

Index To TCT's Speeches Made In The Advisory Councils, 1945 - 1948

Council/Date	Topic
<p>1. BMA Advisory Council, Singapore, Wed, 14.11.1945</p>	<p><u>a) Price and wage levels</u></p> <p>In dealing with rising cost of living, TCT suggested that a standing committee be appointed to ensure careful distribution of supplies, the import of necessary food supplies and the dissemination of accurate information to the public. Once the question of price is tackled, the problem of low wages would automatically be resolved.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Very many suggestions of great interest have been put forward just now, but I think the most important of all is that a standing committee should be appointed as soon as possible to combat this question. There are so many phases of it that we can never cover them at a meeting of this large body. As I say, we have only covered the phase of supply. Of course, in the case of supplies, when there are adequate supplies, control will be unnecessary. Everybody knows that. It is when supplies are inadequate that the artificial device of control has to be introduced in order to reduce the prices; at least, to keep them from going higher and higher. That is one side of it which has been very well dealt with. I should like to deal with what may be called the other phase of it, which seems to have been overlooked. That is the conservation of the supplies we have in our hands. I understand the Japanese left some beans in their stores. These beans were sold to one single party. I think it would have helped distribution if these beans had been sold to small parties at regular intervals frequently and in small quantities, as they would then have gone into the hands of the consumers. The same thing might be done when we received further supplies. If we are going to receive further supplies and if we hand them to wholesalers, we might probably find that some of them may inevitably be hidden away. What is important is that when supplies are short, if we have them we have to use them carefully and intelligently. To use them properly in a</p>

situation like this is to distribute them carefully.

The other thing we have to watch carefully is the type of supplies we import. We cannot get everything we want, but certain supplies are more important and more urgent or probably even more helpful in bringing down prices than others.

Take animal food, for instance. That is one of those things which should have a high priority. Unless animal food comes in, it will not encourage the breeding of animals here and in the long run will make the prices even higher.

Another kind of food the people want is wheat flour. I know wheat flour is in very short supply. At the same time, the population, after 3½ years of starvation, has not tasted wheat flour and is “dying” for just a little of it. But the price of bread is very high. A 2 lb. loaf of bread is selling at \$6.50. If a little – just sufficient to quench the longing of the people – can be released, at least one commodity can be brought down in price and that will have the accumulative effect of bringing down the prices of other commodities.

There is another thing which I have often mentioned: the importation of green peas. That is a valuable foodstuff known to all Malaysians for the making of bean sprouts, which are rich in vitamins. It is such a cheap thing. In the olden days, we got a handful for two cents. Today they cost 45 cents a katty. We do not need very large quantities if the use of it is controlled. The supply of beans for making bean sprouts will go a long way to make up the shortage.

Much of the trouble about the value of money is due very much to the psychology of the people. The people here under the Japanese, especially during last year, have been so accustomed to speak of hundreds and tens of dollars and they still go about in the same way.

I will illustrate this. I was telling a friend that the price of eggs at 40 cents each was terrible. He immediately replied, "During the Japanese regime, they were \$50 each." People cannot realise that we are speaking in terms of the currency which is pegged and which will never one day be useless. They simply feel that whenever you talk of 40 cents, they talk of \$50.

I also happened to speak to a rickshaw puller one day. He asked for a fare of \$2 for a distance of about a mile. I offered 25 cents, asking him what was the price of one katty of rice now and during the Japanese Occupation. He said that during the Japanese Occupation, rice was \$50 a katty and he used to charge \$15 as his fare for a similar distance. I pointed out to him that present price of rice being 11 cents, my offer of 25 cents would enable him to buy two katties. During the Japanese time, \$15 could only buy less than half a katty.

This all shows what the present psychology of the people is.

The other point is we might give a little more information to the people here. The population has been cut off from the world for so long. They do not know about the conditions outside. So far they hear our departments are saying, "Everything is short. That is difficult and that is bad." All this gives the profiteers a greater chance to say. "Everything is short, so you won't get your goods for a long time."

Let us tell them the facts as we know outside.

I happened to be in India and I know Gillette razor blades are arriving. They were selling, in Bombay at the equivalent of 50 cents, and I am sure those same things are going to arrive here one day. A friend of mine wanted to buy some at a high price, but when he heard what I told him, he immediately decided to buy one, instead of the four

packets. That goes towards cutting down demand.

These things ought to be dealt with by a standing committee and as soon as a standing committee is appointed to tackle this matter although we will not reduce the cost of living to the 1941 level, we can at least prevent it from soaring higher.

Once we have tackled this question of price before, I think the wage question will automatically be solved. If we delay, and wages go up permanently to a high level, the question is going to be complicated. (P.13-14)

b) Suppression of vice (gambling, opium etc)

To Dr. Chen Su Lan's suggestion to dismiss the entire police force to curb corruption, TCT felt that it was a drastic measure in view of the hitherto brief existence of the BMA, and instead suggested that the BMA issued instructions to the Heads of Departments to tighten up its system and take every possible precaution against corrupt practices.

