the greater part of these duties, though of course not of the responsibilities which are always mine. But, Sir, Ceylon expects more than this of her

Attorney-General. He is now required to deal with important and difficult questions of policy of all sorts, not merely legal questions, but many of them having the remotest connection with the law. Let me give a few examples. He is Chairman of a Select Committee to inquire into certain very important matters in connection with the Police. Everybody who followed the matter of the Police will agree that that is a matter which ought to get the very closest attention he can give it. He is Chairman of a Committee to amend the Housing and Town Improvement Ordinance. People might think this an ordinary matter. It could be done very quickly, by merely going through the Ordinance with a pencil and patching here and deleting there, but believe me, if I did it in that way, in the course of a few years there would have to be another Committee. He is then actively engaged in trying to unravel the mortgage tangle. Honourable Members will be surprised to know that the amendment of even the simplest Ordinance, and much more in a complicated matter, it is necessary thoroughly to study the whole question from beginning to end ; if not the amendments would fail. It is necessary to get a thorough knowledge of the difficulties which an Ordinance will have to remove. That cannot be done by merely holding one or two meetings as indicated on an agenda. It requires careful preliminary study. Until the Chairman of a Committee knows his subject through and through, it is a pure waste of time to preside at a meeting. Then he is actively engaged in other matters. Yesterday the Attorney-General was asked by one of the Honourable Members to inquire into the possibility of improving our system of magistracy, in which it is possible to make serious mistakes. It is not possible to do this in a few flashy sentences. It cannot be done if the Attorney-General is to be tied down to his desk. Another Honourable Member wanted me to inquire into the complicated and difficult question of the acquisition of title against the Crown by possession. Since then I have looked at the Ordinance, and the more I looked, the more I am convinced that the Ordinance is not a satisfactory one. But lest Honourable Members be too jubilant about it, let me hasten to add, from the technical and legal point of view I give no opinion on the substance of the Ordinance. This is a question which must be looked into.

The Honourable Member for the Batticaloa Revenue District tabled a motion on the question of Local Government. I have now received a letter from the Honourable Member stating that he wishes to urge the introduction of Provincial Councils to co-ordinate the work of District Councils. But this is the point he states : "I wish to urge that this question of Provincial Councils be considered by the Law Officers of the Crown before my motion comes up for discussion." He has the grace to add that it is a difficult problem. These are but a few of the matters under my immediate attention. But some Honourable Members may know of the equally, perhaps more important, matters which ought to be dealt with. I may mention land titles, partition, and registration of titles. I believe, Sir, that the settlement of these questions alone would benefit the community financially far more than will the suggested reduction in taxation. The amount of money spent on land litigation must amount to a very large sum. The greater part of it comes from the pockets of the relatively poor. These, Sir, are questions which ought to be grappled with by my department. I believe, Sir, that there is a widespread feeling in Ceylon that more

should be done to grapple with these important matters. Ceylon is a polite and kind community. But I sometimes sense veiled hints that it is the Attorney-General or his department which is to blame ; that he could do more if he would. Well, Sir, I will tell the Council the truth, and nothing but the truth. The Attorney-General could do more if he had not to devote so much time to minor matters. At present his time is largely spent on matters which could and ought to be done by other persons. I say " could and ought " if the other persons were there to do it. But they are not. My staff are fully occupied with their own work. If, as I sometimes do, I ask a Crown Counsel to help me to look up some point, I know what it means. They do it, but it means that some criminal case has to be delayed by that amount of time. No, Sir, that is not right. There are quite enough delays in criminal cases without my adding to them.

The Attorney-General must play, by which I mean, Sir, that the Attorney-General refuses to overwork himself. There are, I know, some lucky mortals who can and do work all day, and most of the night. I frankly confess I am not one of these. If I was, I should not be here. I should be at the English Bar in private practice. I do not believe in overwork. Well, Sir, what all this is leading up to is this. I believe it would be sound finance for this Council to approve a suggestion I have to make to relieve me of some of the detail work. I refer, Sir, especially to the detail work of drafting Ordinances and by-laws. I believe, Sir, that the time has come when Ceylon should have a parliamentary draftsman. I wonder, Sir, whether this Council realizes the labour and pains required to turn out an Ordinance, or the dead financial loss incurred by the community if the Ordinance is not properly drafted. A slip in drafting means a civil action, or a criminal appeal, all costing money. The amending Ordinance is drafted and introduced, and if it is not well done, it means that more money and time is spent. Well, Sir, it simply comes to this. At present the Attorney-General has to do all this drafting himself. When I say, Sir, that to draft an Ordinance like the Motor Car Ordinance is a matter not of days or weeks, but of months, Honourable Members will realize the immensity of the task. Drafting is largely a matter of careful detailed work. Almost anybody can sketch out an Ordinance which will embody the essential points. But, Sir, when an Ordinance is put to the acid test of use in the law courts, it is the detail that counts. And it is the detail which takes the time and requires the skill. Sir, I believe, a parliamentary draftsman will more than pay his way in three ways. He will leave the Attorney-General with more leisure to devote to important questions, which would otherwise be deferred. He will raise the technical standard of our Ordinances and save litigation. He will, also, Sir, I hope be able as time goes on to undertake bit by bit the revision of our older laws. This, Sir, is work which really must be done some day. It will well repay the cost.

Now, Sir, to come to details, I should like to get a trained parliamentary draftsman direct from the English Bar. The standard of parliamentary draftsmanship is far higher in England than in any other country in the world. Get him here, and let him train some of the young Crown Counsel. Thus, Sir, I hope in time we will be able to do our own drafting from our Bar. At present the Ceylon Bar has no opportunity of experience. I have no

authority from the Government to put this suggestion forward, but I hope it will receive the consideration of the Members of the House. I am merely taking a leaf out of the book of the Honourable Member for the Central Division of the Northern Province. Honourable Members will remember that he stated yesterday that he wished to start propaganda in connection with work which he expected would fructify in 1927.

THE HON. MR. T. Y. WRIGHT (European Rural Member) :— I am another of the Unofficials who thinks it rather strange that nothing is provided in the Budget for attempting to increase food production. Now, Sir, unless we bestir ourselves, and continue to bestir ourselves in this respect, we shall some day get into the same position as we did in 1919-20, when Government lost several million rupees, which by-the-way they have since recovered by doubling the import duty on rice; not so with the proprietors of estates, who lost thirteen or fourteen million rupees, they have had no opportunity of recovering their losses, and they would be only too glad to see Ceylon independent of India. Like my honourable friend from the Southern Province, I too have a scheme, but I am not going to inflict it on the Council. Government must be very generous over this food production question. If they are generous, and if they make really genuine efforts to solve this problem, I am sure they will not be blamed in the future if they fail.

I too am sorry not to see some provision for coconut and tea research schemes. Possibly the promoters of the tea research scheme may not require financial assistance from Government. There is also nothing provided for carrying out fisheries on a large scale. Now, I agree with my honourable friend the Member for Colombo District. The Government should take the initiative, they should set the ball rolling, capitalists are chary of starting new industries as they have so often lost money in these ventures; but I feel sure if Government took the matter up a success would be made of it. Now, a great deal has been said about this duty on dried fish; why import dried fish at all, why not have it dried locally—and quite apart from edible fish, fish manures would bring in a large revenue. At present we pay all this money to other countries; why not keep it in the Island?

From an educational point of view an aquarium is a necessity. The Colony is behind the times in this respect; I have been told by the manager of a firm in Colombo that he could get enough visitors to visit the aquarium to pay for all its upkeep.

Now, as regards the Post Office it is surprising to see that only Rs. 1,900,000 revenue is derived from this department, I do not know if these figures are wangled in any way, but it seems an extraordinarily small amount to get from a large department. Anyhow I think it right not to run this department as a revenue-producing department.

It is interesting to note that out of this revenue of Rs. 1,900,000, no less than Rs. 725,100 comes from telephones, whereas the expenditure on maintenance and improvements to the telegraph and telephone services only amounts to Rs. 315,100. I hope Honourable Members will note that revenue is from telephones alone, and expenditure on telegraphs plus telephones. On these figures, it seems, there is plenty of room for the reduction of the high rates charged for telephone erection, about which there are

so many complaints. There is also room for the extension of the telephone service along the main lines at present existing, and there are plenty of outstations crying out for telephones still.

I have the same old complaint about the railway, and that is, the most exasperating delays at the level crossings. I quite expect to see real trouble some day, and someone will lose his temper with the gatekeeper. Although it may not be their fault, time after time the public are kept waiting for an unnecessarily long time.

I know that if complaints are made the General Manager, Railway, deals with offenders, but it seems to make no difference whatever. It would be much better and cheaper to do away with these gates altogether and only have a rope with a red flag; where there are no gates there is no trouble whatever. Anyhow something must be done, the public are not going to put up with these delays.

I wonder how many times some of the Planters' Associations called attention to the fact that goods consigned from India to Kurunegala and up-country stations have still to go down to Colombo and thereby pay double freight, and this in spite of a shortage of rolling stock.

There have also been complaints that many of the stations have no manure sheds, and valuable stuff is thrown out in the rain. I don't know whether the Director of Agriculture called the attention of the General Manager to this, but at one of the meetings of the Estate Products Committee a great point was made of the fact that wet manure bred large quantities of flies, whereas dry manure did not, and there is no doubt flies breed disease. From the Budget I cannot find out if any manure sheds are provided for.

I am at one with several of my colleagues here in thinking some of the passenger rates and freights ought to be reduced. Third class passenger rates should come down to at any rate the same as the bus fares.

Freights on materials are also very high, indeed; as an instance, I quote the following account to Badulla from Colombo:—The cost of ten barrels cement came to Rs. 105·93, whereas the railway freight was Rs. 87·66 or 83 per cent. of the cost of the material.

At the same time, I do not think that the railway will ever compete with the roads or canals. I am of opinion that the roads will be used more and more to bring produce down to Colombo from the estates, unless the estates are situated close to the railway. It therefore behoves Government to think about either constructing new roads fit for present and future traffic or spending large sums on the present roads. In fact it is high time for a Commission to be appointed to inquire into the general transport of the Island.

Regarding roads, I will go back to that million rupees, which was voted by the Council and which was to be given to the roads which did not come under the Public Works Department, such as district and minor roads. It is now eight months since this was voted, and I understand the money is not yet given—the excuse is that Mr. Pritchard has not given a report on the roads. No one asked Mr. Pritchard to give a report. The District Road Committees were quite capable of giving their opinion, and could have done it in a month, and it was expected that the District Road Committees would get shares of the million in proportion to their mileage. This vote has nothing whatever to do with Mr. Pritchard's report as to what district and minor roads should be taken over by the Public Works Department. I do not understand this delay; the money should have been given at once.

One thing I would like to call attention to is the bridges. I see that Rs. 480,000 is down in the Budget, but only four bridges are detailed, and item 95, Rs. 300,000, is not detailed. I called attention to the want of detail on this item last year; it is well known what bridges require urgent attention, and I cannot see why these should not be detailed in the same manner as roads are.

The reconstruction of bridges is an urgent necessity; traffic is held up, and in some cases, like the Koslande road, the railway is losing traffic. I understand there are several bridges on this section which are in a dangerous state and may collapse at any time, and there are several other bridges in different parts of the Island which require urgent attention, and the public would like to know upon which bridges work is going to be undertaken.

I am glad to see that provision is made for the Nakkala-Muppene new road, and also for a road through the lower parts of Dolosbage, but I would again like to call attention to the Ragala-Kurundu-oya road, which was also mentioned by my honourable friend the Member for the Central Province, Rural.

When I was a member of the Consultative Committee on Roads, the road came 12th on the list of urgency, and I think most of the others which came before it have either been finished or are in course of construction. It was first brought to the notice of Government last century. In 1909 the Government Agent then reported that the villagers had been clamouring for the road for twenty years. Another Government Agent reported that the country on that side must be opened up, and that the road will confer immense benefits, not only on the village population, but on the Colony as a whole. In 1919 the Assistant Government Agent reported that the road was the most important in the district. Again in 1919 it was classed as "very desirable" by the Consultative Committee on Roads. I am tired of talking to Government about this road, and hope that my honourable friend the Rural Member for the Central Province will be more successful.

