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SECTION 7

REEL No.

3

KENYA NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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KENYA GOVERNMENT ARCHIVES
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- SECTION 7

CONTINUED FROM

REEL No.

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WEDNESDAY, 22nd DECEMBER, 1926

The Council assembled at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 22nd December, 1926, at Government House, Nairobi, His EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIR E. W. M. GRIGG, K.C.V.O., C.M.G., D.S.O., M.C.), presiding.

His Excellency opened the Council with prayer.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of 21st December, 1926, were confirmed.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (MR. DENHAM) : Your Excellency, I should like to inform Council that there are one or two questions to which replies are not ready, they having been received at a late date and necessitating further investigation, and I suggest, if Your Excellency approves that this course be taken, that answers should be sent to the Members asking the questions, and the questions and replies should be published.

CAPT. THE HON. H. P. WARD : Your Excellency, I should be perfectly agreeable to that suggestion if Your Excellency would not mind the reply being published in the Press, because questions are for the information of the public.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : There is no objection whatever. As I said, the full question and the reply should be published in the Press, as well as being sent to the Member who asked the question.

MOTIONS.

COMPASSIONATE GRATUITY.

THE HON. THE ACTING TREASURER (MR. BAYLES) : Your Excellency, the first motion standing in my name is, like several others, self-explanatory. Mr. Menezes performed long and faithful service to this Government and died after drawing a pension for a little over a year. Very careful enquiries have been made into the circumstances and there is no doubt that his widow is verging on destitution. Although a considerable period has elapsed since Mr. Menezes died, no application has been received hitherto because the widow has made

strenuous efforts to maintain herself and her dependents. It is to be hoped that the granting of this gratuity will enable her to carry on. I beg to move:—

That in consideration of the destitution of the widow of the late Mr. D. X. Menezes who, after rendering twenty-five years, four months and seven days' satisfactory service in the Treasury Department of this Colony, retired on the 9th of July, 1921, on a pension of Sh. 2,721/60 a year and died in Goa on the 17th of September, 1922, this hon. Council is pleased to award her a compassionate gratuity of Sh. 3,060, which amount is equivalent to six month's salary of her deceased husband at the rate drawn by him immediately prior to retirement.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency, I beg to second the motion.

The question was put and carried.

COLONIAL LOAN.

THE HON. THE ACTING TREASURER: Your Excellency, this motion may appear somewhat elaborate but I am glad to be able to say that it is largely a matter of form. All the expenditure shown on the schedule has already been approved in detail by this hon. Council. As Members of Council are aware, the loans in question have not yet been raised and it is necessary to raise the requisite funds by temporary borrowings. The Crown Agents have provided hitherto the necessary funds and their security is a resolution passed in 1923 to the extent of £2,400,000. The expenditure incurred has now reached that figure and in order that they may be enabled to borrow from other sources and advance to us further funds to the additional expenditure authorized it is necessary they should have the security. This security is furnished by this hon. Council authorizing the issue, if and when necessary, of Treasury Bills.

Your Excellency, I beg to move:—

That pursuant to the provisions of section 2 of the Colonial Treasury Bills Ordinance, 1922, this hon. Council do hereby authorize His Excellency the Governor to request the Crown Agents for the Colonies to borrow by the issue in London of Kenya Government Treasury Bills, a sum not exceeding in the whole £3,162,410 (additional to the £2,400,000 authorized under resolution of the 8th November, 1923) to be applied to the services scheduled below and the said Crown Agents are hereby authorized out of the proceeds of the £3,000,000 loan to

be raised under the provisions* of the Specific Loan Ordinance, 1922, and/or such other Loans as may be raised for these services, immediately on flotation to repay any Bills so issued:—

SCHEDULE

	£	£	£
Ordinance 2 of 1922.. ..	..	3,000,000	..
<i>Less:—</i>			
Amount already authorized by resolution of 4th November, 1923	2,400,000	..	..
Cost of Issue.. .. .	100,000	2,500,000	100,000
Transport Loan (Resolution of 5th November, 1926) ..	..	..	90,000
Colonial Loan (Covered by resolutions of 20th February, 1925, 1st August, 1925, 18th March 1926, and 22nd March, 1926) .. .. .	..	..	1,712,410
			3,162,410*

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency, I beg to second.

The question was put and carried.

BUILDING LOAN PROGRAMME.

CAPT. THE HON. H. F. WARD: I beg leave to move the resolution standing in my name on the Order of the Day:—

"That in the opinion of this hon. Council the proposed immediate building programme under the Colonial Loan, as per statement laid on the table on December 16th, 1926, must be reduced by £100,000."

Your Excellency, that resolution is put forward from two points of view. Firstly, to draw the attention of Government to the present high cost of building and the alarming way in which that cost is rising, and secondly to suggest alternative methods of carrying out the construction programme in a way which it is hoped will reduce building costs. I think that there is ample excuse for the introduction of a resolution of this nature, especially by one who feels so strongly on the subject as I do myself. In the first place, if I have been able to read the schedule correctly, the full amount which is expected to spend on buildings by the end of 1927, approximately twelve months hence, is in the neighbourhood

of £300,000. In addition to that, there are rumours that the Kenya and Uganda Railway contemplates the building of offices, the figure for which is undisclosed, but I will ask the hon. General Manager to give us that information later on. It will be a further tax on the building resources of the town-ship. My second excuse for raising this point is that when the Colonial Loan was introduced almost twelve months ago one of the criticisms against the loan was the assertion by a number of people in a position to make the statement, that if Government did not take exceptional steps to carry this work through (by steps, I mean rather exceptional methods of organizing) building costs would rise to such a high level that it would be almost impossible for the private person to build at all in Kenya. Against that, Sir, we had arguments to the effect that numerous contractors were to be encouraged to come to Kenya and take part. The second assertion made was that a Building Works Committee, a sub-committee of the Works Committee, had been appointed to go into alternative methods of building and the reduction of building costs. That small committee was under the chairmanship of the hon. Mr. Fitzgerald and it had as its members Col. Strain and Capt. F. O'B. Wilson. The opinion of the public to-day is that building costs have very nearly reached that level which was anticipated twelve months ago. On the other hand, there may be, but the average member of the public has no knowledge of any additional contractors in a large way of business having been attracted to Kenya, and in regard to the subject of this report, whether that has been published or whether it has been accepted by Government or what steps have been taken on the report, the average member of the public desires to know. The point is that the position has become absolutely impossible from a building point of view.