TCT: On the question of vice, may I make a few observations on the remarks by Dr. Chen Su Lan?

Corruption. – The B.M.A. has only been here two months and obviously it cannot deal with so many things so quickly. First things must come first. The question of corruption has been left alone long enough. I offer these observations because recently I had occasion to discuss this matter with a certain Head of a Government Department-which I shall not mention- and I was rather surprised to hear him telling me that he must assume that his staff is honest until the contrary is proved, although he had taken over a complete department with the same staff which the Japanese were using in that same department. That, Sir, is asking for trouble. Knowing as we do that during the Japanese regime, corruption, bribery and all sorts of rackets had been deliberately

encouraged, the least that that departmental head should have done would have been to be on his guard. I do not ask that you should reverse the British principle and presume a person guilty until proved innocent. At least, the departmental head should not allow his system to be loose that it is nothing less than an encouragement to the staff to be more corrupt.

I will illustrate some of these things. You may not appreciate it, but I know a certain Government department has goods in certain godowns and sells them on this basis: This Department receives a report from one of the local inspectors, one of the junior inspectors who receives a pay of about \$100. He will sell the goods on these lines:- accept a deposit from the purchaser and on the strength of that deposit, issue an order for these goods to be delivered and when these goods are delivered- of course under the eyes of this inspector- the quantity is assessed and the amount payable is then calculated. You can imagine how much room there is for bribery and corruption. What a great temptation it is to this inspector. Although this matter has been taken up by me with the Department concerned, I must say that ten days have elapsed and I have yet heard of the result.

Dr Chen's suggestion is, of course, a drastic one to take under the circumstances in view of the fact that the B.M.A. must function and it cannot train a staff overnight, but I would suggest that at least the Administration can do is to issue instructions to the Heads of Departments to tighten up its system and take every possible precaution to prevent and to curb these evil practices. (P.21)

2. Council resumed, Thurs,
15.11.1945

a) Government loans to local business
TCT supported the move to give out government loans to the middle class to help them resume their businesses. He called for government loans to be extended to rubber estate owners to help rehabilitate their estates and absorb the unemployed. He cited the War Damage Act and War Risk

Insurance in England and advocated a revised scheme whereby applicants are carefully assessed for loan aid. He was of the opinion that no time be wasted in helping these people and suggested the formation of a committee of Unofficials to look into the applications.

TCT: Sir, I wonder if you have read a memorandum which Malaysians in India, including myself, sent to the Colonial Office representative in India (Mr. AHEARNE), to the Colonial Office and to the Malayan Planning Unit as long ago as 1944? That memorandum contains, among other things, suggestions on loans very similar to this one. Then again, towards the beginning of this year, the Malayan Association in India, of which I was then Vice-President, also submitted a long memorandum on this very subject endorsing the original proposals. Therein it was suggested that loans should be granted to professional men, shopkeepers, rubber estate owners and others to enable them to restart their businesses and vocations.

Since my return to this country, it has become clearer than ever than such help is not only needed, but will also be to the good of the country, as it will clearly expedite its rehabilitation, and the restoration of law and order. The Proclamation, as Mr. Wu has just said, declaring "banana" notes valueless, has hit the middle class more than the big businessmen. The big businessmen usually have considerable reserves in property, if not in cash, and so can always obtain assistance from the bankers. It is the unfortunate middle class who did not realise that "banana" money was going to be declared valueless who are now left almost penniless and are now restarting their business or vocations, these people will either have to get busy in the black market where they can make big and quick profits with a very small capital, or, alternatively, they and their dependants as well as the dependants of those normally employed by them, will have to fall on government relief.

Government must be spending millions on relief and other measures to rehabilitate this country. It is suggested that some of the money be diverted to help to get these people back on their feet. A substantial percentage of bad debts is to be expected, but if the scheme is properly managed, the major proportion of outlay will be recovered. The loss in bad debts will, I humbly submit, be worth more than what can possibly be achieved by spending an equivalent amount on relief. It will have the effect of enabling the people who are able and eager to work for their living to become independent, and, what is of even greater importance, it will keep them usefully occupied instead of leaving them idle and free to be misled into mischief.

On this question, I should particularly like to refer to the rubber industry. As you will know, the rubber estates have been neglected during these 3½ years. Although I am not by profession a rubber estate man, it may interest you to know that I was running 10,000 acres of rubber estates spread all over Malaya. So I think I can claim to speak with first-hand knowledge. Having been neglected for 3½ years, all these estates are overgrown with lalang and blukar which cost money to remove. In case of those with dense undergrowth, it would have cost in the olden days \$50 an acre. At the present rate, it will cost \$100 an acre. How are these estate owners to rehabilitate their estates without some loans. They cannot tap their estates, especially those in North Johore, without clearing this undergrowth for no other reason than that there are wild beasts lurking around. For instance, in my estates, there are known to be dozens of tigers roaming about, and until I have cleared the lalang and undergrowth, my labourers cannot work and for me to clear the lalang at the present cost of labour is an uneconomic proposition and for this reason, much as my labourers want me to restart my estates, I have got to bide my time.