With regard to the cost of building construction, I might, as a small instance, state that last year we objected to Rs. 700 per room for cooly lines, but notwithstanding that, there is an estimate for cooly lines this year at Anuradhapura at a cost of Rs. 1,000 per room, and so it goes on. There is one thing more I should like to mention, and that is the medical vote. I am very glad indeed to see that the Government have been fairly liberal to the Medical Wants hospitals. These matters have been requested for a long time. They are really urgent and necessary, or I can assure Honourable Members they would not have been asked for. Disappointment was expressed yesterday that so much money is being spent in the planting districts. Now, Sir, I sincerely hope that that disappointment will not lead Honourable Members to vote against these most necessary items. I am perfectly ready to support them in any requests for more money for other hospitals or for prevention of disease.

As a matter of fact, if one goes carefully through these items (and my honourable friend from the Southern Division of the Southern Province yesterday evidently mixed up some hospitals, which though in up-country districts are not Medical Wants hospitals) you will find that all the sums under new buildings and special repairs to buildings amount to only Rs. 411,000, whereas under the same heads on medical buildings, which are not connected with

Medical Wants hospitals the amount is Rs. 756,000. So really there need be no disappointment—the items under Medical Wants seem many, but they are mostly small sums. I think the Honourable Member would be surprised if he knew how much the proprietors pay for these Medical Wants hospitals each year; and mind you, Sir, it is not only Tamil coolies who are treated in them, but everyone, irrespective of whether they work on estates or not. Last year the amount paid as their share for hospitals and dispensaries was Rs. 774,000. My honourable friend yesterday contended that this expenditure was for healthy districts. Now I will give him some figures: the death rate on estates last year was 35 per 1,000, the death rate for the Island last year was 25 per 1,000, and for the principal towns last year was 28½ per 1,000. And what about infant mortality? This, even in Nuwara Eliya District, the sanatorium of the Island, is very much larger than in the low-country districts, such as Kurunegala, Kegalla, Galle, Kalutara, and Matara.

Now about taxation. In spite of what has been said by many Honourable Members, and although I have been about the country more and more during this last year, I cannot alter my opinion. I do not think the taxes weigh heavily on the people. Compared with other countries the taxation is light, that can easily be proved by figures; nevertheless, if there is plenty of money I see no reason why some taxes should not be reduced. Last year there was a talk about abolishing the poll tax. I have not heard any one mentioning it this year. I would rather see the tax go and the railway rates reduced.

Yesterday my honourable friend from Kandy suggested reducing the import taxes on curry stuff, dried fish, and jaggery. Now, this is an agricultural country, and every one of those articles can be produced locally and in sufficient quantities to do away with imports altogether. Then why do the people pay these import duties? Can anyone explain it? I say, the people, if they are hard hit by these import duties, would very soon grow them for themselves. Surely it is only reasonable if they do not grow them and produce these articles to suppose that they do not feel the import tax.

Now, Sir, we heard something yesterday from my friend for the North-Western Province, Eastern Division, about the Waste Lands Ordinance. I have no love for the Waste Lands Ordinance, and there is no possible doubt that these Land Settlements are very much delayed indeed, but for goodness' sake let us be fair with the Government. I bought a lot of land from the Government in the North-Western Province, and whenever it was put up for sale and there were any village claimants these blocks were immediately withdrawn and settled on the villager at a price very much lower than what we had to pay for the adjoining land. I know the North-Western Province fairly well, and one sees any amount of small village blocks recently planted with coconuts. I will not hesitate for one moment to criticise Government, but I do like to be fair about it.

There is also one other thing which I would like to say, and that is, that I deprecate some of the racial discussions in this Council, matters of salary for instance. I am of opinion that so long as one man is as efficient as another he should get the same salary, but I am afraid we shall not be a happy family until the words European, native, Sinhalese, and Tamil are done away with in the debates of this Council.

THE HON. MR. C. H. Z. FERNANDO (North-Western Province, Western Division):—I rise, Sir, to make a few observations on certain aspects of the Supply Bill which was placed before this House in such a concise manner by the Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary, and although I do so, I feel that hardly any tangible good arises to the country from these debates which we have to go through periodically at this season of the year. Lengthy speeches are made, the same arguments are repeated with varying degrees of emphasis, but the nett result is that nothing whatever is done to alleviate the conditions of the masses of the voiceless millions whose lot in life is to pay as much as could be extracted from them and to receive as little as is thrown in their way.

In 1922 my predecessor, Mr. C. E. Corea, recalled a trite and appropriate remark made by Sir Marcus Fernando in 1917 as regards the work that the Government is generally doing. Dr. Fernando, as he then was, said "We are going on providing for railways and roads and harbour works, and apparently we are not doing justice to the uplifting of the permanent population." That remark was true in 1917, it was just as true in 1922, it is equally true to-day, and I fear it will continue to be true to the end of time unless this Council resolves, at least after the consideration of this usual humdrum Supply Bill, to postpone the consideration of all other pending matters, to lay aside the putting of the columns of questions which confront us until there is sufficient time at our disposal for that interesting pastime, and to concentrate all our efforts on revising the present basis of taxation.

I feel, Sir, very strongly that it would even be worth our while to let this Budget pass without any discussion if by doing so we would hasten the day when the present mediæval system of taxation is cast into the melting pot and the wise statesmanship of this Council provides in its stead a broader basis of taxation which would lay the obligation of paying on the shoulders of those who could afford to pay, and which would thereby stimulate production and cheapen the cost of the necessaries of life in the case of our voiceless masses, on whose prosperity, and on whose prosperity alone, really depends the prosperity of our whole Island.

I do feel that it is time we made a stop to pressing cumulative burdens through the Customs as export or import taxes without ascertaining the taxable capacity of the individuals thus affected. We must be taxed on our income and all classes and not the producer alone, but even the lawyers, doctors, merchants, the Chetties, the insurance companies, and others who make money out of our country should feel their pockets touched in order that the incidence of taxation should be taken off the shoulders of the poor.

I represent a constituency which I feel is the most highly taxed constituency in the Island. It has been pointed out in this Council on a previous occasion that Government, and I should add that the Members of Council, both Official and Unofficial, seem to feel that the coconut tree is something like the mythical pagoda tree of old. If you possess a coconut tree we fancy that your taxable capacity is boundless. You are taxed on your copra, on the oil your copra is turned into; if you do not convert your nuts into copra, you are taxed on the nut you export or on the desiccated coconut it is turned into. The fibre your husk is converted into is taxed. In fact, no bye-product of the coconut palm is safe from taxation. On the present prices of copra, taking an average of Rs. 75 you pay a tax of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the average nett profit of Rs. 40 a candy.

In my constituency every man, even the poorest of the poor, owns his coconut tree, and hence I feel that the removal of this oppressive tax on produce would help those whom I represent much more than any temporary blessing showered on them in the way of a road here and a road there or anything else of a like nature. Of course, it will be pointed out that this ideal state of affairs cannot come to pass in a day, and the best we could hope for is for a thorough revision of the basis of taxation before the close of the next financial year.

What of the present? It is clear from the large surplus which will accrue at the end of the year that the Government has solely miscalculated the spending capacity of the Public Works Department. In spite of the sore lesson which we have learnt by this error, we once again find the Public Works Department being allotted an enormous sum. A good number of schemes which are being included will, I am certain, be deleted in Finance Committee, and hence there will be an appreciable lessening of the burden of taxation.

The taxes which must go are, firstly, the taxes on curry stuff and the extra tax on rice. From figures which I placed before this House during the discussion of the last Supply Bill, it is clear that the tax on rice is the most oppressive of the food taxes, being two-thirds of the total indirect taxes paid by an average adult cooly or villager, or equal to about 4 per cent. income of an average cooly. We import about as much rice as is grown locally, hence half the people of the country pay this very oppressive tax, which is equal to 10 per cent. of the value of the commodity. I know that there is no unanimity among the Unofficials on this subject. Some are of opinion that a reduction of the tax on rice will benefit only those who are in the rice trade, and not the consumer. This I feel is an entirely mistaken notion. I know a good deal about the rice trade myself, and I am in a position to state that in its present state there is a great keenness and competition displayed. Several European firms some time ago set up in the trade, but they had to cease their activities, as they found that they could not compete with the Indian merchant, who by his simple and frugal habits and low overhead charges is able to supply the commodity with a very small margin of profit for himself. If the opponents of the reduction of this tax argue that a reduction will only benefit the importer *a fortiori*, an increase in the tax will only affect the importer, and in some future date some financial genius will plead for the running of the whole Colony on a super rice tax alone.

The next is the abolition of the poll tax. This is a local tax, and as a preliminary to its abolition the Local Government Ordinance should be proclaimed all over the Island. Once this is done the District Road Committees will cease to function, and their powers will be taken up by general District Councils. Such general District Councils and the local bodies now existing could then abolish the tax in their area and resort to some other in its stead.

The next tax which I feel should be reduced is the export tax on desiccated coconuts. This, although an old industry—the first mill having been started in Ceylon so far back as thirty years ago—had a revival during the war. Mills sprang up in all parts of the country, and nearly every one of them being owned by the permanent population. The industry gives employment to a vast

number of people, and is at present almost at a standstill owing both to the low price of desiccated nuts and to the high price of copra. It is an industry which deserves help from the Government. Unlike other trades, it has received nothing from Government in the past. In fact, its present precarious position is in some measure due to the American Government subsidizing the industry in the Philippines so as to enable it to compete with Ceylon. The total exports for Ceylon last year were 871,341 cwt. The tax of $\frac{3}{4}$ cent per pound brought in Rs. 731,926.44. The exports up to date are about 25 per cent. less than those for the corresponding period of last year. A reduction of the tax to a $\frac{1}{4}$ cent would mean a loss to the revenue of about Rs. 500,000 a year. At present most mills are run at a loss, and a saving of $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per pound would mean saving the majority of millers from total bankruptcy. In this connection I will only ask Government to redeem a pledge made in 1921. The Honourable the Treasurer in a debate on the export duty on rubber stated that when a bad time arose in the case of any industry, and it is brought to the notice of Government, a revision of the taxes will be considered. My honourable friend the Treasurer further stated that the most equitable basis was the adoption of a sliding scale, so that when the market prices reached the cost of production the export duty ought to cease. It is nothing more than a species of income tax, said the Honourable the Treasurer. No one will deny that the desiccated coconut industry is in a frightfully bad way, and I ask for some measure of relief, even temporary. If further taxation is to be imposed to meet the many schemes the Unofficials have in view, I am certain the rubber industry, now that rubber is paying about 500 per cent. on the cost of production, will not grudge a slight increase in the export duty on that commodity.

Another matter in which my constituents are most keenly interested is the salt industry. During the debate on the last Supply Bill, I asked that a Select Committee should be appointed to go into the question of Government monopoly in the salt trade. The leader of the House, who is now administering the Government, in the course of his remarks stated that the Government will have no objection to the appointment of a Commission. At present the trade in Puttalam is almost at a standstill. The manufacturers have not seen eye to eye with the Government, and the result is a deadlock which is vitally affecting the interests of the whole Colony. Hence the necessity for this Commission is all the greater to-day, and I look forward to its appointment without further delay. The tax is estimated to bring in Rs. 1,800,000, but the cost to Government in collection is estimated at Rs. 650,410, which works out at over 35 per cent. This shows that the whole system needs a complete overhaul.

His Excellency in the course of his Address on this Supply Bill laid emphasis on the fact that the question of transport is one of the most important problems awaiting solution. As for roads, we to-day find that certain districts are badly served in the matter of road communication. This is due to the fact that in the past preference had been given to districts where vociferous associations exist to voice the needs of the people. The Chilaw-Puttalam Districts, which contribute more than any other to the revenue by way of taxes on produce, possess roads which do no credit to the Government.

I have heard it stated that the Chilaw line is not the success which it was anticipated it would be. The reason for this is that the roads which serve the railway are about the worst in the Island. I make bold to repeat once again that unless feeder roads to the Puttalam line are taken up without further delay the line will not be a paying proposition.

In this connection, I believe most of us are agreed that the Government should include in the Budget all the roads recommended by the Consultative Committee on Roads both for opening up of new roads and for improvements and additions. This Committee, in which served three Unofficial Members of this Council, were, I am told, made to understand that Government would allot a sum of one million rupees for new roads and two million rupees for repairs to existing roads in the Supply Bill this year.

The Committee took this rather seriously and prepared two lists, which they termed (A) a priority list of new roads for the proposed inclusion of Rs. 1,000,000, as approved at a meeting of the Consultative Committee on Roads held on May 28, 1925. The list comprised fourteen roads, of which the total estimate came to Rs. 3,392,500, and for this, Rs. 1,000,000 was to be expended next year. Government has included only three of these roads, covering a vote of Rs. 250,000. I am certain the House will agree to the inclusion of the other roads, costing Rs. 750,000. The second list was termed a priority list of improvements to existing roads for the proposed inclusion of rupees two million in the Supply Bill, 1925-26, as approved by the Consultative Committee on Roads at a meeting held on May 28, 1925. There are forty-four roads in the priority list, the total estimates come to Rs. 5,066,650, of which two million is proposed to be spent. Of this list only four roads are taken up, entailing Rs. 420,000. I am certain once this Bill is pruned of the unnecessary items, a way could be found to include all these roads totalling Rs. 1,580,000.