This seems to be a very appropriate time to raise the question for this reason, because we see in the schedule what is contemplated for Nairobi alone. We have a school contract which I believe is for £40,000; we have a Government House which goes over £75,000; and we have the Railway offices, which are to be built at a figure which I cannot mention. At any rate, Sir, in a very comparatively short space of time we are going to approve a programme which is five or six times more than the country is able to carry out at economic rates, and especially in Nairobi the programme must be even in excess of that. Speaking on the same subject at the beginning of the year I did offer the suggestion to Government in the humblest manner, as I am not an expert on building and have only a general experience of it, that Government would have to be faced with sacrificing a certain amount of the

aesthetic in consideration of getting buildings up at a low cost and quickly carried out. When speaking then, Sir, I suggested to Government close consideration of steel and concrete buildings. I got an assurance then, Sir, from the hon. Colonial Secretary, that that suggestion would have the consideration of Government. Well, Sir, I am not in a position to know whether or not that is a recent consideration, and if so what action Government has taken or proposes to take on that particular matter. When speaking at that time (I hope this hon. Council realizes that it is a highly technical subject of which I have very little knowledge, only such as the average man in the street has) I was not able to press that form of construction because, although I have been responsible for a great deal of building in this town, I had not had experience of construction of buildings of that type before. Since that time I have had that experience and I would like to give that experience to this hon. House. The building in question is not a particularly large one but it is fair to say that with organization and an increase of staff, I (with a building three or four times the size) would have had the same experience as in this one. This building is steel-framed with concrete filled walls and concrete floors. The steel was delivered on the site on the 15th October last; the tiles were delivered on the site on the last day of November or beginning of December; and the building was handed over complete last Monday, December the 20th. That is not the only reason I feel convinced from this demonstration that I must urge on Government this type of construction. If we are going to reduce the cost of building, or even if we are going to pay the present high costs of building, it is essentially necessary to get on to some lines which tend to improve the permanent building in the Colony, and I contend if we go along constructing buildings on our present system we will never get any satisfaction and make no improvements. This particular type of building appeals to me very strongly as the one within which you can employ and train the maximum number of the natives of this Colony. At the present time, as this hon. Council is aware, we are entirely dependent on Asiatic labour and we are dependent—I am speaking of Nairobi—on a class of native labour which is looked on as an untrained assistant to the artisan and which has caused the high increase in the cost. During the last twelve months the rise has been very great indeed. If we are to effect further improvements in building, to my mind we must eliminate both those factors as far as we can. You must eliminate the Asiatic artisan and you must so build your buildings as to enable you to bring in practically untrained native labour and train them up as useful artisans.

Before bringing forward this argument I would like to describe this type of building very briefly because, as I said, it is a steel frame, the only timber used in building was for constructional purposes for the lining to the roof and for trusses for carrying the battens for the tiles. That is the only timber in the building apart, of course, from the doors and so on. The windows are steel-framed. The remainder of the woodwork is a simple sort of woodwork, doors, frames, lintels, skirtings and so on, nothing else. Well, Sir, that seems to me the very best training ground you can possibly find for the native of this country under European supervision, because the method is so sectional. Steelwork is a sectional matter by itself. It is all of the simplest possible nature, provided it is properly supervised, and when you come to the question of plastering, I submit that in no country in the world are there more indigenous plasterers than in this country as we can see when we travel round the Colony. The woodwork lends itself admirably to the class of work turned out by the industrial schools of the Colony. They are the simplest forms of woodwork you can have for your doors and lintels and so on; and painting, as hon. Members know, to-day, is practically in the hands of the native peoples of this Colony and Uganda. The question that arises is whether you can employ a European artisan on what I call sectional supervision at economic rates, and that hangs on the ratio, as hon. Members know, which you can place on one European artisan to a given number of Asiatics. I myself think that my ratio is high but I give it for what it is worth. I think that the ratio is about one to four or one to five. I find disagreement on that, but I think it is possible to find agreement with a ratio of about one to three; that is, that one good European artisan could do the work of three of the average run of Asiatics now employed. That is without taking into consideration the fact of efficiency, which must be higher on the side of the European, and without taking into consideration the factor of handling the native of this Colony, which we know the Asiatic artisan is totally incapable of doing.

If you agree to that ratio of one to three, the European artisan is paid from £40 to £50 per month. That is a figure I am prepared to substantiate in any quarter and that is without taking into consideration the very large rise in cost. I appeal to this Council, what better method could we employ than to standardize our buildings in the way I have suggested? Standardize, wherever possible, by some such method. Go to the trouble of selecting the requisite number of European artisans and depend upon that, coupled with the natives of the Colony, for carrying out our programme.

I feel so strongly on the subject that I would like to give notice to Government that I will press this resolution unless Government gives an assurance that close consideration will be given to the matter, and that they will only then proceed with the programme if my suggestions prove impracticable. There are so many buildings in the programme which can be brought into this scheme, particularly the schools. In the schools time is a factor and no one can contradict the enormous saving of time by the suggestion I have made. I hope this resolution will receive the consideration of Government.

CAPT. THE HON. H. E. SCHWARTZ: Your Excellency, I beg to second the motion.