On this question of benefit to the country, we were merely looking at it from the point of view of the estate owners. At the present moment we have a lot of people, all congregating in the villages, for the simple reason that they have nothing else to do. They cannot find employment. The result is that these people are eating food and vegetables which have to be transported many miles from the place where they are produced, in the outlying districts. If these people could be attracted back to the estates, they would settle down. They would immediately, as it is only natural, begin to breed a few fowls, a few pigs, and grow some vegetables in the vicinity. They would then be independent of the professional market gardeners. They will perhaps even be able to produce some surplus which they can sell to other people to alleviate the lack of supplies. But at the present moment, they are demanding high wages, and the high wages they demand are almost justifiable because it cost them so much to live in the villages. If these people can be transferred back to their estates, they will then be able to live partially on the produce of their own hands and once they are able to do this, they naturally will not mind if they are being paid a little less. It is a vicious cycle. These people are left in the villages, the employers dare not and cannot afford to bring them back to the estates, and as long as they are not got back to the estates, their wage rates will remain high. I think this is a case where the B.M.A. must adopt a bold policy and endeavour, either by loans to these estates or by subsidy, to encourage estate owners to open up estates and thus take away all the labour into the work that they were doing before. I am encouraged today in supporting this because it has just been announced that the tin mining industry is to be helped, and if the tin mining industry needs help, I think the rubber estate owners need just as much help. In fact, in the case of rubber estates, as soon as they are helped, these labourers can immediately be absorbed, whereas in the tin mining industry it will take time- machinery and many other things have to be imported.

Another reason which emboldens me to make this suggestion is that, as we all know, in England there is the War Damage Act under which those who suffered war damage are being compensated. It does not mean that everybody is going to be compensated. But some of them have been compensated. The householder is compensated up to the amount of £100 for household effects damaged by enemy action. Money is being spent in ways like that to rehabilitate the people of United Kingdom and very rightly so. I therefore suggest that money should also be spent, if not in paying compensation in the first instance then in making loans. Many of these people will have a good claim for compensation; some of them have insured their stocks under the War Risks Insurance. Therefore, if a loan is given to them, we can recover stocks under the War Risks Insurance. I think loans should be granted to these people if on no other ground than the principle of helping the unfortunate war sufferers as has been established in England.

I will not going into the scheme. Perhaps those who have read our proposals will see that I have not and my colleagues have not, advocated a wild scheme whereby it is suggested that hundreds of parcels of notes should be thrown to everybody that comes forward. Every case must be carefully considered. Every applicant must be carefully examined and where we definitely know that he has suffered from a war loss, a loss due to no fault of his own, he should be helped. For that purpose, in order to give aid to these people as soon as possible, I think in this matter speed is more important than anything else. If you are going to help them, it is better that you help them quickly than in three or six months' time. Perhaps a committee of Unofficials might usefully examined all applications and recommend them for the approval of whoever the Government may appoint to work the scheme. (P. 28-29)

b) Remittances to China

TCT supported the stand that petty remittances to China should be restored in the earliest possible and gave his reasons: to be able to send remittances and receive a reply from the families would serve as an assurance for the labourers and a reminder for them to be more careful with their hard-earned money. He added that Brigadier Godsall had agreed to help expedite the restoration of the practice.

TCT: When talking of this subject yesterday, I did not know that I would be able to get such great satisfaction after a little discussion with Brigadier Godsall this morning. After the discussion with the Brigadier, I believe all the problems as I see them have been more or less cleared.

I of course, agree with Mr. TAN CHOR LAN, especially that petty remittances should be allowed at as early a date as possible, and as I have already had the assurance of the Brigadier GODSALL that he is sending another wire to London in order to try and enable this to be done before long, I have little more to say.

I have just to point out two reasons for the information of this Council. The ability for the labourer, especially concerning petty remittances, to send any money to China is more than a pecuniary one. He has not been in touch with his family for 3½ years. He is naturally in a very unsettled state of mind. Everyone would be, not having heard or communicated with his family for 3½ years. It is customary with the Chinese, when they communicate with their families in China, to send something as a present or as a token of goodwill. And the petty remittance has always been a method by which they express that love, that affection, for their families. Once they are able to send these remittances and get a reply from their families, I think it will have done very much to sober these people. They will feel that “at last, my family is well. I have got to be careful and not be too wild lest I will be

clapped into gaol.”