I am certain that all of us agree with His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government that the question of roads is more important than any other before us, and we will willingly agree to the deletion of a sufficient number of items from the Public Works Department vote, specially those entailing expenditure on vast building schemes, so as to allow the inclusion of the projects recommended by the Consultative Committee on Roads.

Government in its anxiety to push forward vast schemes have omitted a number of minor projects which should have been included in the Budget. First and foremost I would place such projects as would alleviate the conditions of labour in Ceylon. The oft vaunted prosperity of Ceylon, our inflated revenue, the so-called contentment of the people, each and every one of these owe their existence to the industry of our labouring classes. It should be our duty to do everything we could to make their lives worth living. There are a large class of workmen who although are termed daily paid labourers are just as much fixed Government servants as the most distinguished gentlemen who adorn the Civil Service. Yet casual leave is denied to them owing to their being what is termed daily paid men. If they have served two years they are entitled to a short period of sick-leave, but these are concessions which in practice they do not get. In the Government Factory a man with fifteen years' service on applying for sick leave was told that there were no funds for that purpose. Steps should

immediately be taken to provide sufficient funds for sick leave and also for casual leave for all workmen who have been over one year in Government service.

Until a sufficient number of houses are provided for Government workmen they should get their railway passes on the same conditions on which they are given to railway workmen. If these few concessions are granted Government will have a contented labour force.

Another matter which affects labour is that the present scales are found in practice to be of no benefit to the workmen at all. Provision should be made for the automatic promotion of men from one scale to another, otherwise the practical result would be the workman would start and end his life on the same scale.

In the vote for the Medical Department there should be included provision for a dispensary and apothecary for the Government Factory. This is a recommendation which has been made over and over again by the Labour Advisory Board.

If these few concessions are granted Government would have a satisfied and contented labour force. This would result in greater efficiency, and the small additional cost would be more than made up by the advantage of having a happy labour force.

In answer to a question of mine at a recent meeting, the Principal Civil Medical Officer informed us that the number of patients in non-paying wards who were buried without coffins last year was 8,899. Government, it is stated, was advised from a sanitary point of view that there was no advantage in burying in a coffin. I am sorry that the sanitarian has had the better of the humanitarian in my honourable friend the head of the Medical Department. The estimate of Rs. 7.50 per coffin is an exorbitant one, and if tenders are called for, judging from what is paid by other bodies, it would not come to more than Rs. 3 per head. A vote of Rs. 30,000 would amply suffice for this work.

The department which requires a complete overhaul, in fact the only department of Government which to my mind is in need of some radical changes made in it, is the Colombo Port Commission. I hope the question of the Port Trust which the Chamber of Commerce is now pressing for will be taken up by Government. Of course, on such a Trust ample provision will have to be made for the representation of the Ceylonese and Indian interest. For the present, until the Port Trust is created the present Port Commission should be made more representative by the inclusion of non-European Members of the Council and of Ceylonese and Indian mercantile members. At present the public believes that the Port Commission shows undue preference to certain privileged firms; besides, the members of that august body seem to be under the belief that no Ceylonese is fit for any job in the harbour except that of a coolie.

There are a number of wants in my district which I shall bring up in Finance Committee, among them are the Chilaw and Pallavi bridges, the Marawila Police Court, clerks' quarters, the telephone to Puttalam, and several Post and Telegraph Offices. I shall not dwell on this matter, as our mentors in the morning press have advised us to leave parish pump politics alone and concentrate on general subjects. If this advice had been acted upon, a good deal of time would have been saved.

We are deeply indebted to the Honourable the Principal Civil Medical Officer, the Director of Public Works, and the Director of

Agriculture for their contributions to this debate. The Principal Civil Medical Officer has told us that the Mahara jail scheme has been scrapped. Surely Government had all the figures quoted by the Principal Civil Medical Officer before the draft Budget was drawn up.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY :—The report was received subsequent to the Budget being drawn up and subsequent to my speech. It came into my hands about seven days ago. I immediately sent it on to His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government with the remark that it was very good news.

THE HON. MR. C. H. Z. FERNANDO (North-Western Province, Western Division) :—I accept the Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary's explanation that these figures were not before Government when the Budget was being drawn up. If they were not, they should have been. I appeal to the Principal Civil Medical Officer to go into the question of the treatment meted out to the hospital attendants. These men received some concessions last year, but in practice they have turned out to be nothing. The Senior Burgher Member asked the Principal Civil Medical Officer whether he was satisfied with the condition of the Ragama and Kandana tuberculosis hospitals. I know something of these institutions, as I am a member of the Tuberculosis Committee. Kandana is a model institution, but Ragama admits of great improvement. The Principal Civil Medical Officer year after year has asked for votes for Ragama, but these have been turned down. This year we find a vote of Rs. 117,000 for building quarters for religious sisters and for building two wards in place of two corrugated iron sheds now used. Once the self-sacrificing Catholic sisters take up nursing there, I am certain conditions will improve.

As for agriculture, we will, I assure this House, not get a move on until the Forest and Irrigation Departments and the Land Settlement Department too are controlled by the Director of Agriculture. We have great confidence in the present Director, and we are certain that if he is given a free hand he will make things move fast enough. His shoulders are broad enough to bear the weight of four departments.

There is one matter I wish to touch on before I conclude. My honourable friend Mr. Rajaratnam yesterday tried to make out that the Honourable Member for the Colombo District advocated the non-employment of Indians in the Public Service. He did nothing of the kind. All he asked for is that the Ceylonese should be given equal opportunities for employment in the Railway Department as Indian labourers.

THE HON. MR. S. RAJARATNAM (Northern Province, Central Division) :—I do not remember the Honourable Member for the Colombo District saying that preference should be given to Ceylonese. He said that Indians should be excluded. His words were, if I mistake not, "Why should there be these 1,000 Indian coolies in the Railway workshop?"

THE HON. MR. D. B. JAYATILAKA (Colombo District) :—As my name has been mentioned, I feel that I should make an explanation. I made it quite clear that I was not preaching a

policy of exclusion. I said that out of 3,000 employees in the railway workshops one-third were non-Ceylonese. I added that that policy should not be pursued hereafter, because in the case of the Ceylonese workmen there was no possibility for them to go outside Ceylon and find employment. We are all complaining of unemployment; and I therefore think that Government departments should try to employ Ceylonese workmen in preference to non-Ceylonese.

THE HON. MR. C. H. Z. FERNANDO (North-Western Province, Western Division):—I am greatly indebted to the Honourable Member. I thought I had followed him. There is a feeling that Indians are being given preference there because they did not take part in the last strike. The Hon. Mr. Jayatilaka was actuated by no anti-Indian feeling. In the Agenda of two days ago I find two questions, Nos. 107 and 110, against the Hon. Mr. Rajaratnam where he asks to what race the Sanitary Inspectors belong. He was probably actuated by a desire that no one race received preference. The answer discloses the fact that the proportion of Sinhalese to Tamils was two to one. By the way, the population is in proportion of four to one. The proportion two to one should satisfy the Honourable Member, as it is the proportion which the so-called Sinhalese-Tamil Unity Conference, of which my honourable friend is so distinguished a member, has decreed should remain the proportion of representation in this Council for all time.

I shall conclude my remarks in the same strain as I started, that is, I do hope that when we consider the Budget of next year we will have a more equitable scheme of taxation which will take the burden off the poor and force the rich man to contribute of his plenty for the benefit of the country as a whole.

The Council adjourned for tea.

On resuming,

THE HON. MR. W. DURAISWAMY (Northern Province, Western Division):—I rise, Sir, to make a few observations on the Budget that has engaged the attention of this House during the last three days. I will not take up much time of the Council, as I propose to leave by the 5.30 train for Jaffna, nor will I attempt to repeat, emphasize, or reiterate what was stated by other Honourable Members of this House on matters affecting the general welfare of this Island. These have been very forcibly and effectively put before the House, and there is unanimity with regard to the demands made by the Unofficial Members. I hope that these will receive the closest attention of Government.

One point which has still not been touched upon, if I remember right, is that of the undue increase, both in the revenue and expenditure of this Island, during the last ten years. Closely connected with this question is the undue rise in the surpluses during the last six or seven years. The Financial Statement which appears over the signature of the Honourable the Treasurer, and which I hold in my hands, shows that the revenue from 1914-15 to 1925-26 has more than doubled. In 1914-15 it was Rs. 51,500,000, while the estimated revenue for 1925-26 is Rs. 106,000,000 or Rs. 107,000,000. It will, therefore, be seen that during a period of ten years the revenue of the

Colony has doubled itself, while the expenditure has correspondingly increased. Let us examine the reasons for the rise in revenue and the reasons for the rise in expenditure.

Is the rise in revenue due to a corresponding rise in the general prosperity of the country? I emphatically say that it is not so. We, who are the representatives of the people, and know the wants and condition of the masses, cannot testify to any progress in their condition. What, then, is the rise in revenue due to? It is due to the imposition of the new taxes. A rise in revenue has always occurred after new taxes were imposed, and it has been our experience that the rise in revenue has been more than the return expected from the new taxation. Most of the taxes which were imposed during the period of the ten years I am referring to were temporary measures, resorted to during the great war to meet a sudden emergency. I am sorry I cannot furnish Honourable Members with statistics in support of that statement, and, indeed, I do not think that any useful purpose will be served if I could. Well, as I said, the taxes imposed during the great war were imposed mostly for temporary purposes; but they have all become permanent. All those taxes are yielding returns which are responsible for this increase in revenue. The increase is not due to progress in the prosperity of the country.

On the last occasion when taxes were increased the proposal was to get by the new imposition a sum of only Rs. 7,500,000. To meet the estimated increase on account of the new Salaries Scheme a sum of Rs. 5,500,000 was wanted, and the remainder was to meet the expenditure on works that were delayed on account of the want of funds. The estimated increase, I say, was Rs. 7,500,000. Who was responsible for that estimate? I put the question direct to the officers of Government. This is not the only instance in which the estimates have gone completely wrong. Well, the Rs. 7,500,000 has risen to millions and millions more. The new impost was made when the Budget for 1922-23 was being discussed. It was thought at the time that there would be a deficit of Rs. 2,500,000 in round figures. But what was the result? There was a surplus of Rs. 8,000,000 and more on the working of that Budget. I ask the question, Who was responsible for this estimate which placed the country on increased taxation and led to other evil consequences? Now, this inconvenient surplus got into the hands of the Treasurer, and what happened?

In 1923-24 the Government realized another surplus on the same taxation, and they made frantic efforts to get rid of this amount. They passed special resolutions to pay Rs. 3,000,000 towards the war contribution which was to fall due the next year or the year after, and they set apart a few more millions for other purposes, and thereby got rid of Rs. 11,500,000 during that financial year in order to bring down the reserve to Rs. 10,000,000. Well, what happened the following year? Somewhere about March, when the Government looked into their accounts they found that they had again gone considerably wrong, and that they would be faced with a surplus of Rs. 11,000,000 odd, and they again set about to dispose of this money. That money, I say, should not be bestowed on the objects for which they are taken.

We are now considering the Budget for 1925-26. Here, again, there is going to be a surplus, and it is estimated that on September 30 there will be in hand Rs. 23,250,000, which is about the same

amount as the previous year. I will read out the amount of surplus which has accrued since 1920. In 1920 the surplus was Rs. 32,500,000, in 1921 Rs. 11,500,000, in 1922 Rs. 13,500,000, in 1923 Rs. 22,500,000, in 1924 Rs. 23,250,000, in 1925 the surplus will be Rs. 23,250,000.

If money had not been voted out of the surpluses the amount would have stood at about Rs. 46,000,0000. These surpluses came into the hands of the Government and, naturally, expenditure had to be provided to get rid of the money, but why was this money taken from the people when it was not wanted for regular expenditure? Is it sound finance? Is it sound administration to take money from the people and appropriate it for purposes for which it should not have been appropriated? Why should the present generation, which is groaning under the present taxation, contribute for the benefit of succeeding generations? We pointed out at the time that a salaries scheme could be introduced without new taxation. But new taxation was introduced, and the money is still being drawn out of the people. I ask why no steps have been taken to reduce taxation and balance the Budget? Revenue and expenditure should balance. It is not an artificial balancing, such as has been attempted during the last three years that is wanted but a regular balancing.