THE HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Your Excellency, I have much pleasure in giving my strongest possible support to the resolution. I feel very strongly that Government has not carried out its undertakings in connexion with this building programme. I think I am right in saying there was a distinct understanding between Government and the Elected Members that the rate at which it was proceeded with would be dependent very largely upon the success or failure of Government in controlling the costs of building and solving the labour difficulties of the building trade. It was urged upon Government by the Elected Members, particularly by the mover, that if this programme were embarked upon hurriedly the building cost would be bound to rise very considerably and the private builder would be prejudiced thereby. That, I think, is the position with which we are faced to-day. Very largely as a result of this building programme of Government being proceeded with rapidly, building costs have risen to the disadvantage of the private builder. Furthermore, although we have been assured by Government that extensive enquiries have been made to relieve the difficulties of the building trade, I fail to see that any concrete results have come from Government in that direction. I should very much like Government to give some evidence that their efforts in this direction have met with any success. If they cannot do so they should call a halt to this building programme. I think it was generally held by those who supported the Colonial Loan programme twelve months ago there should be a distinct relation between the amount spent on unproductive and productive works. Government is very energetically pushing forward its programme in relation to a number of works which are not productive. The same energy has not been displayed in works which can be regarded as productive. Although sums amounting to £125,000 have been approved in connexion with roads and bridges, there is no evidence to show that any appreciable

amount of the money has yet been spent, and there is no date given for the completion of these works. I respectfully submit that is part of the programme which should be pushed much more energetically.

A further reason I have in supporting this motion is that it gives an opportunity to ask Government for some statement on the Basden Report. I certainly do hope that before Council adjourns we shall hear a statement of policy from Government on that subject. If it is the Government's intention to operate on the recommendations of that report, a very considerable alteration will be made in the schedule of these loan proposals, and permit possibly of a very considerable saving to Government and of the money being utilized to a greater advantage.

THE HON. SHAMS-UD-DEEN : Your Excellency, one cannot help agreeing with the principle enunciated by the hon. mover of the motion that in our building programme we must employ the most economical methods to reduce the cost of building. May I be permitted to make a suggestion in that line? I have been reading in the papers of the latest development in the building industry in Europe of building houses of glass which, I am informed, is the most economic form of building. It is the most permanent type of building and the cheapest and is good. It is the cleanest and the cheapest. If we are going to be up-to-date, we should be as up-to-date as possible.

As regards the employment of the European artisan, I would also like to see it being experimented. Once for all, it would prove, if such a programme is possible, that the almost daily abuse meted out to the Asiatic artisan, because he works for less than half the amount which it would cost us if we employed European artisans, would be obviated for ever.

In the beginning of this year I gave my opinion to the Works Committee that unless the Government took some steps to employ artisan labour or took advantage of a certain amount of unemployment in India, the cost of building would increase. It has already increased by about 50 per cent and if we go on with these highly problematical questions as to the employment of European labour, the cost will go up another 50 per cent. We are all agreed the native of the country should take his place as an artisan and skilled employee. That cannot be accomplished in six months or a year, and instead of being idealists we have got to face the issue and take the earliest possible steps to secure such labour as will keep the cost of the buildings down as much as possible.

THE HON. W. MACLELLAN WILSON : Your Excellency, I remember when we voted for the loan proposals—a fairly large programme—we voted so large a programme with the idea of getting some contractors from other countries by providing a certain amount of competition and getting things done cheaply. Apparently that has not eventuated, and there can be no question that building operations are much more expensive to-day. I rather think I remember the General Manager assuring us that the buildings the Railway were putting up did come to a greater sum than he had anticipated. The hon. Member for Nairobi North has made a very feasible proposal, and while he may not be an expert on building—none of us are perhaps—some of us have had a good deal of experience in building and many people to-day in the country are putting up buildings more or less on the lines he has indicated, which is a very cheap method, mainly because the labour that can be utilized for such work is cheaper than highly-skilled artisan labour. I think no one can disagree with the principle, but that to my mind is the reason for much of the delay the hon. Member for Plateau South drew attention to in the construction of certain roads and bridges. That delay is probably due to the fact we were waiting for implements. I see we passed £125,000 some time ago for school buildings, out of which only £35,000 odd has been spent. It is due to the same thing; we are waiting to get into our swing. After probably a year's consideration we ought to be able to get into our swing. We had a very valuable report from Mr. Basden, and I think we ought to be able to get something done along those lines. I see the impossibility of attempting to spend all the loan money on building within one year. It would not be wise to do it because it brings us on to the interest and sinking fund with one jump. There is no reason, with the information we have had up to date, and the experience we have gained by these cheaper methods of building, that it should not enable us to get on with more building at a cheaper rate. I do not know, Your Excellency, whether the hon. Member for Nairobi North only wants to reduce our loan proposals by £100,000 or to call attention to the facts. I cannot agree to reduce the loan expenditure as we ourselves have recommended it.

THE HON. W. A. M. SIM : Your Excellency, I understand this motion is not to curtail the building programme, but to do the same work by standardization and more modern methods at a very much less price. I think I might express my own disappointment in the fact that Government has not gone ahead in the rapid building programme. The present Government officers are disgraceful; they were put up twenty-five years ago as temporary offices only, and they are here

to-day. If we defer our building programme year after year, there is no doubt the burden will become very much heavier than it is now.

THE HON. THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (MR. STILES) : Your Excellency, the mover of this motion appears to base his arguments on two points. The first is that the cost of building can be reduced, and secondly, that it should be reduced by the adoption of some specific type of building or standardization, such as the steel-concrete construction. In respect of the cost of building in this country, it was clearly established by the sub-committee of the Building Committee that the cost of building any particular standard was not more than it was in the Union of South Africa and in England. It was lower than it was in Southern Rhodesia, though higher than in India and Ceylon. The reason why it is higher than in India and Ceylon is that the cost of labour in India and the cost of material in India and Ceylon is lower than in this country. Also freight charges are lower.

The costs of building of any particular type in this country are possible higher than they should be. One reason for that is that we are dependent largely on imported artisan labour, and we have not developed our own resources in respect of training the native artisans of this country. Much work has been done in that connexion though. It is the policy of Government always to construct certain buildings which are regarded as being of great urgency by the resources which are immediately at their disposal, and the remaining buildings by employing natives for carrying out the construction as far as possible. That is a proposal which requires great consideration and thought. It may be considered that building by that method will be higher than by the methods we have at our disposal now by utilizing Indian artisan labour. Later on it is thought the costs will be reduced. Much co-operation between the Administration, Native Affairs Department and the Public Works Department is necessary before anything much in that direction can be achieved, and it will take a good many years.