A man usually thinks of money in terms of his own currency. The average Englishman, when he spends a dollar, thinks of 2s. 4d. If a Chinese can be permitted to send money to China- at the present favourable rate of exchange, the rate of exchange with subsidy from Government is 200 to 1- he will then be more careful.

He will think that for every dollar he spends he is spending 200 Chinese dollars, and that is going to help to curb his extravagance.

I will not take up more of your time as Brigadier GODSALL knows all about these things and he has kindly promised to help. (P. 29-30)

c) Discussion on grants-in-aid etc to schools

TCT lauded the efforts made by the BMA to help reopen schools. He pointed out that the Military occupation of the Chinese High School premises kept the students away from school and requested for strong representation be made to the Military to see if the High School cannot be returned. He also suggested that financial help by way of a grant or low-interest loan from the government be provided to reopen more schools to keep the youths occupied.

TCT: Sir, I have been dealing with this matter on behalf of certain schools for some time, and to begin with I should like to say that B.M.A., especially, the Singapore Division, fully realises the importance of opening schools and helping the schools to reopen. I must say that every help and encouragement has been given by Brigadier MCKERRON and Colonel REGESTER. In certain cases, I should say they even did wonders. As soon as they were approached, the next day the school premises were returned.

Nevertheless, there has been disappointment and the disappointment cannot be blamed on these two very, very energetic officers. I refer particularly to the

Chinese High School. We realise that the Military are short of accommodation and that a very important division of the Military is occupying those premises. At the same time, I should like to stress that youths of impressionable age of the High School students need, more than younger students, the opportunity of returning to school. The sooner these youths can go back, the less likely are they to be led into mischief.

Many people cannot help feeling that, after all, charity begins at home. The need of the Military is imperative, but we also notice that there are many Dutch evacuees in this country. We have had to take them in because their country was unfortunate. At the same time, it cannot be gainsaid that by admitting them we have added to our problems. We have made congestion more congested and many people are not too happy when they recall that when Malaya was threatened, the Government of the Dutch East Indies would only accept 500 refugees from this country. That is all they agreed to accept from us. When people think that congestion has been added to by these Dutch refugees and even the primary schools cannot be opened, they can hardly be blamed for feeling a little strongly about it. This Council is an Advisory Council and it is, I believe, my duty as a member of it to voice my opinions. I merely wish to ask that the strongest representation be made to the Military to see if this High School cannot be returned.

Another question is to help some of these schools to reopen. When the Japanese came in, they forced the schools to be abandoned, with the result that all furniture and fittings have been destroyed. In former days, schools had always been subsidised by the merchants themselves. The merchant people here having a little money generally contributed willingly towards running and equipping the schools. But, after these 3½ years of hardship, I am afraid they have lost most, if not all, of their money. They cannot afford to be as generous as they used to be.

	<p>As a result there is a Chinese school, for instance, which is unable to restart because it does not have the funds to furnish the school. In such cases, perhaps the Financial Department may see its way to help by way of a grant or, if not possible, perhaps by way of a loan on very low interest, so that yet another school and more youths can be absorbed and kept occupied. (P. 34-35)</p>
<p>3. BMA Advisory Council, Wed, 12.12.1945</p>	<p><u>a) Discussion on financial matters- assistance to rubber estates, pineapple plantations and local industry</u> TCT asked Colonel Williams for assurance that estates over 100 acres would have access to supplies. He explained that his application to the Supply and Distribution Department has drawn a blank.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Sir, may I ask Col. WILLIAMS for an assurance that supplies, when being allocated to rubber estates, will include estates of over 100 acres. My information has been that those estates of over 100 acres who do not join the Malayan Rubber Estate Owners' Company will have to look to God for supplies. I have applied to the Supply and Distribution Department and they say, "we do not know where you can get your supplies." (P. 46)</p> <p><u>b) Discussion on financial matters- Transactions with the banks and the post office savings bank during the Japanese Occupation</u> TCT spoke in defence of the efforts of the BMA officers, especially Brigadier Godsall, in securing relief for the locals and seeking sanction to grant foreign exchange in appropriate cases. He expressed his dismay at the apparent reluctance of the Imperial government to delegate more powers to the Controller of Finance, which ran counter to colonies' aspirations for self-government.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Sir, I find it difficult to refrain from speaking in this discussion, since it happens to be part of my business to dabble in this question with the Finance Department. I had hoped that it would not be necessary to</p>