We have not the time to study, nor have we the capacity or training of experts; but we have come across many blots and mistakes in the framing of the Budget. If Honourable Members will examine the Railway estimates, they will find that that department is asking for something like Rs. 6,000,000. How much of this is to go towards capital expenditure and how much towards maintenance? The Budget does not represent the true state of the finances. An expert is necessary to go into it and find out how much money has been drawn out of the people unnecessarily.

Was any serious endeavour made by Government to look into this question and adopt some measures to reduce taxation? All the talk in this august assembly seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Sir, I have the greatest respect for the Officer Administering the Government. He is the permanent Colonial Secretary. I have also the greatest respect for my honourable friend the Colonial Treasurer. I know how he scrutinizes every item carefully and looks into all the details. But I expected that they would co-operate with the representatives of the people. I say that the co-operation we expected was not given. I hope there will be a change of attitude on the part of the responsible members of Government. We trust that a new attitude will be adopted by the Government, and that they would, if our representations are true, try to remedy matters. I do not, Sir, want to go much further. But there has been a unanimous desire on the part of Unofficial Members to see that some of the existing taxation is reduced. We are of opinion that the taxes on foodstuffs and other necessaries of life should be reduced. If that is done, it would give great satisfaction to the people at large. Last year almost every Unofficial Member asked the Government to abolish the poll tax, and a Committee has been appointed to go into that question. The poll tax has not yet been abolished, but the Government has left the matter to be decided by the local bodies. If the local bodies abolish it, I hope the Government would come to their rescue by making up the deficiency. I hope the Government would go into these suggestions at the meetings of Select Committee.

Many matters were referred to in the course of this debate, and among them was the important subject of food production. What is the amount provided in the Budget for food production? Last year a sum of Rs. 9,000 was provided for paddy experiments, and in the previous year a sum of Rs. 10,000 was provided; but all the money had not been spent. This year the amount voted is Rs. 30,000. No doubt it is a big jump from Rs. 9,000. But is that all that is necessary for the purpose of encouraging food production? In the year 1921 I asked the Director of Agriculture to state what had been done for the purpose of encouraging food production and he gave a list of things done; but they were disconnected instances of what had been done by the officers of the Agricultural Department in the different parts of the Island. With all this the condition remains the same—the same quantity of food is produced; and we have to depend helplessly on the supply we are receiving from the neighbouring continent. For the purpose of increasing food production we want, not thousands, but lakhs and millions. Large sums of money are voted for putting up palatial buildings and on other works. I ask, why should we not vote large sums of money to start the work of food production? Why should we not start in every village in every Province demonstration plots, as pointed out by an Honourable Member, and show the people that it is a paying proposition to cultivate paddy. I think the Government should help us in this matter by adopting our suggestions.

I wish to say a word, Sir, in support of my honourable friend who represents the Eastern Division of the Northern Province. I was a Member of this House when in 1921 or 1922 I visited Mullaittivu. There the Maha Jaha Sabai referred to by the Honourable Member gave me a copy of the memorial which they had presented to the Government. In that too they had made pointed reference to the transfer of the Kachcheri. They protested against the intended transfer of the Kachcheri from Mullaittivu to Vavuniya. I myself did not see any reason for the transfer of the Kachcheri to Vavuniya. My honourable friend has adduced very strong and satisfactory reasons in support of his proposal that the Mullaittivu Kachcheri should be retained. I happened to be in Mullaittivu during the north-east monsoon and I found nothing wrong with the place. Of course, during some part of the year the place is rather unhealthy, but with the Malariologist in our midst—and he is successfully combatting malaria—Mullaittivu can be made a healthy town.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the Budget should make provision for the villagers—the masses. My honourable friend the Director of Agriculture classified the people of this country as tea, rubber, and coconut producing people, and he called the villagers paddy producing people. I want the villagers' interests to be carefully looked after by the Government and by this House. This Budget appears to look only after the interests of the capitalist class. I want the views of all the Members on this question, whether we should carry on the administration of the country for the good of the capitalist class, or the labouring class, or the cultivators. I want that aspect of the question to be looked into by the Official and Unofficial Members of this Council so that ultimately, as I hope, measures may be introduced for the amelioration of the poorer classes.

THE HON. MR. W. T. SOUTHORN (Principal Collector of Customs):—I was brought to my feet just before the tea interval, Sir, by that unexpected attack upon the Port Commission—an attack, I am sorry to say, on those very racial lines which the Honourable Member for the European Rural Constituency had only just before deplored. The attack having been on those lines, I propose to leave it alone merely regretting that the fact that there is on the Port Commission a very able Ceylonese business gentleman seems to have been completely overlooked.

At the request of my honourable friend the Member for the Northern Province, Western Division, I gave him the right of addressing this Council immediately after tea, on the express understanding that as he had to catch a train he would take up only ten minutes. I am not sorry I gave way to him. Besides meeting his convenience, I think I shall be able to show the cause of the miscalculation to which he referred with regard to the amount which would be recovered from the additional taxation in 1922.

I happen to have with me the records of the trade of this Colony for the past ten or twelve years. When estimates of revenue are framed, it is necessary to consider what has been the trend of the trade of the Colony during the past few years. Attention has been drawn to the estimate of revenue framed in 1922. It will perhaps explain why the revenue produced was greater than the estimate framed if I give Honourable Members the figures of the trade of the Colony for a few years before and after that date.

The total revenue from the trade of this Colony in the years 1919, 1920, and 1921 was as follows:—

			Rs.
1919	642,000,000
1920	629,000,000
1921	548,000,000

Any Principal Collector of Customs who framed an estimate of abounding revenue on a falling volume of trade of that kind would have been rash in the extreme. But what followed? In spite of the increase in the Customs duties, the trade in 1922 rose to Rs. 598,000,000; in 1923 it rose to Rs. 660,000,000, and in 1924 to Rs. 711,000,000. That, I think, accounts for the increase of revenue which followed the Budget to which so much criticism has been directed.

I rise, Sir, to-day more particularly to address the Council on that very difficult subject of taxation. The matter is one of absorbing interest. It touches the pockets of all of us. There is not one of us who would not be glad to pay less for what we purchase—whether it be for the safety of our homes and lives, or the general amenities of social life, or the food and clothing which we purchase in the markets of commerce. I think the Government can congratulate the Unofficial Members on the fact that when they came to consider the reduction of taxation, they, with a unanimity which we all admire, devoted their whole attention to reducing those taxes which they thought would react to the benefit of the poorest classes.

Now, Sir, if I join issue with my Unofficial colleagues, both as to the conclusions they have drawn and as to the premises on which they are based, I hope that this Council will acquit me, and will acquit the Government, of any lack of sympathy with the poorer classes of this Colony. The Government is as anxious as any

Member of this Council to promote the welfare of the poorest classes. It is about the means by which their welfare may be promoted that we differ. Our objects are the same, and if we differ only as to the means, let us recognize and acknowledge the honesty of purpose that actuates us both.

Before I begin to deal with the general subject of taxation, I should like to mention one or two points raised in the course of discussion to which I think I should give some reply. It was suggested by the Honourable Member for the Colombo District and he has been supported by several Members who followed him—the Member for Hambantota District, the Member for Ratnapura, and the Member for the Northern Province, Western Division, who spoke last, it was suggested by these Unofficial colleagues of ours that expanding revenue is not an indication of prosperity. I am quite certain that no Member on the Government side of this Council ever suggested that expanding revenue was an indication of prosperity. It is a truism that the prosperity of a country cannot be gauged by the amount of its revenue. But the amount of the trade of the Colony is an indication of the country's prosperity. I have just read out to Honourable Members in another connection the figures of the total trade of this Colony during the past six years. Honourable Members will see that they went down from 1919 to 1921 and rose from 1922 to 1924.

Goods cannot be imported into this Colony without money or credit to pay for them, and they cannot be exported from this Colony without the labour for producing them and the payment of wages to that labour. I therefore maintain, and I do not think it can be controverted, that a rising general volume of trade in this Colony is a sure indication of increasing prosperity. Now, it seems to have been assumed by certain Members who have spoken on the Unofficial side that because revenue is high, therefore the rates at which it is collected are too high, and therefore the poor are being ground down by them. That is a fallacy. The fact that the revenue is high is not due to the fact that the rates are too high, nor would it be the fact that if the rates were too high, the poor would necessarily be ground down. The fact of having the rates too high and having them at a figure at which the general population of this Colony cannot afford to meet them would be reflected, not in rising revenue, but in falling revenue; and when revenue falls without a sufficient reason, such as, for instance, a general depression in the world's trade, then the Government must look into its rates of duty and other sources of revenue and find out whether the rates are too high and are pressing too heavily on the general population of the Island.

That there are poor people in Ceylon is not denied by anyone. They are everywhere. The poor are always with us, and, unfortunately, they will always be with us; but to say that there is any general unemployment in this country at the present moment is, I think, not correct. There is no grinding poverty such as exists in some of the manufacturing centres of the West. Fortunately for Ceylon, it does not know the depths to which poverty can go. If the dignity of labour, if I may use the term, were more widely recognized in this Island, I think that people would hardly talk about unemployment, especially when they realize that last year we were forced to import 150,000 labourers from the neighbouring continent to make up for the deficiency of local labour. These

things must be looked at from a broad standpoint. There are, no doubt, certain classes of people who for one reason or another have had their status changed and have not yet been assimilated into the body politic. But that is a passing phase, and that particular form of unemployment to which the attention of this House has been directed on one or two occasions recently will gradually right itself. It certainly is not a ground for saying that the present state of Ceylon is one of unemployment and distress. I think that many in this House—not all—will agree with me and my honourable friend the European Rural Member, when I say that the people generally have never been so well housed, never been so well fed, never been so well clothed, and never been so well looked after as they are at the present moment.

THE HON. MR. E. W. PERERA (Kalutara Revenue District) :—
Question.

THE HON. MR. W. T. SOUTHORN (Principal Collector of Customs):—Let me not be misunderstood. I do not at all suggest that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and that improvements are unnecessary. Not until the millennium arrives shall we reach that blessed period when there shall be no poverty and no distress. Until then there will always be room for improvement in dealing with the poorer classes of the community ; always room for improvement, towards which this Government should and does give attention. But what I wish to emphasize at the moment, Sir, is this, that the people generally are better off than they were ten years ago, and much better off than they were a hundred years ago, and that the language of hyperbole which has from time to time been used about the condition of the poor is not, I think, justifiable. The trade figures of this Colony with all they imply—the purchasing power and the employment of labour—are, I think, a sufficient proof of what I have put forward.

Speaking of the export trade of this Colony, my honourable friend the Member for the Colombo District quoted some figures, which I am sorry to say I have been unable to follow. I think he said that our exports in 1922 and 1923 were Rs. 107,000,000 of raw materials and Rs. 2,000,000 of manufactured articles in the first year, and Rs. 113,000,000 of raw materials and Rs. 3,000,000 of manufactured articles in the second year. These figures bear no relation to any I can trace. I am sorry the Honourable Member did not give me the figures in writing to enable me to trace them. The export figures, exclusive of coal and liquid fuel, were as follows :—

Rs. 297,000,000 in 1922.

Rs. 351,000,000 in 1923.

Rs. 385,000,000 in 1924.

What the Honourable Member refers to as raw materials I do not quite understand. If we take tea, rubber, coconut oil, citronella oil, desiccated coconut, coir, and several other articles, we find that they have all undergone some process of manufacture. If we take unmanufactured articles, such as arecanuts, fresh coconuts, cardamoms, and possibly plumbago; then, as far as I can follow it, the figures would be Rs. 113,000,000 raw materials in 1924 and Rs. 270,000,000 manufactured articles in the same year. It may, however, be that we are at cross purposes, because I do not know

whether the Honourable Member regards tea as a manufactured article although it is made in a factory. I have, nevertheless, placed the figures before the House, so that Honourable Members may know that the figures put forward by my honourable friend are open to criticism.

I would now like to pass to that much-debated question of the reduction of taxation. But I do not propose to follow my honourable friends into the sea of detail in which some of them have been engulfed. I do not know whether I am in order in referring to certain newspaper articles, but if Honourable Members have read the morning papers, I wonder whether they noticed an interesting observation put forward, and that is, that we should restrict ourselves to broad principles and avoid discussions on where the exact situation of the local pump is to be, or even the more intimate question, whether there should be a local pump at all. I could not help being reminded of that particular article in the press when listening to some of the discussions about apothecaries at Angunakolapelessa, or springs at Ambala and Dutch wells at Pahalagoda, and I could not help feeling that the pump handle had been worked a little too freely. I shall, therefore, try to restrict my remarks to general principles, and not refer in detail to the various suggestions that have been made for the reduction of taxation. Details, if necessary, will come in their proper place.