The high cost of building in this country in respect of material is largely due to having to import large quantities of our material. In India, for instance, the cost of cement is something like Sh. 18 per ton. In Nairobi the cost is about Sh. 180 per ton. The cost of cement in Nairobi is about three times the f.o.b. cost in England. The cost of cement in Nairobi is nearly double the landed cost at Mombasa. The cost of bricks in Nairobi varies from about Sh. 80 to Sh. 100 per thousand. I see no reason at all why, if certain methods are adopted, the cost of bricks in Nairobi

should not be reduced to Sh. 50 per thousand. The type of permanent construction at present most economical is the concrete block type. If bricks were brought down to Sh. 50 per thousand, brick construction would be more economical. The present ratio of cost of building walls in concrete blocks, stone and bricks is about one to six to one to eight to two to fifteen.

The hon. mover has referred to concrete construction. Unfortunately he has not given any indication of what the cost would be of the building to which he refers. The type of construction he advocates is the type which has been used for the hospitals in the Native Reserves and, where transport is costly, it is economical to utilize that type of construction.

The hon. mover stated he considered that one European is equal to three Asiatic artisans. I cannot agree to that. The average Asiatic artisan is capable of laying about 300 bricks per day. That is the amount of bricks which a layer is allowed to lay in England by Union rules. The European can lay very much more than that though. It is not in the proportion of one to three. I cannot agree with the hon. Member that it is necessary to standardize as far as possible the type of construction. It is not possible in all cases. Concrete block construction is the cheapest in Nairobi. That does not mean it is the cheapest form at Meru. Bricks can be produced cheaply there, and therefore concrete blocks are not the cheapest way at Meru.

With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Plateau South, who stated the Government had not carried out its undertakings in connexion with the building costs, Government has, and is, acting as far as possible on the recommendations of the Building Committee. It is not possible to effect a complete change in the cost of building construction. The thing takes considerable time, and I hope in two or three years' time, if the proposals are adopted, the cost of building will go down.

THE HON. T. J. O'SHEA : Your Excellency, on a point of order, I believe I stated that Government's efforts in the way of bringing down building costs would have been in connexion with the carrying out of this building programme and not a general effort to bring down building costs.

THE HON. THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : With regard to the Basden Report, Government has decided an effort shall be made to induce building societies to start operations here, and the matter is at present under consideration by the Treasurer and myself. Our recommendations will be submitted to the next meeting of the Building Committee.

With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Kikuyu, an effort has been made to attract contractors from other countries, but up to the present we have not been successful in that direction, and it is quite clear that any contractor who is in a good way of business in South Africa or any other country will not come to this country where conditions in respect of labour and so forth are so uncertain; nor will he undertake the construction at the price.

With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Mombasa, it is our endeavour to carry out works at less cost, and if we are given the opportunity we shall achieve that object.

THE RT. HON. LORD DELAMERE: Your Excellency, I find it very difficult to speak on this subject to-day because I did not know it was coming up. I have not been back in the Colony very long, and I have only been at one meeting of the Works Committee since I have been back. I agree with a great deal of what the hon. member has said, and I personally hope to see, and the Works Committee hope to see, and the only decision that has been come to on that subject—I understand there has been a meeting since and we are liable in this country, especially of late, for some reason or other in the last two or three years, to make a decision, go away and come back and find something different on the subject. That makes it difficult. The position was what the hon. Director of Public Works said that certain buildings should be put into the "must" category where you had to get them built somehow. For instance, schools—you cannot wait for schools, and to a certain extent accommodation in Nairobi must be provided, and I understand that it was arranged that certain improved buildings should be provided for that purpose to see how far that would meet the case. Outside that and Government House in Nairobi—and after all we must remember that with regard to Government House, Nairobi, several other Colonies are putting up money for that purpose, certainly part of the cost, and at the next Governors' Conference they will expect to find that work done or at least reasonably started—but outside these buildings that work should not be carried on until such time as better methods can be adopted. I believe that time has been lost, but what actually happened was this, that with regard to the work of the Works Committee they did try to get some of this work done by contract. They have had to give it up; that is what it comes to. There was at one time the hope that contractors would come in, but one clever gentleman wrote a lot of letters about labour in this country and the

result was that those contractors refused to come. I understand that is the position. I have no objection to them doing it; I would have done the same myself if I did not know the position, but I do say I believe that had a great deal to do with the reason why it was found difficult to get contractors up to this country. Incidentally, Gentlemen—Your Excellency, I beg your pardon, I am rather tired and I get into that particular way of talking—incidentally it is perfectly clear that if we go in for a contract on some different system we are not going to improve the conditions, because what will happen is that a big contractor will come here and until he imports artisans from somewhere else he uses the artisans of the country, and my own opinion is that there is only one way of dealing with these things that have got to be done at once. You have got to make an experiment, perhaps on single people, or whatever it may be, and you have got to get on with that in order to get your public to work on.

In regard to the rest of the buildings I think you have got to do it departmentally, because that is the only way by which you can govern the conditions under which it is done and try and improve the methods adopted in this country. I know we have all figured for a very long time that there is something wrong in the country when you can get a building like the Memorial Hall built by native artisans almost without supervision. I think there were only two Europeans on the thing at all, and the only fault in regard to that building—I am not saying it is first-class perhaps—but the chief fault with that building was that it was considerably more expensive than it would have been if it had been built under ordinary methods of building in this country with Asiatic labour. I must apologize to the mover of this that I was not here when he began; there were reasons why I could not get here. We all feel that if advantage is to be taken of this building programme of Government to alter our methods of building in this country, and perhaps cheapen them, there is only way of doing it and that is by putting our foot down and saying we will not go on with building. It has always been my opinion that none of us on this side of the House are experts on buildings. I came in on the part of the hon. Member's speech where he referred to one successful building that he had put up. I believe there is only one method possible of getting on to a different basis altogether. What you have got is—you have got your natives; your natives work so slowly as a rule at present that they do not earn the wages they are getting—Sh. 60 or Sh. 70 a month is too high for the rate at which they progress, and the only way you can get that improved is