discuss this matter at this meeting as Col TODD will tell you. Brigadier GODSALL and he have been working very hard to get a decision from the Home government. To begin with, therefore, let me make it clear that I am convinced that the officers of the B.M.A., particularly those of the Finance and Accounts Section, are in sympathy with our hardships and have exerted themselves to get us the relief we have been seeking ever since Malaya was liberated. I deliberately say "relief", because this exchange is used for no other purpose than getting relief for the people who have families in China and relief for ourselves in getting urgently needed supplies. Therefore, they are in no way to blame for the present impasse. For some inexplicable reason officials of the Imperial Government department concerned with this question have turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the officers of the Finance Section. Officials of this department, that is the Imperial Government department, do not seem to realise that the people of this country having undergone four years of Japanese exploitation coupled with an all too successful Allied blockade, are in real and urgent need of supplies. Nor do they appear to appreciate that the people of this country are also human and sentimental and so have been almost bursting with impatience to communicate and obtain news of their kith and kin and to send them much needed succour. It is over two months since Brigadier GODSALL sent his first signal to London for sanction to permit limited petty remittances to China. In other words, family remittances, remittances of very small amounts not exceeding \$100 per month per person. At the last meeting of the Council, I had given the notice to speak on this question, but I desisted when Brigadier GODSALL, personally took up the matter again with the Home Government. Since then, he has sent several more signals, but so far he has not received any favourable reply. There can be no question that limited remittances to China must be permitted. It was permitted right up to the fall of Singapore and it will have to be permitted so

long as there are Chinese immigrants in this country. Such remittances are permitted in India and in Australia where all remittances, including those to other sterling areas, are usually severely restricted. The hold-up, therefore, seems unnecessary and unkind.

As regards the general question of foreign exchange, Brigadier GODSALL has similarly sent many signals to London asking for the necessary sanction to enable him and his officers to grant foreign exchange in appropriate cases. Again, this question is left in abeyance. All reasonable men realise the need for the British Empire to conserve her foreign exchange, but surely Brigadier GODSALL and his officers who have been appointed by the Imperial Government can be relied upon to exercise the greatest care in releasing any foreign exchange. We are so short of supplies at present that something must be done immediately to alleviate our hardship. In fact, if we use our foreign exchange judiciously, we shall be enabled to help recover more foreign exchange than what we may spend. For instance, transport and estate supplies are two of our chief shortages. Therefore, the more quickly we can import trucks and, for instance, formic acid into this country, the sooner will our estates be enabled to swing into production to put forth the rubber so badly needed by the world and which the United States so eager to buy from us. Sir, I must confess that this apparent reluctance on the part of the Imperial authorities to delegate even a little of its powers to our Controller of Finance bewilders and disheartens me. All Malaysians were happy and hopeful when they heard the Secretary of State for the Colonies declared not so long ago that it is the policy of His Majesty's Government to lead the colonies to self-government. They thought that at long last we are to be given a little more rope, but, alas, we still appear to be tied to Whitehall's apron strings more tightly than ever. If it requires two months for the Treasury to delegate such ordinary discretionary powers to the Controller of Finance, one shudders to forecast how many

decades it will be before we can ever have any semblance of self-government. However, I believe that the malady is not so deep-rooted. I fear that certain officials in the Trading with the Enemy Department and perhaps also in the Treasury are inclined to belittle the gravity of our problems, due perhaps to our smallness, geographically, and the distance between us and their mother country. It may be a case of "out of sight, out of mind." Let us, therefore, hope that as a result of this ventilation of our troubles, some friendly Members of Parliament- of which I believe we have not a few- will take up the cudgels on our behalf and correct this illusion.

May I also very briefly touch on the complaint that Dr. CHEN SU LAN has made. I certainly agree that it is the duty of members of this Council to bring forth whatever complaints they may have heard, but I also submit that it is the duty of members of this Council to investigate complaints before they bring them up. So far as I know, I can only speak for the banks; the complaints against the banks are not well founded. (P. 48)

c) Trade and supplies-Price of rubber

The long term policy was to attain a fair price for an adequate supply of rubber, but as TCT saw it, this policy was forgotten in the case of new cars which were selling at 150% more than the pre-war price.

TCT: Sir, may I be permitted to make one observation? In the case of rubber, we have been told we must revert to the pre-war price and look to the long-term policy. I think you have heard of the new cars which have arrived, selling at \$2,640, which is 150 per cent more than the pre-war price. In this case, it seems the long-term policy is forgotten. (P. 59)

d) Municipal affairs and housing- formation of standing committee on municipal affairs

TCT urged the formation of a standing committee of ex-Municipal Commissioners

to assist Mr. Bartley in the Herculean task of reorganizing the Municipality.

TCT: Sir, In urging the formation of a standing committee to help in dealing with Municipal affairs, I have not overlooked General HONE's explanation in the opening speech at the inaugural meeting of the Council. He said then that it was not possible at the moment to reconstitute the Municipality as a semi-autonomous body responsible for its own finances. Whilst conceding that it may not be convenient to set up a semi-autonomous body responsible for its own finances inside the framework of a military administration, I can see no harm, but on the other hand, I can see many advantages in having a standing committee of ex-Municipal Commissioners to help the Senior Civil Affairs Officer (Municipal) in the same way as the General Reconstruction Committee is co-operating with you. There are happily in this country still quite a number of experienced Municipal Commissioners who can undoubtedly give valuable assistance to Mr. BARTLEY. We are very fortunate in getting Mr. BARTLEY to come back to help reorganise the Municipality. But as the task before him is a Herculean one and he has so few experienced officers to assist him, I feel sure that Mr. BARTLEY will be among the first to welcome my proposal, whereby he will acquire immediately and without expense a group of willing and experienced helpers to share with him the burden of unraveling the numerous tangled problems confronting him. They can at least help him in promoting continuity in municipal policy and in paving the way for the eventual charge-over to the civil government. (P. 59)

e) Matters of law and order- scheme to attract educated youths to join the police force and to provide for their intensive training to be police inspectors

TCT suggested that a training school for local officers be established as soon as possible and a remunerative scheme to attract the best type of candidates.