The subject of the general financial situation of the Colony I shall leave to the more able hands of the Honourable the Colonial Treasurer and the Honourable the Colonial Secretary to deal with at the appropriate time. Suffice it to say that so far as I myself am concerned, after listening to the speeches of the Honourable Members who represent the various constituencies, it has been made perfectly clear to me by the arguments that they have adduced that the revenue of the Colony is totally inadequate to supply the needs of which the Government has been reminded. Nor is the Government ignorant of those and many other needs, many of which have been strongly pressed by heads of departments. They were only omitted from the Budget now under discussion for lack of funds to meet the necessary expenditure. The fact that our revenue is inadequate for our needs escapes the attention of my honourable friends when they begin to talk about what is wanted. In one breath they would take away Rs. 4,000,000, and in the next they would demand expenditure on roads, railways, hospitals, water supplies, paddy cultivation, payment of headmen, fencing of roads and fencing of railways, and last but not least lakhs and millions of rupees on food production as my honourable friend the Member for the Northern Province, Western Division, just said before he escaped to Jaffna—projects which would eat up not Rs. 4,000,000 but Rs. 40,000,000 and more than Rs. 40,000,000 of additional revenue.

My honourable friend the Member for the Colombo District—I must apologize to him for referring to him so often, but he opened the debate and set forth the views of my Unofficial colleagues—girded at the expenditure on personal emoluments. My honourable friend the Member for the Central Province Urban Electorate declaimed against expenditure on bricks and mortar, but the former suggested that in order to encourage commerce among the permanent population we should establish bureaus of commerce and industry. A bureau cannot function without an office; it cannot function without a house for the officers in charge to live in.

There go more bricks and mortar! Still more dreadful, the bureau cannot function without a bureaucrat! Now, bureaucrats are anathema to my honourable friend the Member for the Kalutara District, and I felt that he must have writhed with agony when he heard the suggestion from his next door neighbour that this Government should employ bureaucrats up to a number which was not specified. The fact is that the Government is asked to give back with one hand more than it is asked to take away with the other.

It falls to my lot to consider the principles on which Honourable Members have proceeded in their proposals for the reduction of taxation. It is interesting in this connection to recall some of the proposals which were put forward in the last Budget debate. The demand then was the abolition of the poll tax, the removal of the tax on rice, and the removal of the tax on salt. Where are the snows of yesteryear? The tax on rice is not mentioned; the tax on salt is barely mentioned; while with regard to the poll tax there is a strange and mysterious silence. This year the old proposals have been dropped, and with a few exceptions, some of them so rash that I think they could hardly have been intended to be taken seriously, Honourable Members have concentrated on the suggestion that there should be a reduction on certain specific articles. I shall not deal with the question of the railway or other matters in which my department is not concerned, but I will confine myself to my own particular subject—the tariff. So far as my department is concerned the suggestions of Honourable Members may be summarized as follows:—Reduce taxation by Rs. 2,700,000 by remitting or reducing the import duty on curry stuffs, dry and salt fish, Maldive fish, and sugar.

I might as well point out at once that there is no question in this matter of reduction. It is a question of entire remission if my honourable friends wish to obtain the sum of money they want. The actual sum produced by these articles in 1923 was Rs. 2,500,000. In 1924, thanks to that prosperity to which I have referred, the figure went up to Rs. 2,900,000. But I can hardly suggest such a tinkering with the tariff as to remove only Rs. 2,700,000 and leave a couple of lakhs of revenue available. On this point we might, I think, pause and see what was said last year. Then, as I pointed out, it was the poll tax and rice. Now it is sugar, curry stuffs, and fish. It appears to me that in the case of Honourable Members who have made these suggestions they have thought the matter over and come to the conclusion that they, perhaps, were wrong last year; and I, therefore, say that perhaps the Government was right. Well, what proof have we that the same thing will not happen again this time next year? There is no disgrace in, or objection to, any changes of opinion in any man provided it is an honest change. I am not suggesting that there is anything wrong or improper in the change of opinion on the subject of articles on which taxation should be reduced, but I think that the Government may well pause and consider whether the same position may not arise next year; whether this time next year Honourable Members will not change their minds again and come to the conclusion that some other items should be the subject of taxation.

I will not trouble the House with what Honourable Members said last year, but I might perhaps be pardoned if I refer to the remarks of two Honourable Members. The first I should like to refer to are those of my honourable friend the Member for Colombo

District. He said: "I am rather inclined to think that the question of taxation must not be dealt with piecemeal. It is a matter which requires careful consideration. My humble opinion is that the more prudent course for this House to adopt is to tackle the whole problem of taxation as early as possible, not so much with a view to reduce or abolish this tax or that tax, but for the more important purpose of devising some scheme which may distribute the burden of taxation in an equitable manner." The Honourable Member for Kegalla Revenue District said: "On this question there are two schools of thought, judging from the many speeches we have heard to-day. One school of thought would wish to reduce the tax on rice and abolish the tax on dry fish; the other would have us abolish the poll tax altogether and the tax on salt We must consider carefully whether the abolition of any of these taxes would redound to the advantage of the poor man." As a matter of fact the Honourable Member favoured the abolition of the poll tax, but as regards the tax on rice, he said it was doubtful whether its abolition would be to the advantage of the villager.

Now, Sir, the general conclusion which may be gathered from what was said last year on the question of reducing taxes is that the Government should move with caution. That brings me to the question whether my honourable friends on the other side of the House are proceeding on right lines in their suggestions for the reduction of taxation. Some would prune the tariff, some reduce the estate duty, and some the railway rates, while there is the suggestion, first put forward from outside and since repeated in this House, that there should be a reduction of the postal and telegraph rates. The Government might well pause before such a multiplicity of suggestions. The tariff, of course, offers an easy target for the arrows of reduction, but I think that Honourable Members are misled by the false analogy of the British tariff system. The British tariff system is quite different from ours. Our system touches practically everything in commerce. On the other hand, the British system, apart from the special war and post-war changes, includes only a small number of rated duties applying to a certain small number of commodities. Sugar is among the rated commodities, and I would, while on the subject of sugar, remark that I have, in the short time that has been at my disposal since it was mentioned, been able to find only one Colony and one large State where sugar is not taxed. Speaking generally, sugar is a universal article of taxation.

The revenue of the British Government is not in any way dependent on its tariff. That is only one of the many sources of revenue. In this Colony it is quite different. If Honourable Members will look at the second page of the Estimates, where the estimates of revenue are given, they will find that the total estimated revenue for 1925-26 is Rs. 106,000,000. From that, if they take away land sales, port dues, and the Government railway—none of which can properly be called items of taxation—they will find that they are left with an income from taxation, although I have no doubt that the Honourable the Treasurer will be able to point out that many of the items cannot properly be called taxation, of Rs. 74,150,000, of which Rs. 38,500,000 comes from the Customs. The Customs tariff is one of the main sources of this Colony's revenue. It is an integral part of the fiscal system of the Colony and has been

carefully devised. It is—I say it advisedly—intended to reach all members of the community according to their ability to pay, and it falls with the least hardship on the poorest of the people—on those people who live in their jungle villages, who eat their own home-grown food, and spend an infinitesimal amount on duty on imported articles.

Now, as regards tariffs in general, I think the House will be interested to know what the Economic Committee of the League of Nations says about changes in tariff. What it says is this: “The Committee strongly recommends that all States should endeavour to ensure that their Customs tariffs should remain applicable for substantial periods of time, and that changes in rates and classifications should be effected as slowly as possible.” Our tariff is a tariff carefully revised and evenly balanced, and last fixed by a law passed only in 1922. Every revision results in some dislocation of trade. The trade of this Colony has now adjusted itself to the new tariff, and I would strongly deprecate any sudden changes at the present time, and still more the annual changes which seem to be foreshadowed by some Honourable Members.

I do not propose to deal in detail with the various items mentioned for the remission of taxation, but I would remind Honourable Members that it will be necessary for Government to give careful consideration to the matter before it gives effect to it. It may well be found that many of the proposed remissions will re-act solely to the benefit of the middleman, and after we have handed out Rs. 4,000,000 we may find that it has gone into the pockets of a class already well off without having obtained any corresponding benefit for the poor. On the other hand, many of the taxes to which the attention of the House has been directed possess a distinctly protective value. After what we have heard for the last two days of the need for local food production, it is open to doubt whether it is wise for Government to take away taxes to the injury of local food production. The same point was made by the Honourable the European Rural Member, and I fully endorse what he said of the danger in taking away taxes that assist local food production.

In conclusion, to me has fallen the thankless task of indicating to this House the fact that Government cannot without the fullest inquiry accept the various suggestions thrown out by my Unofficial colleagues on the subject of taxation. I know that my words will fall on unresponsive ears. I know I shall be accused of thwarting the desires of my Unofficial colleagues, but I think that if those desires are unsound it is my duty to oppose them. Honourable Members might remember that Burke said that to tax and be popular is as difficult as to love and be wise. My remarks, no doubt, will be open to criticism from my honourable friends the Unofficial Members. If that criticism is communicated to us with the same suavity of tone and temper, the same pleasant demeanour, and the same sweet reasonableness with which my honourable friend the Member for Colombo District opened the debate, then the Government will accept it with good grace and realize that it is given in an honest spirit.

THE HON. MR. D. B. JAYATILAKA (Colombo District):—Will you allow me a minute, Sir, to make a personal explanation? The Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs in his speech referred to certain figures which I quoted the other day, and he wanted

to know from where I had got the information. I may say at once that there was a small inaccuracy in my statement that the figures referred to were for 1922-23 and 1923-24. The figures are really for 1922 and 1923. I obtained them from the Blue Books. I do not want to take up the time of the Council by describing them fully, but the Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs will find the information—which is quite correct—on page 4 of the Customs Returns for the year 1922. The value of raw materials as given there is Rs. 107,653,235. I gave the figures in round numbers. For the following year the Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs will find the figures I quoted on page 3 of the Blue Book for that year, where the raw materials are given as of the value of Rs. 113,789,872. As for the manufactured articles, the Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs will find my quotations perfectly correct. Of course, I depend on the Blue Books being correct.

THE HON. MR. A. MAHADEVA (Western Province, Ceylon Tamil) :—Sir, I am glad I was unable to catch your eye till after the Principal Collector of Customs had spoken. After all, what we, the Unofficials, and the public are most anxious to know is the attitude Government is going to adopt with regard to our request for the remission of taxation. I wish at the outset to say that there is a great difference between the request put forward on behalf of the Unofficials by the Honourable Member representing the Urban District of the Central Province and those tentatively thrown out by the other Members of the Council. We would like certainly to see a large remission of taxation, but we do not want to be embarrassing to Government by asking too much at once. So, after careful consideration, we unanimously deputed the Honourable Member for the Urban District of the Central Province to represent our minimum demands. Those minimum demands include the remission of taxes on curry stuffs, Maldivé fish, sugar, jaggery, as well as certain reductions in railway passenger rates. Now, Sir, it is with regret that I note that the Principal Collector of Customs spoke of this very modest request which we have put forward as an attempt to tamper with the whole tariff of the Colony. He tried to prove that the tariff of the Colony is not based on the same principle as the tariff in England is based, and that, whereas the tariff in England may be altered, and as a matter of fact is altered regularly by each of the various Governments when it comes into power, if we attempt to do such a thing we would be trying to do something of which we do not know anything at all. He has quoted from the report of the Committee of the League of Nations to suggest that it is dangerous to interfere with the tariff. But was the League of Nations thinking of the remission of curry stuffs and Maldivé fish, or was it thinking of the tariff as changing the import or export duty on a commodity like rubber from, say, 2 cents to about a rupee per pound? Surely what the League of Nations had in mind was the large fluctuations in the imposition of export duties and import duties which would greatly hamper international trade. The remission of the tax on curry stuffs, Sir, as was pointed out by one of the Members, would only result in the reduction of Rs. 250,000 or Rs. 350,000, and I make bold to say that there would be a smile of contempt if any member of the Committee of the League of Nations heard that their report was quoted in connection with the remission of a sum amounting to about Rs. 350,000, and

that on foodstuffs alone. We would have liked, as I said, Sir, to have had a far greater reduction, but we were very moderate, because we did not want to hamper the Government, whom we consider rather as friends than as enemies. We thought of the Government as a part of ourselves, and we knew that the Government could very well carry on the essential and necessary services of this Island if it were deprived of only Rs. 4,000,000. That is the attitude we adopted, and we are now told that Government is unable with its huge surpluses to reduce taxation, or, as the Principal Collector of Customs put it, "We must consider the incidence and the effect of the reduction of these taxes." Sir, the story is often brought forward in the case of a request for the remission of the taxes on curry stuffs that the reduction would benefit, not the consumer, but the middleman. Well, if that is the theory by which we are going to be guided, we shall never remit any taxes on foodstuffs. I think, Sir, that we would be perfectly justified in asking for a remission of all taxes on the food of the people, but we have not gone so far, as I have said, out of an absolute desire to be moderate and to put forward a proposal which we thought the Government could never reject.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY :—I may say, Sir, on this point that Government has not actually rejected the proposal. It has not yet been before His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, but I do say that this proposal which has been sprung upon us suddenly requires very careful investigation. How long that will take I cannot tell you. Honourable Members cannot expect me to accept these proposals offhand.