by supervision. In other countries you find workmen of a lower grade of intelligence are supervised very carefully and kept up to their work in different ways. That is especially necessary in the case of people who will not take on contracts at a paying rate because in the beginning I think mistakes were made about that and they thought it would be a great deal more than it is. Well, you have got these people, and for their sake I think it is necessary for these people in some way or other to be got to work for a time—four or five years—at a sufficiently low rate as apprentices to Government in order to allow of sufficient high-class European supervision working alongside or whatever the thing may be with them. I believe it is the only way by which this particular thing can be altered and brought into different conditions altogether. I am not saying anything against the Asiatic. In some ways Asiatics build here now. I think they have done a great part of our building for us, but on the other hand it is perfectly clear that if you depend for your building on people from outside like that, whenever you have a sudden spurt of building they have got you in their hands and can put up prices of building and labour unless you import. But, Sir, I do feel that, like earth roads we were talking about the other day, there is only one way of dealing with it. About the earth roads, I said when you got the machinery here (and especially on rocky hills and roads) until we got this machinery properly working on the whole of the road system in this country the only way is to vote money for any other form of labour for roads except where the case must be met with certain roads which are unfitted for use. Do not think I am making talk on this. You say that we are all liable to take the line of least resistance, and it is just as well for us all I think if we took the line of greater responsibility and put it at the opposite end so that we may have to go towards the other way. It appears to me with this building. I believe if you are going to do anything with this building Government has got to put its foot down. But, with regard to this other thing, the Department that carries out the building in this country has got to do it on certain lines and it will not be done until they do it.

With regard to one or two other points—I hear a lot about cost. Take, for instance, the difference between bricks and concrete blocks. It is perfectly evident that local bricks, although they may be higher in price in this country, they can be imported the same as concrete blocks but they would be infinitely cheaper to the country. In one case you are producing the thing in the country and all the loan money is circulating in the country; in the other case you are circulating the money overseas. The money spent in the country

is not really spent at all so far as the country on the whole is concerned; I think we can take that as established. I think it is an important thing too when you talk about girder building. I am looked upon as a crank in regard to local timber (I have none of my own), but I believe there again, if the local sawmills are patronised by Government in their building, after all that money is turned again and it is not spent outside the country, I mean not directly. A great deal may be spent in other ways, but there is no doubt these things do make a great deal of difference and in the future they are going to make a great deal more. When you spend a million, plus interest and sinking fund, and you cannot float loans in the country, you are going to have invisible imports of that sort coming in all the time, and it is to my mind extremely important that every effort should be made to prevent an unfavourable balance of trade by other means that can be adopted to use the funds in the country. I know there are a great many arguments to spend money in the country and keep it there. Perhaps somebody will say that that is a simple statement. I do not think it is, I think it is a demonstrable thing and I think it is a very important thing indeed, and I think that in all these cases every effort should be made, not of course to go outside any sort of comparison of figures whatever, but where there is any reasonable comparison at all, I think it should be remembered that money spent in the country is not spent, so far as the country is concerned as a whole. I hope the Treasurer will agree with that statement. That is a very important thing. I must apologize to this hon. Member, as a member of the Works Committee—there are not many of them—for not having got up this building thing better; I have been very busy lately and I have not had a chance. I think I should, in view of what Members on this side of the House have said, probably have prepared a case. I think we change our minds on these things and we go backwards and forwards, but I do think we are trying to work to a certain thing and I think within the last week or two a definite decision has been come to. I know there has been a Works Committee meeting since and I do not know if they have not reversed the decision come to at the last one. But provided that is not so, the opinion at the last meeting of the Works Committee was that this method should be adopted of a certain number of buildings being put down on the old system and then making it quite evident to the Department carrying it out that that matter has got to be done on a different basis. If we do not, and unless Government itself lays down and says we are not going to alter this, because if we do we are not going to get anything done; unless we do that you are not going to get anything done, and I agree with hon. Members

on this side of the House. I am not making a personal attack on the Director of Public Works. I do find it difficult when that sort of resolution is come to as it has been come to in different forms. You go back and find that the Director of Public Works has put up a thing entirely different from the spirit of what we proposed on the Works Committee, suggesting that a large number of people should be brought in to do the work or something of that sort. I do think it is difficult if Government wants a thing done and wants to get these things altered, and I suggest it cannot be done by contract. It has been tried. Contracting is very much more expensive; that has been tried, not only in public works but it has also been the experience of the hon. General Manager of Railways, and they themselves had to give up the contract method in building some of their buildings and go back to departmental methods.

I hope, first of all, that my hon. friend, having ventilated this question, will not press this motion, because after all, however much I sympathize with his figures, and I believe a great deal can be done, I do not think he can show that £100,000 can be saved in this case. Unless he can do that I think he should show which buildings should not be proceeded with or something of that sort. That is for him to decide. I cannot, as a member of the Works Committee, vote for a vote of no confidence in myself and I am going to vote against this motion; but I am sorry to do so because I do sympathize with it and I believe the hon. Member is perfectly right in raising this question. I am sorry that these matters come up at a time when there is so much else to do at the moment. If we could only hold a meeting of this hon. Council and spend a week on it I believe the thing would never be altered for years. We do a little to-day; it goes back to the Works Committee; and then somebody else says something. I do believe, in these questions before the country, it would be a very good plan if we could try something of that sort. At the slack time of the year, when people can come down, we could hold a session for a week in sub-committee to go into these things and leave it to the Executive to carry them out, knowing perfectly what to do and with a clear expression of opinion, and knowing that they are not to depart from it.

CAPT. THE HON. E. M. V. KENNELLY: Your Excellency, Government gave this House an assurance some time ago that the details of expenditure—I hope I shall be corrected if I am wrong—that the details of expenditure and not the total amount of expenditure would be furnished to this House, with the idea of enabling the country to effect some sort of control over that expenditure by criticism constructive or otherwise

—and since that has not been done—in any case I have not received that information and I know hon. Members have not received it—I am supporting this resolution.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: On a point of order, I would like to point out that if the hon. Member will refer to the statement tabled the other day he will see that there is an explanatory schedule which gives the details to which he refers.