TCT: Sir, as it is generally recognised that a respectable and reliable police force is a prerequisite to civilised social order, it is unnecessary for me to stress the importance of building up a really good police force in this country. Since the backbone of any organisation is the quality of its leadership, the police force needs more than anything else good officers. In the past most of the inspectors were recruited from the United Kingdom, but in view of the urgency of our needs, and as local men, who will not have to learn the common language of the country and already know the customs and habits of the local people, can be more easily and quickly trained as inspectors, I suggest that a training school for officers be established immediately. There must also be a remunerative scheme to attract the best type of candidates available. At present, regardless of the qualifications of the candidate, he has to undergo training as an ordinary police constable in the Thomson Road Depot, drawing whilst in training a salary of \$26 or \$28 per month- the rate at which ordinary constables are being paid. They have no assurance that after a fixed period of training they will be promoted to officers. Of course, with their higher scholastic qualifications and consequently higher intelligence, they will have every chance of quicker promotion. Nevertheless, I believe it is a bit too much to expect any Senior Cambridge boy to accept those terms of enrolment in the police force in the hope that one day he will, as stated in an official statement recently, rise to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police drawing a salary of \$300 to \$510.

In raising this matter, I have gone very carefully into the present system. In fact, on your suggestion, Sir, I induced a boy to join the police force. When that boy was interviewed by the Commissioner of Police, he was asked to join the Auxiliary Police Force where he was told that his salary would be \$45 a month. The next thing that happened was that they found him to be the

best in the Auxiliary Police Force and the latest decision is that he should go to the Thomson Road Depot and enroll at the reduced salary of \$26. That is what happened for being too good. The need for a scheme to enable suitable candidates to be trained intensively as officers is apparent, and I can only hope that this proposal of mine will not be shelved as are other necessary measures until the return of civil government. (P. 64-65)

f) Medical, health and relief matters

TCT illustrated with examples to emphasise the high price of medicine. He suggested that public recognition be accorded to those doctors who had made the sacrifice to adhere to their pre-war scale of charges. He appealed to all reputable dispensaries to help in all possible ways to bring down the price of medicine.

TCT: Sir, may I, with your permission, take this opportunity to make a public appeal to our noble medical fraternity and their associates the druggists and pharmacists? As Dr. CHEN has very rightly said, it is the duty of members of this Council to bring before it the grievances of the public. The public at present complain that the price of medicine is very high. I have found this complaint to be only too true. Here is a bottle of Doan's embrocation, an external application for the relief of rheumatic pains. I only bought it yesterday at an old established dispensary in North Bridge Road not because I want to encourage high prices but simply to show it to you. It cost \$6.50 as against 60 cents pre-war. A tube of Wintogeno costs \$8 as against about 75 cents pre-war, a bottle of nerve vigour costs \$25 as against \$1.25 before and a tube of Burnol \$6.50 as against 60 cents pre-war. Other medicines are similarly priced at many hundred per cent above their pre-war levels. If anyone on this Council has any doubts about these facts, I suggest that we adjourn and proceed to some of the dispensaries to see the price lists being displayed by some of them at this very moment.

I have no doubt that there must be cause for such increased prices and charges. For one thing, we know that the doctor has to pay 10 times more for his food and other personal needs. He has also to pay higher salaries to his employees but as many of them are already well to do if not rich and it is the proud tradition of their profession to serve, may we not ask, at least those who are well able to afford it, to accept some sacrifice and adhere to their pre-war scale of fees. The legal profession generally has not revised their pre-war scale of charges. I am aware that some doctors have nobly refused to increase their fees not only now but even during the Japanese regime when they were paid in Jap currency and to them, the public must ever be indebted and grateful. In fact, I would suggest that those who have made such noble sacrifices deserve to be accorded suitable public recognition by some signal honour. Medicine is a necessity as vital to the poor labourer who sweats for his living as to the rich. It may be that the dispensaries selling them have had to buy their supplies at high prices, but what seems astounding is the disparity between the prices in one store as compared to those in another. Anyway, let me here and now appeal to all reputable dispensaries to make little, if not any more than their pre-war margin of profit, whatever may be their cost, to restrict their sales to each customer and to help in all possible ways to bring down prices. Under the existing circumstances, the public must rely on their tender mercies. Enlightened men like them and those of the professions must give the lead not only in words but also in deeds, if we are ever quickly to restore this fair land of ours to what it was. (P. 71-72)

g) Education matters- return of schools occupied by the forces

TCT pointed out the importance of education to the Chinese community and appealed on behalf of the community that the Military returned the other school premises still under their occupation as quickly as

possible.