THE HON. MR. A. MAHADEVA (Western Province, Ceylon Tamil) :—The Principal Collector of Customs did not say definitely that the Government was not going to accept the proposals.

THE HON. MR. E. W. PERERA (Kalutara Revenue District) :—He did.

THE HON. MR. A. MAHADEVA (Western Province, Ceylon Tamil) :—His final words were that they must carefully consider what the effect of the proposals are. I think that was intended to give Government a loophole to bow to our wishes if we are unanimous, and I hope that the speakers who are to follow me would impress on the Government that our demand this year is not going to be like the demand during the last year's Budget debate—a sort of guerilla warfare on the part of Unofficial Members—and that we are taking united action. On the question of foodstuffs, it seems absurd at this late date to question the impropriety of placing any tax on foodstuffs. It is equally absurd that the Government should not realize our generosity in not going to them and asking them to remit all food taxes, and should even want time to consider our desire merely to remit practically one-tenth of the taxes on food. I should like in this connection to read from a great economist on the subject of foodstuffs. He said : "Every argument is against such a charge in a rationally organized community, and the fact that such a charge is considered financially necessary is tolerably good evidence that the State expenditure is more than its economic position justifies." That is our charge

against the Government, and I hope to develop that later on in a resolution which I hope will be brought forward in the near future for a review of the incidence of taxation. But I say, Sir, that the present position is that we want these taxes remitted because Government is unable to spend that money usefully. I should like to give some figures to prove that even if Government has these moneys it cannot spend them. This is in reply to the argument of the Principal Collector of Customs: "You Members come before us and detail a large number of demands for which there are no funds provided." We know that when we state our demands we can expect only some of them to be carried out each year. The resources of Government are not sufficient to cope with all our demands and put them into effect in one single year. Now, Sir, I would like to show you how even after providing funds Government has not been able to spend them. In the last financial year we authorized an expenditure of Rs. 111,387,000, which we later increased to Rs. 114,595,000. Of this sum Government was able to spend only Rs. 106,000,000, and that in spite of the fact that we gave them permission to spend about eight millions more. They found that the spending department was not organized sufficiently to spend that sum. Then again, the previous year we authorized the Government to spend nearly Rs. 97,000,000, and during the course of the year we increased that sum to Rs. 107,000,000. Yet all that the Government was able to spend in that year was Rs. 100,000,000. There again in spite of the fact that authority was given to spend a far larger sum, the expenditure fell short by approximately seven millions. Again in the year 1922-23 the expenditure actually incurred fell far short of the authorized expenditure by approximately six millions. What does all this show? I had an idea that it was my honourable friend the Director of Public Works that was to blame for this state of affairs, and that he was unable to spend the moneys allotted to his department. But after listening to the reply of the Director of Public Works, I feel that the fault lies, not so much with him as with the padding of the expenditure items in the Budget, that is, there are large sums of money put down which Government anticipates will not be spent. This might appear rather a bold statement. But one little fact came to my notice as a member of the Police Inquiry Committee. There the Inspector-General of Police made one suggestion, and that is, the payment of increased salaries to constables and sergeants, which will amount to Rs. 80,000, roughly, and he said that that amount could be paid, if sanctioned, from the vote allowed to his department; mind you, without any increase to the vote to his department. Well, Sir, that clearly indicates that somehow or other moneys are voted to Government departments which they know will result in a surplus at the end of the year.

I do not want, as several Members have done, to go over the various topics that are of general interest to the Colony, because time will not permit of it. I think they have been already sufficiently dealt with by the other speakers. But I would say, Sir, that this House will view with great regret any reluctance on the part of the Government to accede to the very moderate demands we have made. We have made them specially moderate because, as I have already said, we do not want to embarrass the Government, with whom we feel that we are co-operating as regards the framing of

this Budget and in the expenditure ; and we know that any action on our part should not be such as would be likely to lead to essential services of Government or its administration not being carried out. I think we view, Sir, with great regret the speech that has been just delivered by my honourable friend the Principal Collector of Customs, who in the course of his remarks showed that Government is still hesitating to meet our very moderate request.

THE HON. MR. A. F. MOLAMURE (Kegalla Revenue District) :— I crave the indulgence of this already over-taxed House, not on the assurance that I shall not keep Honourable Members more than a few minutes, but on the promise that I shall not dwell on subjects which range from China to Peru, or even from Dondra to Point Pedro, and also that I shall only touch on two subjects referred to by the Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs and the Honourable the Principal Civil Medical Officer. I feel almost frightened and diffident to refer to the words of the Principal Collector of Customs, lest I fail in that grace which he said he expected from his critics. But should I fail, it will not really be for want of courtesy or regard for him, but to the effect his speech has had on me.

The Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs started by saying that the Government is anxious to promote the welfare of the poorer classes. That is what we always hear from Government Officials. His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government in the Address which he delivered in this Council before the presentation of the Budget used words similar or even more high falutin. I shall very soon deal with the remarks of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government.

The remarks I have referred to are dinned into our ears day in and day out, and we are asked to believe that they are sincere. We wish we can believe that they are sincere. I sincerely hope that they are sincere ; but when we compare the acts of Government with their promises, I have grave doubts with regard to their protestations, and I believe that other Honourable Members also have such doubts.

The Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs told us that the increased volume of trade indicates the present prosperity of this country. He took exception to the remarks made by some Unofficial Members that the country is not prosperous. I wish to ask him whether that is the criterion by which he judges the prosperity of a country. In my opinion, it shows that only a certain class of the people are prosperous. Trade is in the hands of a certain class, and if trade has increased we say that only that class of people are prosperous ; in fact we have asserted and re-asserted at this debate that the poorer classes are not prosperous ; and in spite of what the Principal Collector of Customs said we maintain our contention.

The Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs further said that there is no such grinding poverty existing in this Island as it exists among the poorer classes of the West. I am one of the fortunate ones of this House who happens to have spent some time in the West, and I can honestly say that the poorer classes in Ceylon are very much poorer than the poor classes in the West. When I was in London I made it a point to go to the East End, which I did in the company of a *padre* who was a friend of mine in Ceylon. I

went with him all over the East End and saw as much of it as I could, and I can say that the poorer classes here feel poverty more than the poorer classes there.

I was surprised when the Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs told us that he hoped that most of the Unofficial Members of Council would agree with him when he asserted that the poor people of this country were never so well fed, never so well clothed, and never so well looked after than now. I am surprised at this statement. Does the Honourable Member know who the poorer classes are? Has he seen them? Has he visited them? Has he known their homes and troubles? Had he known their condition he would not have uttered those words and asked us to believe his statement. I may, with more truth, say that their condition was never so wretched than it is to-day, and that no one is more pampered, more pandered to, and more molly-coddled than the rich by the Government of to-day.

The Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs also told us that last year the Unofficials wanted the poll tax abolished, but that this year there has been a mysterious and uncanny silence on that subject. But the Honourable Member has forgotten the fact that the Government promised us a Select Committee to go into the whole matter. That matter is now before that Committee. We, believing that the Government was anxious to help us, do not want to trouble the Government over the matter again this year. That is how we account for the mysterious silence.

The Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs also told us that in one breath we ask that certain taxes should be taken away, and in the same breath ask for things that would cost a large sum of money. All we ask is that certain taxes should be either remitted or reduced, and that certain votes which are not urgent should be cut down. I think I am perfectly right in saying that this year the Unofficials shall take an adamant stand in regard to the cutting down of votes that we do not want. Last year most of us were new to Council work. Last year we did not know the intricacies and problems which confronted us, and we yielded to the persuasions of Government with good grace. But this year we are adamant. We are united, and in this unity we shall stand together.

The Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs paid me the high honour of referring to me to-day. He told the House that last year I said certain things about the abolition of taxes. What he read out was exactly what I said. He told the House that last year I wanted the poll tax abolished, and that I am silent on that point to-day. I have already explained to the House why I am silent. The spokesman of Government told us to-day that Government could not accept the reduction proposed without due consideration. But the Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary told us that the Government has not made up its mind about accepting what we are asking for. I hope that the Government will be wise in their generation and give some heed to the demands of the people.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY:—I did not hear what the Honourable the Principal Collector of Customs said.

THE HON. MR. W. T. SOUTHORN (Principal Collector of Customs):—What the Honourable Member said was substantially correct.

THE HON. MR. A. F. MOLAMURE (Kegalla Revenue District) :— I shall no longer deal with the remarks which the Principal Collector of Customs has thought fit to address to us to-night. I have finished with him because I know that certain other Unofficial colleagues will criticise him with that grace with which he expects to be criticised.

I shall now deal with the remarks of the Honourable the Principal Civil Medical Officer. In the first place, I should like this House to know that the vote for new works in connection with hospitals is Rs. 479,000. This total amount is allocated to the planting districts, and only Rs. 50,000 to Trincomalee. No other part of Ceylon is to get anything for hospitals. Again, of this sum of Rs. 429,000, Rs. 231,200 is allocated to the Central Province. The Honourable Member who referred to this, remarked that it was very strange that the most healthy part of the country was to get all the hospitals and medical facilities. I say that it is very funny. Let me tell Honourable Members that there are 83 general hospitals in this Island. Of these, 59 are in the planting districts, and of these, 21 are Medical Wants hospitals. Besides this, there are 78 estate hospitals managed by estate proprietors.

There are 649 dispensaries in this Island, of which 84 are independent of planting interests and 565 are maintained by estates. There are 7,165 beds in hospitals. Of these, the planting districts get 4,988, while the rest of the Island gets 2,181. It is now proposed to give three more hospitals to the planting districts, and I do not know how many dispensaries. We, the Unofficials, were rather surprised at this, because it seemed to us that only the planting districts were favoured, and that although almost every Unofficial represented the medical wants of his district we were denied everything. What is the reason for this? It is given by the Principal Civil Medical Officer, who says that there is a sum of four and a half lakhs of rupees which has accumulated from a fund known as the Medical Wants Fund. I should like to tell Honourable Members something about this fund. It is a fund collected under Ordinance No. 9 of 1912. The cess is collected under section 28, and reads as follows :—

The Legislative Council may from time to time by resolution impose duties on exportation of tea, rubber, coffee, cacao, cardamoms, coca, camphor, pepper, and cinchona, at such rates as the Council may deem sufficient for the purpose of meeting the expenses of the administration of this Ordinance, in so far as the same are not herein otherwise provided for.

I should like Honourable Members to pay attention to the words which I emphasize :—

The Legislative Council may from time to time impose duties at such rates as the Council may deem sufficient.

These words indicate that this amount was to be imposed from time to time; and I say that the Government had no business whatsoever to accumulate this amount, and the planting community had no business to allow Government to accumulate the fund. The intention of the Ordinance was not to allow the fund to accumulate. I will read from the Address of Sir Hugh Clifford, then Colonial Secretary, in introducing this Ordinance into Council. I read from Hansard of 1912, page 133 :—

If in any one year there is a surplus of the cess imposed by this Council brought to the revenue of that year in excess of our requirements, the following

year the estimates will be reduced, not only to make allowance for that year, but also to reimburse that amount with the surplus which has been derived during the preceding twelve months.