CAPT. THE HON. E. M. V. KENNELLY: Your Excellency, I am not satisfied that these details are details enough.

THE HON. THE GENERAL MANAGER, KENYA AND UGANDA RAILWAY (MR. FELLING): Your Excellency, I did not know the motion was coming on to-day, otherwise I might have brought some information with me which might have been of some use to this hon. Council. But two or three matters concerning the Railway were mentioned and I would like to refer to them briefly. First of all the hon. Member asked me to let him know the approximate cost of the new Railway offices. Well, speaking from memory, the latest tender which we were discussing with a firm of contractors was something in the neighbourhood of £105,000. We have got the cost down to something like £90,000. We first of all called for designs, and we got a very good design from an architect in South Africa. Quantities were prepared under the direction of this architect and then we called for tenders, both here and in South Africa. Passing through Johannesburg I saw a number of builders; I also saw a number of builders at Cape Town and explained to them the conditions of this country and tried to encourage them to take an interest in the building programme here. We did receive a number of tenders, but it cannot be said that the best known building firms in South Africa participated. What the reasons for that were I cannot say, but I always understood that somehow it got about in South Africa that the idea in calling for tenders in South Africa was simply to bring South African builders into competition with Kenya builders and that they were to come here to cut rates and profits. However, some firms did tender. With the lowest tender we had some difficulties and then we arranged for the second lowest firm to send representatives to this country. They sent their principals up here. I thought at one time that we would sign contracts with this firm to undertake the contract, but at the last interview with myself they raised difficulties. They raised difficulties with regard to Nairobi stone. They made certain alternative proposals in regard to the method of construction, but the conclusion I came to was that they were trying to avoid signing the contract and that turned out actually to

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The lesson to be obtained from this is that although we tried very hard to get contractors to come from South Africa we have not so far met with much success. It is not correct to say that no contractors have come in. There are a number of small firms in Nairobi trying to do some work here.

The question of Railway rates has been referred to in connexion with cement. May I say, Your Excellency, that I regard the Railway rates on cement as high and I think that the first opportunity should be taken of reducing them, when the Railway Council will be able to see its way to do so. But the Railway is up against some very serious financial problems. We have the Port loss; we have the Mwanza-Tabora rates discussion; we have cotton difficulties; and we have got under consideration certain rate reductions, especially rates on building material. In the meantime, I think I should tell this hon. Council that there has been a very serious loss in revenue. In one week we were £10,000 less in revenue than the week before, so that the position needs very serious watching. The Director of Public Works mentioned the high cost of contracts. That, of course, does not depend on Railway rates. My experience is that the cost of the local article is extremely high without any Railway rate being added.

So far as the Railway is concerned, we have built small European houses, Asiatic houses, and native houses out of concrete blocks, and we used largely the natives of the country to do the work and we found the native can be more easily used with concrete block construction than with any other form of construction and the work comes out very much cheaper.

I should like to make a short reference, Your Excellency, in regard to the hon. Member's remarks on local timber. I would just like to say this, that it is being continually

represented to me by the Railway Stores Department and the Railway Workshops that they cannot get sufficient supplies of local timber. Very often there is no response whatever to our calls for tenders, so obviously we cannot use what we cannot get. As Your Excellency is aware, we are now doing our own logging because of our difficulty in getting supplies. I think that is all I have to say.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency, the motion which has been brought before the House has, I think Government and all hon. Members of Council will agree, been very useful in bringing up this very important question to Council in a form which will lend suggestions to the debate and what may be valuable to the House in regard to Government's policy in this matter, and I trust the hon. Member will not pursue his motion further, but withdraw it on being satisfied that the question of building is one of the most vital questions with which Government has to deal, and all ideas will receive the full consideration of Government. I do not think this hon. Council has realized the full difficulties of Government in this matter. It has been somewhat assumed that Government has not proceeded far enough in regard to its programme. The policy of Government may be divided into two parts. First, to push on as fast as possible the loan proposals which have received the full approval of this Council and, secondly, to see that the labour employed on these works is the labour which has been born and educated in this country, under European supervision. To combine these two takes time, and it is not possible to carry out works as rapidly as is desired. Government has taken steps, and there has been no breach in continuity in carrying out building works on the lines suggested. Every effort has been made to bring contractors to this country, and the failure to do so was due to things in this country itself. They were met with difficulties here which made it very difficult to get them to remain in the country, but at the same time they did come. The only way you can attract contractors to this country is to have a building programme.

It seems, I think, obvious that the way to secure cheapness in building is to put up more buildings and not to stand still. Departmentally, it was found that these buildings can be constructed at present at a cheaper rate than by contractors. That can only be proved by starting these buildings, which must in time have an effect on the labour market and on prices generally and call for a reduction in the cost of building. Not only that, but also in the cost of living.

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THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency, the motion which has been brought before the House has, I think Government and all hon. Members of Council will agree, been very useful in bringing up this very important question to Council in a form which will lend suggestions to the debate and what may be valuable to the House in regard to Government's policy in this matter, and I trust the hon. Member will not pursue his motion further, but withdraw it on being satisfied that the question of building is one of the most vital questions with which Government has to deal, and all ideas will receive the full consideration of Government. I do not think this hon. Council has realized the full difficulties of Government in this matter. It has been somewhat assumed that Government has not proceeded far enough in regard to its programme. The policy of Government may be divided into two parts. First, to push on as fast as possible the loan proposals which have received the full approval of this Council and, secondly, to see that the labour employed on these works is the labour which has been born and educated in this country, under European supervision. To combine these two takes time, and it is not possible to carry out works as rapidly as is desired. Government has taken steps, and there has been no breach in continuity in carrying out building works on the lines suggested. Every effort has been made to bring contractors to this country, and the failure to do so was due to things in this country itself. They were met with difficulties here which made it very difficult to get them to remain in the country, but at the same time they did come. The only way you can attract contractors to this country is to have a building programme.