TCT: Sir, according to a recent report in the newspapers, the B.M.A. being only too appreciative of the importance and urgency of restoring school facilities in this island, is doing its utmost to secure the release of school buildings. However, in the same report, it was stated that “school buildings not yet released total 29 and up to the end of last month, only about 59% of the 1941 total of 65,700 students are attending school”. It would be more correct to say that 59% of the 1941 total have managed to squeeze themselves into schools of some sort as some school buildings are used by as many as two schools holding three or more sessions daily and packing as many students as space will permit into each class.

School-going children have lost almost 4 valuable years during which they had not only learnt nothing useful but also learnt much that it is undesirable, due, of course, to corrupt codes sown by the Japs. With high prices and a distorted sense of values still prevailing, it is imperative that children should be kept healthily occupied in order to prevent them from acquiring, during their enforced idleness, more misconceptions and bad habits. Schooling therefore is the thing that our young people need most, after food. They must not be mentally starved a day longer. I think it is quite unnecessary for me to take up more of your time to stress the importance attached to schooling in our modern civilisation. Suffice it to say, that even in war-torn China, the Government has kept schools open at any cost and sacrifice. In this country, the importance of education in the eyes of the public can be gauged from the fact that all Chinese schools were built out of private charity and, but for a subsidy from Government, they were also sustained by private funds. In fairness, I must also add that the peoples and the Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations have also regarded schools as of no less importance. In Australia, troops have elected to camp in

the open even in Winter rather than displace schools. I am sure the Military Forces here are no less unselfish and can be equally self-sacrificing. In fact, I have just heard a rumour that the regiment occupying the premises of the Chinese High School at Bukit Timah is already planning to vacate the premises within this month in order to enable that School to prepare to re-open in January next. On behalf of the public and the School Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Military Authorities for their considerateness. We will be extremely grateful if the School is immediately released as we do badly need it. The School Committee held a meeting when I received your letter of 17th November advising "that for various reasons it was not possible for the Army to vacate the Chinese High School premises in the immediate future." They were bitterly disappointed with the news and they decided that another appeal should be made to you and, through you, to the Military Authorities to release this, their only institution for higher studies in Chinese. They have asked me to point out that, unlike in England, this School like most other Chinese schools in this country, was built by the Community and not out of public funds. Its importance to the Chinese community cannot be over emphasised. I have here two news cuttings in Chinese. They show how perturbed my Community was, when news that the Chinese High School may not be returned for some time, leaked out to them. However, I hope that is all over since the Military, according to my latest information, will soon be returning the premises of this school. The Chinese Community further hope that the Military will also kindly endeavour to return the other school premises still under their occupation as quickly as possible. They are not insensible of the debt they owe to the fighting forces for their liberation but they are also convinced that strong and hardy men will not mind putting up with the discomforts of tent life in order to expedite the salvage of our young intellectuals. (P. 76)

h) Land and sea transport problems

TCT highlighted the importance of bringing in more ships to ease the shortage of supplies. He called for the Military authorities to release the vehicles loaned to them by the BMA so that such vehicles might be allotted to various essential industries to enable them to restart.

TCT: Sir, as a member of the General Reconstruction Committee which has been trying to grapple with the problem of high prices and shortage of supplies, it seems to me that in whichever direction we turn, we always find that the transport bottleneck is one of our chief ailments. One often hears that there are no ships to bring back more trucks or cars or other supplies which we badly need. One also gathers that there are not enough trucks to go up-country and bring back our supplies. There is, of course, also an acute shortage of public transport facilities with the result that the population is crowding into the towns making our problems many times more difficult. On the first problem, one cannot help wondering where all the thousands of "Liberty Ships" have gone. When Germany was defeated, we were told that all the ships available were to be diverted to repatriate the American troops and in intensifying our offensive in the Pacific. Now that it is over 6 months since Germany capitulated and 3 months since Japan surrendered, we should have thought that some of those ships would have been available for bringing supplies to us. We all know that we are in the grips of a very serious economic malady which, if not quickly treated, may become chronic. I trust this is as fully appreciated by the Authorities who control shipping and that therefore Malaya will be accorded the highest possible priority.