The Government never intended that a single cent of the cess should be accumulated. If they found that there was an excess, they should have reduced that cess in the following year in order to get in only what was required; and I repeat that the Government had no business to accumulate funds, and that the planting industry should not have allowed them to accumulate it. If the Government found that the fund was accumulating they should have remitted it for some time. The Principal Civil Medical Officer, however, was constrained to admit that it could not be said that other parts of the Island are not in need of hospitals and dispensaries. If Honourable Members will look at the Administration Reports of Government Agents, they will see that every one of them is asking for some buildings in connection with medical wants. The Central Province wants two, and one of these, at Watawala, we are told is an accomplished fact. I can assure the Honourable Member who told us that, that it is not yet an accomplished fact. The item is down in the Estimates, but it has yet to be seen whether the item will go through or not.

The North-Central Province, Southern Province, Eastern Province, Badulla, Kalutara, and Trincomalee are asking for hospitals, but only Watawala has been favoured. Are the others needed or are they not? The Honourable Member for the European Rural Constituency told us that hospitals at Watawala and Madulsima are necessary. I will show Honourable Members that they are not. At Madulsima there is a dispensary. The total attendance for 1923 was only 1,045 patients. At Welimada the attendance was 2,189, and at Watawala 5,322. Now, take the dispensary at Rambukkana. The total attendance there in 1923 was 17,322; at Walasmulla it was 9,000 odd; and at Muttur 9,000 odd; but the place at which the dispensary had an attendance of only 1,045 is to have a hospital. Why? Because, so we are told, the Medical Wants Fund has got the money. If hospitals in the planting districts are needed, give them by all means; but my complaint is that in providing for them the Government has forgotten the other parts of the Island. The Government appears to think that hospitals are needed only in the planting districts.

I refer again to the Address of His Excellency the Acting Governor. The Honourable Member for the Colombo District told us that it was a remarkable Address. I have read it more than once, and I can quote certain passages from it from memory. It was a remarkable Address no doubt; so remarkable indeed that I cannot help admiring the sentiments expressed therein. I am ready to believe them only if the heart of the speaker is behind his words. If it is, the sentiments mean fair play to all of us and prosperity to the country. But let us examine the sentiments and compare them with the Estimates. We were told that the Acting Governor was instrumental in revising the Estimates; and what I am going to read to Honourable Members is from the Address of the Acting Governor. This is what His Excellency said:—

Now, the first and most important factor in all problems of administration is the human factor. The aim of the King's Government is the welfare of His Majesty's subjects—men, women, and children—and the creation of

happy, healthy, and prosperous homes in all parts of his dominions. If that is achieved, all is achieved. So, the main criterion, by which each proposal as it comes before us should be judged, is the extent to which it may help or hinder the beneficial development of this beautiful Island upon lines most conducive to the health, happiness, and prosperity of those who live here.

These are very fine sentiments, but if Honourable Members will compare them with what I have said about the hospitals, they will see that they are not in keeping with the actions of the Government. Again, speaking with regard to the different Provinces and the backward parts of the country, His Excellency used these words: "How can this be done? Obviously the first step must be to make the three least developed Provinces easy of access and more attractive to settlers." How can these Provinces be made more attractive? They cannot be made attractive unless the conditions of health are very largely improved. The Principal Civil Medical Officer told us that it is not the policy of the Medical Department to fill hospitals, but to prevent disease. I maintain that not a single settler will be attracted to the unhealthy parts of the country unless they are certain that they can have their medical needs attended to. Before I close on this point, I would wish to emphasize the words of His Excellency, that the "most important factor in all problems of administration is the human factor," and I hope that in Select Committee Honourable Members will not forget the fact that votes have to be spent by human beings.

Lastly, I come to the sentiment expressed by His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government that the Government and the Unofficials are one. That is so in theory, but not in practice. The Honourable the First Burgher Member very tritely remarked: "Whither are we drifting?" And he also wished to know whether the Unofficials were ever to remain a Committee for voting supplies. The Government, I am afraid, is a one-man show. It is run by the Honourable the Colonial Secretary. There is no one who has a greater regard for the Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary than myself; but facts must be faced. The administration is carried on by the Colonial Secretary. Heads of Departments may place anything before him, but he draws a pencil across it.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY:—I think I must protest against that statement. The Colonial Secretary does not put his pencil through these things. We have a Governor in this Island who governs.

THE HON. MR. A. F. MOLAMURE (Kegalla Revenue District):—It is his lieutenant who really governs. The remedy, however, is in our own hands. It is this. We must somehow or other—I do not care how—get into closer touch with the working of Government, and we must take a hand in the governing of this Island. At the present time it is perfectly true that we are in a majority. But merely being in a majority is useless to all intents and purposes. Unless we take a hand in governing the country, we shall always be drifting into that position to which the Honourable the First Burgher Member referred.

I shall not mention a single grievance of my district. To do so, it would be, to use a common expression, like pouring water on a duck's back. The Government, with amiable smiles, will listen to us, and there the matter ends. The Honourable Member for the Central

Province Urban Electorate pleaded hard for the appointment of a Committee to consider the wants of the whole Island when the Estimates are being framed. I suggested the same thing last year. I asked whether the Government would not take the representatives of the people into their confidence and ask them what are the requirements of their district. I waited patiently this year for a letter from the Colonial Secretary, but I waited and waited in vain. I then took the bull by the horns and wrote to the Colonial Secretary.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY :—That is exactly what I hope Honourable Members will always do.

THE HON. MR. A. F. MOLAMURE (Kegalla Revenue District) :—But what came of my letter? My district has not received a single cent, because no attention was paid to my letter. When His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government visited Kegalla the other day he was quite impressed with what he saw, and he appeared to realize that we do require the things I pointed out to him. Perhaps some of our wants may be attended to next year.

I shall now relate a little story to illustrate what I have said. In Ireland, a certain head of a family once wanted to send a present to someone to whom he was very much indebted. All he had to send was a live hare. He called his son Sandy, and said to him "Sandy, my boy, take this hare to so and so and ask him to treat it well and kindly." But remembering that Sandy was apt to be absentminded, he gave him a label on which the true destination of the hare was written. Sandy gripped the hare hard in his arms and went along. But the hare struggled hard, escaped, and ran for dear freedom. Sandy looked on, then held his sides with laughter. "You fool," said the father, "why don't you run after the hare, catch it, and take it to its true destination?" "Not I, father;" saying which Sandy turned towards the fast disappearing hare and said "You may run and run as much as ye loikes, but ye will never get there, as I have the label in my pocket." Likewise, gentlemen, we may talk and talk as much as we like, but the Government thinks it has the power in its pocket. Just as disillusionment soon came to Sandy, so will it be to others who think similarly.

I leave it to Honourable Members to imagine who Sandy is, who the father is, and who the hare is, and draw the moral of this tale.

Before I sit down I must say a word more, because a certain Honourable Member of this House told us yesterday that in his experience the Civil Servants of this Island are a lazy lot; that some of them do nothing but smoke cigarettes and read novels. I take exception to those remarks. It must be a unique experience of my honourable friend only. My experience of Civil Servants of this Island is that they are very hardworked, and that they try to do the best they can. But as someone very tritely remarked, the Government will not allow them to do what they can and want to do. I have no doubt at all as to their honesty of purpose, and I am second to none in my admiration of the Civil Servants. I know of cases where District Judges have to sit from 9 in the morning to 7 at night, and I have known of cases of Government Agents

and Assistant Government Agents working from 8 A.M. to 12 P.M., and again till 7 P.M. I have known of Office Assistants doing the same; and that, I say, is my experience of Civil Servants.

Now, I would wish to make one appeal to the Unofficial Members of this House. It is a sad spectacle to see the stronger team beaten by the weaker team. We are the stronger team—there is not the slightest doubt about it. We should not be beaten by the weaker team. We will be beaten if we do not combine. We must bow to the commands of our captain, the venerable leader of this House, and we must not try to play an innings all by ourselves. That has been the great mistake some of us have been making last year and this year. That is the mistake which gave the Principal Collector of Customs the opportunity to make the remarks he did to-day. I sincerely hope that we will all work together and gain that freedom which the hare did.

THE HON. MR. E. W. PERERA (Kalutara Revenue District) :—
Sir, I did not intend to speak on the second reading of this Budget, but as the representative of the bureaucrats has made pointed personal reference to me I feel constrained to do so. I believe an Unofficial Member of Council previously spoke of the bureaucrats as being like the Bourbons who learned nothing and forgot nothing, and if there is any Member of this House who previously had doubts as to the unwisdom of having bureaucrats as masters of a people, I believe that those doubts would have been entirely dispelled by the speech of my honourable friend the Principal Collector of Customs. Now, my rooted aversion among others to bureaucrats lies in the fact that apart from their soulless efficiency they have the quality of supreme arrogance, and according to the ancient Greeks arrogance is the precursor of doom. I do not like to generalize and say that all bureaucrats are soulless. We have a great and grand exception. We find that the lord of Anuradhapura and master of Nuwarakalawiya in his day is now the accredited and acclaimed representative of the people of the Province he comes from. That is a unique experience, and I believe the tale of it ought to resound through Asia. But such exceptions are very very rare.

I would like now, having touched on that point, to leave the bureaucrat and go on to the Budget. Now, the most important question before us is the finances of the Colony, which we ought to discuss in its broad and wide aspects. It is no doubt within our province to bring up individual matters, but, as has been pointed out by speaker after speaker, that could be done in Select Committee. I am afraid I cannot run away from the bureaucrat, because I have to meet some of the reasons that were put forward by one of them in the course of this debate. Speaking on that theme, I have to make mention of the argument that was urged as a preamble by the Honourable the Attorney-General. My grievance against him and other Officials that spoke previously is that they have given us absolutely no opening. He stated that it was useful that matters should be threshed out in the Council in detail with regard to every Province and every individual need of a constituency. That would be very useful from the point of view of the Attorney-General. But I say it would be most insidious and dangerous from the point of view of Members of this Council at this stage, because, as we know, unless strong, united, concentrated action is taken

with regard to the remission of these taxes that have already been referred to by a good many of the Unofficial Members, we will not be able to make any effect on the stony heart of Government, if Governments have any heart at all. It will be as bad and as dangerous as running in the train of pinchbeck Curzons careering throughout the country in triumphal progress. Therefore let Honourable Members beware lest they find a new scale of precedence—and the tiny bureaucrat has precedence to the ear of a Curzon or a Cæsar—while the Member representing a Province or a constituency would have to rush behind him and try to whisper into the bureaucrat's ears matters affecting his district.

It was stated that the peasant of the country is well-nourished, that he lives well, and that there is no real poverty in the country. That shows how unreasonable and even ignorant the bureaucrat is at times. I have stated for the last three years in season and out of season that it is an absolute necessity to remit taxation on the staple diet of the country. Three or four years ago, Sir James Peiris, a great political economist, opening the debate on the Budget placed this view in detail before this House. Anybody who actually knows the poverty of the peasant will see the necessity for the remission of taxation on the food of the people. This fact was repeated year in and year out, but the Government absolutely turned a deaf ear, and now my complaint is that we have been too moderate with regard to our demand for the remission of taxation. Now we take our stand on the remission of the railway rates and on the remission of the food taxes, and mind you, a very small moiety of the food tax. My principle is that all food taxes should go. I am old fashioned; I am a free fooder. On the last occasion I also supported the remission of the tax on rice. Unfortunately we split on that rock. But we shall not split on it again. I cannot but touch on one vital question of finance so far as it affects our country. That question is that nearly 50 per cent. of the revenue of this country goes in expenditure for the machinery of administration. That is a matter that has to be very carefully scrutinized, and unless we realize and the Government realizes what that means, it would be making headlong for financial ruin and chaos and for a political crisis in this country. When the Salaries Scheme was sought to be imposed we fought strenuously against it, and we did all we could possibly do. But our efforts were of no avail, and that most moderate of moderates, as a Secretary of State spoke of our Vice-President, walked out of this Council followed by other Members, as he found that nothing further could be done except making this gesture. On that occasion I must say that "even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer"—even though the bureaucrats were voting increases to their own salaries. It would be an insult to an inoffensive and island people to say that their half-starved peasantry is sleek and well fed, and that an extra tax should be put on their daily diet. I would appeal to the Honourable Member representing the North-Central Province, who knows the condition of the peasantry so well, and has first-hand knowledge of them, to illumine the darkness of some of the bureaucratic minds on this point.