It seems, I think, obvious that the way to secure cheapness in building is to put up more buildings and not to stand still. Departmentally, it was found that these buildings can be constructed at present at a cheaper rate than by contractors. That can only be proved by starting these buildings, which must in time have an effect on the labour market and on prices generally and call for a reduction in the cost of building. Not only that, but also in the cost of living.

With regard to the Basden Report, steps have been taken by Government. The hon. Director of Public Works referred to the fact that he and the hon. Treasurer formed a sub-committee to investigate this matter further. What was proposed and agreed to at the Works Committee was that private effort should be called upon and induced to come forward to carry out the construction of Government offices in Nairobi. Every inducement should be given them and full advertisements should appear in the papers stating conditions and the terms on which Government can give assistance and inviting private building companies to come forward and undertake this work. Government is anxious to give the fullest possible help to private enterprise.

As regards the amount being done in respect of technical education for natives, the position is bound to be a very difficult one because this work has to be undertaken by the Education Department without any special expert or technical advice in regard to its own Industrial Training Depot. It was proposed in the Committee on the Estimates in 1925 that a Supervisor of Technical Education should be employed and I am glad to say that Supervisor has arrived in the country; he is an officer of very considerable experience, who has been an adviser on technical construction in England, and been in charge of works in England. He is now getting down to the work being done at Kabete, and the position has very considerably improved by the fact you have a man on the spot to supervise the work to a much bigger degree than before. Three European artisans have been brought out and are working at Kabete, and thus co-operation between the European supervisors and the native apprentices is much closer than it was previously.

At the Industrial Training Depot there are 152 natives, many of whom are doing very excellent work. Mr. Weller told me that the woodwork being done there was extremely good and far exceeded his anticipation. The question in regard to these natives is how long are they to stay at Kabete and how soon they should be put out to work in the Colony? That is a question which the Committee, of which the hon. mover is a Member, has been asked to decide, and they will find the difficulty with which Government is faced is this: that you have to put up buildings for these workers in order to bring in more apprentices. The natives working there are engaged in the erection of these buildings, and while you are employing them on the erection of buildings there, you cannot employ them on buildings outside. That is again the difficulty with which Government is faced, that while it is training men it has to house them, and to put them on to housing themselves. With regard to the simplicity of the

housing, it must be considered further in order that we may economise in time as far as possible. I trust hon. Members will realize a great deal is being done.—We are only really at the start of this programme. It is only the first year of the building programme in execution of the Colonial loan. The Colony has been faced with very considerable difficulties—the labour problem, the priority of the buildings in the best interests of the Colony as a whole—all these questions have to be considered before the whole building programme can be faced.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Before I call on the hon. and gallant Member to reply to the debate, if he wishes to do so, there is one word I should like to say on an aspect of this problem which probably is clearer to me than to anybody else. The Noble Lord quite rightly called attention to the fact that there is a lack of continuity of policy very often in the work of this or that Committee, and I think that it may be well for the public in the Colony to understand why that so often occurs. The reason is the difficulty of getting committees together and keeping them together. Take the Works Committee alone. I have been depending upon the advice of that Committee all through this year, the first year of the new building programme, as my hon. friend, the Colonial Secretary, has said, and I think every original Member of that committee has been on leave, or is on leave at the present moment. As the Noble Lord said, he himself, like other country members of committees, often cannot attend meetings. The composition of the Works Committee, like that of other committees, in consequence has often varied greatly from one meeting to another. That makes continuous study of any question difficult, and creates a fundamental difficulty in getting things on to a continuous basis. One Member is unable to be there; another arrives at another time with a different view; and decisions are apt to be altered. I doubt if it is widely realized in the Colony that for a considerable period this year I have been without ten of my chief advisers—Heads of Departments—all absent on leave. That is one of the great difficulties under which the Colony is labouring in present conditions. It has reduced me, once or twice, in despair, and because some decision was necessary, to taking decisions in an autocratic manner.

But that is not what I want. I want to see a system built up by which the largest possible responsibility is taken by the representatives of the Colony for the decisions which are made. I am sure the Rt. Hon. Member is right; the best way of doing this is that we should concentrate for a week on important subjects on which a decision should be

taken; that those who take it should abide by it afterwards; and that they should trust the executive to carry the decision out.

I must add, in comment on what has been quite fairly said about changes of decision, that it is not in committees alone that changes of opinion occur. Opinion changes rapidly outside amongst the public, and the opinions of hon. Members of this Council change very rapidly too with the changes of opinion outside. We have had striking examples of that in the last two or three weeks. In such conditions continuity of policy is difficult, if Government is going to act in conformity with public opinion.

I hope these difficulties in regard to the Works Committee may now be largely removed. The new building staff has now arrived, and the organization which we have had in view throughout the year is almost complete.

As the Noble Lord has said, we have come to the decision that the urgent works must be proceeded with departmentally as rapidly as possible, and we shall do our utmost, with the less urgent works, to build up a new system of skilled industry in the Colony composed largely of African labour, and to get the rest of our works done by that means.

Does the hon. and gallant Member wish to reply to the debate?

CAPT. THE HON. H. F. WARD: Your Excellency, I wish, if I may, to reply very briefly indeed. I should like to take the remarks made by the Noble Lord because I did not contemplate it possible by any means to delay the construction of Government House. That is a matter which is too obvious. It must carry on under the present system of construction. I do suggest the methods I put forward will not delay the construction of the buildings he mentioned and they are eminently suitable to that type of building.

If Government could give a little more definite undertaking; in view of the fact that the hon. Director of Public Works has put up no real criticism and that the hon. Colonial Secretary has dealt with it very briefly on the broadest possible lines, I do suggest Government should give an undertaking that in the next three weeks they will consider these definite proposals of these steel and concrete buildings before coming to their final decision.

HIS EXCELLENCY: I am very glad to give the hon. Member that assurance. I understand that the motion is withdrawn?

The motion was withdrawn.

BILLS.

THE HON. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (MR. HUGGARD): Your Excellency, I beg to move that Council resolve itself into a Committee of the whole Council to consider clause 4 of the European Education Tax Bill and clause 4 of the Asiatic Education Tax Bill.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to second the motion.