I should now like to refer to the question of overhead charges. I must say that as a result of firm and strenuous representations to His Majesty's Secretary of State we got the assurance that this question would be revised in 1927, and before that date it would be

wise, instead of forcing a crisis, to have a Select Committee of this House appointed to look into the whole question of the cost of the machinery of this Government. I firmly believe that people should not be underpaid, and I also hold the heresy—equal work, equal pay. But I do not believe in having three men where one man can do the work, and in overpaying one man while slave-driving another. All these questions of detail with respect to every establishment and every office of Government must be carefully threshed out, but not with the rush and scurry of the “Rent-Ando” Commission. When that Commission was appointed the Hon. Mr. Duraiswamy, who was then the Member representing the Northern Province, and some of us protested vigorously against the appointment of that Commission. But Sir Graeme Thomson declared that the Commission had been appointed, and that it was better that the work should be allowed to proceed. He also said that it would be insane in the existing state of the public revenue to increase the salaries of public servants. I was, I might say, not suspicious, but cautious, and I said: “It may be that these are your assurances, but it would be afterwards urged ‘We have got down this Commission at a great deal of expense. Now that it has reported, are we going to scrap the report?’” But what happened? The Governor repudiated afterwards the promise made in Council by the accredited representative of Government. Sir Graeme Thomson went away, and he was caught up and made Governor of British Guiana. I hope he will come back to us some day as Governor. The whole trouble is that we get now officials, some of them extremely able men, who come here unsophisticated, from different parts of the world, and when they discover how things actually stand with regard to finance and other matters, they are caught up and transported to another Colony. I do hope that the Government will realize that we are on the brink of a financial precipice, and that the sooner we take our establishments in hand and go through them the better will it be for the Government and the whole country, and for the peace of all. I am glad to find that on this occasion members of all shades of political opinion drawn from all the varying races of this Island are united on this point, and if Government dare defy the most reasonable appeal of the Members of this House for the remission of a very small extent of taxation, which ought never to have been imposed on the foodstuffs of the poorest of the poor, and on transport, which affects the whole community, they will find that all the progressive elements of this country are banded together in strong opposition, and when the words “To your tents, O Israel” is heard they shall not fall on deaf ears. I do hope and believe everybody will unite in getting the matter through. I do hope that on this occasion we shall continue this “happy family” arrangement with the Official Members, spoken of by our Vice-President. I trust that it is not a case of “Sally in our Ally where the Master comes like any Turk and bangs her most severely,” and yet she continues to sing “We are a happy family, we are, we are, we are!” In justice to the people of this country I make this final appeal to the Government to meet our request.

THE HON. MR. D. S. SENANAYAKE (Negombo District):— I wish, Sir, to make a few remarks, and in doing so I should like to refer to the remarks of the Principal Collector of Customs. I was surprised at some of the statements he made. I was under the

impression, Sir, that he was one of the few officials who knew the country and the people well. In fact he had moved freely with the people and now enjoys, I believe, the affection of the people. But unfortunately when I heard his speech I felt that he does not know the condition of the poor peasantry of this country. If my honourable friend the Principal Collector of Customs does not have that knowledge, how can we expect that knowledge from others who move less with the people? He told us that the people are very prosperous, and that we could gauge that prosperity by examining the Customs returns. I am sure, Sir, that if our Principal Collector of Customs was not holding his present office, but was holding the office of the Fiscal, he would have told us that there was very little prosperity in the country now. He would have told us how the people of the country pay for the goods they buy and what their financial position is; and we would have heard from him how the properties held by the traders are mortgaged over and over again. I am sure, Sir, that anyone who would take the trouble to go to the Pettah and find out the ownership of the properties some time ago, or examine how many of the firms that were then in existence were still being continued, he would realize that there has been very little prosperity, and that most of the poor merchants of past years are now no more in the business world. Figures would show that a large amount of money has been spent, but the number of mortgaged properties will show that we are much poorer to-day.

After some hesitation, Sir, I have decided to support the demand for the reduction of taxation. I do so, not because I do not realize the needs of the country—they are many. Although our needs are numerous, and constantly brought forward, those demands are not attended to by Government. And if Government is not capable of utilizing all the revenue to satisfy the needs of the people, it is better to reduce the revenue and provide only the amount that Government will probably be able to spend. In 1922 the Budget provided for an expenditure which exceeded the revenue. In 1923 we expected to draw from the surplus balances. But it was found in these years that the money could not be spent. So I feel that even if we make provision for expenditure now we would not be spending all the money. Another reason why I wish to support the demand for the reduction of taxation is that the very taxes which are sought to be reduced would reduce the cost of living. If we want to compete with any country successfully in business, our first duty should be to reduce the cost of living and the cost for transport. We have only proposed the reduction of Rs. 4,000,000, and that reduction, I am sure, would give relief to the poorer classes to such an extent that the cost of living may be reduced. It was pointed out, I believe, in this Council that the cost at present to bring potatoes from Nuwara Eliya to Colombo is more than the cost to get them down from Bangalore to Colombo. That would show that owing to the present cost of transport we are not able to compete with distant countries. So the suggestion that the transport rates should be reduced is a wise one, and it would not require much consideration on the part of Government to accept it.

Honourable Members have year after year heard of innumerable needs of the country that require the earnest attention of Government—the defective educational system; absence of provision to supply industrial, technical, commercial, and agricultural training;

the need for better and more roads; the unemployment problem; the vagrant and beggar nuisance, or rather danger; the demand for a well-thought-out scheme to fight diseases, such as malaria and parangi; some comprehensive scheme to assist the paddy cultivator, and so on. This is but a small list, a comprehensive list will prove tedious to listen to. On any one or all of these one can with a little effort declaim at considerable length. My purpose in referring to them is to seek the reason why nothing substantial has been accomplished. We know, and in fairness to Government we must publicly admit, that Government is very sympathetic and very anxious to do something. I personally believe our departments are well organized and efficiently manned. These departments are, further, presided over by conscientious and capable officers. This Council is anxious to vote the necessary funds. The country, as is apparent from our overflowing exchequer, is capable of bearing the expense necessary for greater activity. But there is no progress. The sympathy of Government, the capacity of the heads of departments, the willingness of this Council to vote the money, and the ability of the country to bear the necessary burden produce no appreciable results. Why is it, and how is it? I submit it is due to a defect in the executive government of the country. To-day no head of a department can initiate a policy that needs the co-operation of any other department. If any officer does so, he has not the authority to secure that co-operation from the departments concerned. Hence nothing comprehensive can be attempted or accomplished. This state of affairs is tending to create an impression—an unfair impression—in the country that the sympathetic attitude of Government is but hypocrisy—a cloak to hide its true policy of doing nothing very substantial for the improvement of the conditions of the permanent population. What we need badly is some means of getting out of this interminable rut of routine. It is no longer practical for one officer to do all the thinking and organizing. The time has arrived to set more than one brain in motion to evolve policy. This I think can be accomplished if Members of this Council are entrusted with ministerial functions. They will then possess the necessary authority both to initiate policy and to see that policy carried out.

I should now like to refer to a remark made by our Principal Collector of Customs. I make this reference as a contributor to the Medical Wants Fund. I am a planter, but at the same time I must admit that I am more a villager than a planter; and I know and realize the wants of the villager more than the wants of the planter. In giving hospitals to planting districts Government has stated that this money comes from a cess. In the first place, I should like to say as regards the cess that it is a very bad policy that has been adopted. If any tax is imposed on the people, it should be imposed on people who could pay it, and the tax must be credited to general revenue and used for the benefit of the people. The requirements of the people must be met with the funds Government gets. It is also bad policy to get money from one set of people and use it for their benefit alone. By such a policy we would not be helping the various districts to make much progress. If we spend all the money we get on the necessities of the districts that grow products, the other districts must suffer. In connection with this cess, I wish to say that Government makes out a balance of Rs. 400,000, but they have got that balance by not charging certain items of expenditure that

should have been charged to the account. My honourable friend the Treasurer shakes his head, but I would refer him to the Colonial Auditor's report. In the report of the Colonial Auditor for last year he will find that the Colonial Auditor has criticised a certain item credited to this fund. That is the expenditure incurred on Inspecting Medical Officers. It will be remembered, Sir, that certain medical officers were appointed to inspect estates, and at the start they had to perform certain other duties also. Later on, in 1918, they had no other duty but to visit estates. But the expenditure incurred on their account was charged to general revenue, and not to this fund. It is true that this fund has a balance which may be claimed for hospitals and other needs. But at the same time I would like to say that this balance should be used to meet the needs of the country in general. I say if the planters who are contributors to the fund require any hospitals they should be attended to, but at the same time we should not overlook the needs of other districts.

With regard to the remarks of the Director of Public Works I should like to say a word. I was surprised when he told us that he had saved only 9 per cent. of the money voted to his department. I certainly thought that he had saved very much more than that. I had occasion to go over the Negombo road and sometimes over the Moratuwa-Panadura road, and, judging from the state of these roads, I certainly think that he would have saved more than 90 per cent. of the money.

There is another remark I should like to make, and I hope that Government will take serious notice of it. I hope Government will not permit the Public Works Department to be a destructive department, existing for the purpose of pulling down some buildings and putting up others. For instance, in the Training College we want accommodation for 26 teachers, and it has been proposed to break down a part of the building and rebuild it at a cost of eight lakhs. Surely accommodation for these 26 teachers could be made at a modest cost instead of breaking down a whole building. The policy of breaking down and building, which is a bad policy, is followed also by the Railway Department, and I hope that it would not be continued.

I should like to make a remark or two with regard to the Agricultural Department. I hope, Sir, that the Agricultural Department would not think separately of the major and minor products, but that it would look upon the products of the Island as a whole, and put forward a complete scheme for the advancement of the people of the country. We hope that the Director of Agriculture would not bring forward merely a piecemeal scheme for the improvement only of the tea industry or the coconut industry, but a big scheme embracing within its scope the different industries. Such a scheme would receive, I am sure, the support of us all. If the scheme is one calculated to serve capitalists alone, it will be turned down by us. We cannot encourage the Agricultural Department or assist the Government in promoting the interests of the capitalist at the expense of the peasant.

I wish also to say a word with regard to the Kurunegala District. Some remarks were made by an Honourable Member about the operation of the Waste Lands Ordinance. I must say that I have always noticed that the Settlement Officers always show greater consideration to the villagers, but my experience is that the charge

made is more than the villagers can afford to pay. I noticed that after the introduction of the Ordinance the poor villagers in order to pay settlement charges had to borrow money, and within a couple of years the interest amounted to such an extent that the lands had to be sold. Any planter will bear witness to this fact. This must be prevented. It may be that the Government has assisted capitalists in getting land, but it is not a good or just policy. Further, Sir, I should like to state that these poor villagers of the Kurunegala District have got to maintain the roads, and they have to work on the roads, although they do not own lands there. I think it is a great shame that the Government should compel unfortunate people who have lost their lands to work when they are in such poverty.

I would in conclusion beg of the Government and the Unofficial Members to stand shoulder to shoulder and try to protect the unfortunate peasant. The greatest work of Government undoubtedly is to improve the condition of the peasant by making him more efficient and more contented, and an owner of land.

Adjournment.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY :—I propose, Sir, that we should adjourn till to-morrow. It would be convenient to Government if we could sit to-morrow also, because the Budget has to be considered in Select Committee, and our report must reach the Secretary of State by the end of August, so that we may get a reply before October 1.

THE HON. MR. C. W. W. KANNANGARA (Southern Province, Western Division) :—I must say that it is most inconvenient to outstation members to sit to-morrow. We have been here the whole week, and we must get back to our stations. We do not mind sitting any day next week.

THE HON. MR. E. W. PERERA (Kalutara Revenue District) :—No doubt a cable has to come from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but I presume one or two days' delay would not make any material difference, because I believe the Budget has to be passed by September 30. As regards the debate, I think it is practically tailing off. There are not many speakers more to follow, and I think an adjournment till next week would cause no inconvenience.

THE HON. MR. T. B. JAYAH (Third Muslim Member) :—May I suggest, Sir, that we continue the debate on Thursday and start the Select Committee meetings on Friday following? That will afford time to the outstation Members to go to their towns and return.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY :—If that is the wish of Honourable Members we shall adjourn till Thursday. Of course, the unfortunate part of it, Sir, as I told the House yesterday, is that we should be in Select Committee on Thursday. I have wired to the heads of departments that the Select Committee

would commence its sittings on Thursday. Therefore I think it is better that we meet on Wednesday, as otherwise it will upset the appointments of the heads of departments.

THE HON. MR. D. B. JAYATILAKA (Colombo District) :—
I think another State telegram would put matters right.

THE HON. THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY :—I have already altered the date once. I should like to know whether it is the wish of Honourable Members that we should adjourn till Thursday next.

It was agreed that Council should adjourn till Thursday next.

THE HON. THE OFFICER COMMANDING THE TROOPS :—
Council will now adjourn until 2.30 P.M. on Thursday, July 30, 1925.