The question was put and carried.

Council went into Committee.

In Committee:

THE EUROPEAN EDUCATION TAX BILL.

Clause 4. THE HON. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I beg to move the following clause be substituted for clause 4 of the Bill:—

"4. (1) The tax shall be paid on or before the thirty-first day of March in each year:

Provided that—

(a) Any European who is not residing in the Colony on the 1st day of January, or who, although residing in the Colony on that date, leaves the Colony before the thirty-first day of March without having paid the tax for that year, shall pay such tax within one month after his arrival in or return to the Colony, as the case may be; and

(b) Any European who arrives in the Colony after the thirtieth day of June in any year, and who has not previously resided in the Colony during the same year shall be required to pay only half the amount of the tax.

(2) Any European who fails to pay the tax within one month after the thirty-first day of March, or within one month after his arrival in or return to the Colony, as the case may be, shall be liable to pay double the amount of the tax in respect of which he is in default and in lieu thereof. Provided that such liability shall not accrue if such European can show that the default was due to causes beyond his control."

The object of the amended clause is to give effect to the suggestion which was made by my hon. friends on the other side with regard to the time of payment, and in the amended clause it is proposed the tax should be payable between the 1st of January and the 31st of January, March of each year, instead of between the 1st and 31st of January. I am glad Government has been able to meet the suggestion in regard to this matter. There are one or two consequential amendments in the clause, but only one is material—the provision with regard to the time at which the tax is payable. In the clause, one month is given for the original payment, and the tax is payable three months later. In the amended clause, three months is given for the original payment, and one month later the tax becomes payable, so that the tax must be paid in the same period of four months from the beginning of the year.

The question was put and carried.

THE ASIATIC EDUCATION TAX BILL.

Clause 4.

THE HON. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Your Excellency, I beg to move that the following clause be substituted for clause 4 of the Bill:—

"4. (1) The tax shall be paid on or before the thirty-first day of March in each year:

Provided that—

(a) Any Asiatic who is not residing in the Colony on the first day of January, or who, although residing in the Colony on that date, leaves the Colony before the thirty-first day of March without having paid the tax for that year, shall pay such tax within one month after his arrival in or return to the Colony, as the case may be; and

(b) Any Asiatic who arrives in the Colony after the thirtieth day of June in any year and who has not previously resided in the Colony during the same year shall be required to pay only half the amount of the tax.

(2) Any Asiatic who fails to pay the tax within one month after the thirty-first day of March, or within one month after his arrival in or return to the Colony, as the case may be, shall be liable to pay double the amount of the tax in respect of which he is in default and in lieu thereof: Provided that such liability shall not accrue if such Asiatic can show that the default was due to causes beyond his control.

The new clause is a copy of the new clause which has been passed in regard to European Education Tax Bill, with the alteration of "Asiatic" for "European."

The question was put and carried.

THE HON. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Your Excellency, I beg to move that these two Bills be reported to Council as amended.

The question was put and carried.

Council resumed its sitting.

HIS EXCELLENCY: I have to report that the European Education Tax Bill and the Asiatic Education Tax Bill have been considered in Committee of the whole Council and are reported back to Council with amendment.

THIRD READINGS.

THE APPROPRIATION BILL.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency, I beg to move that a Bill to apply a Sum of Money for the Service of the Year ending the 31st day of December, 1927, be read a third time and passed.

THE HON. THE ACTING TREASURER: I beg to second.

The question was put and carried.

The Bill was read a third time and passed.

THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) BILL.

HON. F. GORDON SMITH (SOLICITOR GENERAL): Your Excellency, I beg to move that a Bill to Amend the Criminal Procedure Ordinance be read a third time and passed.

THE HON. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I beg to second.

The question was put and carried.

The Bill was read a third time and passed.

THE EUROPEAN EDUCATION TAX BILL.

THE HON. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Your Excellency, I beg to move that a Bill to make Provision for the Payment of a Tax for purposes of European Education be read a third time and passed. Standing Orders having been suspended it is unnecessary that notice be given.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to second.

The question was put and carried.

The Bill was read a third time and passed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

THE HON. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Your Excellency, I beg to move the Standing Orders be suspended to enable the Asiatic Education Tax Bill to be read a third time and passed. I do this entirely for the convenience of hon. Members. As hon. Members are aware, the Bill has just been reported to Council and the third reading could not be taken until tomorrow, and therefore I move that Standing Orders be suspended so that the third reading may be moved without notice.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to second.

The question was put and carried.

THE ASIATIC EDUCATION TAX BILL.

THE HON. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Your Excellency, I beg to move that a Bill to make Provision for the Payment of a Tax for Purposes of Asiatic Education be read a third time and passed.

THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to second.

The question was put and carried.

The Bill was read a third time and passed.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Before I adjourn Council and conclude this session, which will be the last of the existing Council—for I imagine that in all probability Council will be dissolved according to the proclamation before there is need to summon it again—I wish to thank all Members of Council for the courtesy which they have shown to the Chair during the whole time I have presided over its proceedings and for the admirable tone and temper in which they have conducted its affairs. I am sure, in this respect, they have set no bad example to Councils which will follow afterwards.

May I also say one word in the interests of the Colony about the appeal to the electors about to take place. It is apparent in the Colony, owing to its peculiar conditions, and owing to the fact the electors are for the greater part of their time necessarily concentrated on their business and their farms, that public opinion often only reveals itself on questions of public importance at the eleventh hour. I trust that next month the Colony will realize that now is the opportunity for public opinion to make itself felt. I hope electors will consider carefully the important questions which are being submitted to them at the elections and will make their opinion upon them known. I am to go home in the near future to represent, so far as I can, the desires and views of the Colony. I cannot do that effectively unless I feel that I really know what opinion in the Colony is, and I am beset by a constant doubt that, whatever public opinion may appear to be at the moment, it may be different a few months hence. This is the opportunity of the Colony to tell the Government, and its own representatives, what it really wants, and what it means, and I hope full advantage will be taken of that opportunity.

Council adjourned sine die.

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