As regards the land transport bottleneck, one sees on the road and all over the town large numbers of army trucks. We know the Army needs large numbers of lorries and other vehicles for its special purposes but in view of the fact that the B.M.A. is so badly in

need of a few trucks to bring supplies from upcountry, one wonders whether it will not be possible for the Army to lend the B.M.A., at least temporarily, some 20 or 30 trucks to be returned when those being imported by B.M.A. arrive. For lack of motor-cars, many industries which have been anxious to restart, have been hampered. During the initial stages, it is believed that the forces did not bring their own transport with the result that some of the enemy vehicles have had to be allotted to them. Now that the military must have landed their own transport vehicles, may we expect the Military authorities to release the vehicles loaned to them by the B.M.A. so that such vehicles may be re-alloted to the various essential industries. (P. 80)

i) Repatriation of Malayan evacuees

TCT urged the BMA to make further representations to the relevant powers to provide the necessary transport to bring back the evacuees in India who had made the necessary arrangements to prepare for their return only to find themselves stranded in India due to the lack of available ships.

TCT: Sir, when this country was threatened, thousands of women and children were evacuated to various parts of the world. They left behind them in Malaya, husbands, fathers and mothers. In the case of the Europeans, their husbands and sons have since rejoined them in India, Australia and the United Kingdom. We rejoice with them in achieving such an early reunion thanks to "RAPWI" and other similar organisations. However, in the case of the domiciled Malaysians, they have had to and are still patiently awaiting the return of their beloved ones and for the happy day. Although most of the local people have not been interned, it must not be inferred that they had not undergone as much suffering as those who were interned. In fact, all have suffered alike since this country was overrun by callous barbarians whose ruthless disregard for personal rights is only too well known. The local people were broken-hearted when they

had to send away their families – they actually felt the wrench even more keenly than their European friends as people in this country are not accustomed to long separation.

Through the thoughtfulness and considerateness of General HONE, plans were made to repatriate progressively the Malayan evacuees in India. With this end in view, a repatriation Committee of representative Malaysians arrived in Singapore in mid-October. They had, under the direction of the Refugees and Displaced Persons Branch, prepared and sent to the Colonial Office representative in India lists of evacuees in India and Ceylon who had homes to go to on their return to Malaya and who would not be a burden on the local Government on their return. On receiving such lists, the Colonial Office representative sent out a circular to the evacuees concerned, warning them to be prepared to leave on a few days' notice. That was at the end of October or early November. We have also heard that as long as October last, the Government of India had agreed in principle to the provision of 4 ships to repatriate 4,000 evacuees at weekly intervals starting about mid-December. Later the All-India Radio was heard to announce that a troopship would take about 1,000 evacuees back to Malaya about the 15th December.

Taking heed of the Colonial Office representative's warning and the reports of arrangements made for their repatriation, most of the evacuees concerned have prudently given notice to terminate their employment, sold their furniture and even contracted to give up their flats or lodgings by mid-December. They have now been told that there is little hope of getting any ship to repatriate them before next January. They are therefore in a terrible predicament. They are now subsisting on their meager savings and they are in danger if being thrown on the streets.

The B.M.A. has no control over shipping, but

I hope it will nevertheless make further and urgent representations to the Powers-that-be to provide the necessary transport to bring back the evacuees without delay. It has been suggested that with our food shortage, it may be better not to increase the population. If that be so, I think even our Dutch friends will agree that we must make room for our own people before we even attempt to extend shelter to some 12,000 Dutch refugees as was reported in the papers recently. Anyway, if the ships which may bring back these evacuees should be used to repatriate the many thousands of unfit and aged Indians in this country who are clamouring to return to their motherland, it should be possible to send out as many as may be brought back to Malaya and the net result should be no increase in population and, consequently, little aggravation of the food problem. (P. 81-82)

4. BMA Advisory Council, Wed,
23.1.1946

a) Date of changeover to civil government
TCT proposed that a target date for the change-over to civil government be fixed and made known to the public. In anticipation of the disputes that would arise with the termination of the BMA, TCT called for the introduction of certain general rulings and the appointment of a specially constituted commission as part of the preparations for the change-over.

TCT: Sir, since, besides the Supremo, you and your chief officers are known to be determined to see that the Civil Government is restored to Malaya at the earliest opportunity, it may safely be assumed that the change-over will not be unnecessarily deferred. In fact, - perhaps rather rash- I will venture so far as to predict that Malaya will again be under Civil Government by the middle of March, if not earlier: I am not making a blind guess. As we all know, Burma has to suffer much damage before the Japanese could be expelled therefrom and yet its Civil Government returned at the end of about six months after its liberation. For this reason, it is logical to presume that Malaya will not need to be under Military

Administration for any longer than Burma.

However, may I suggest that, as in the case of Burma, the Supreme Allied Commander may be advised to fix a target date for such change-over and make it known to the public. As you know only too well, although the country is making a progressive recovery under your able administration, there are still countless problems and issues which are being held over pending the return of the Civil Government. Legitimate sales and purchases of properties, movable and immovable, are restricted most severely at present. In the absence of civil courts, the estates of those unfortunate enough to have died just prior to the re-occupation of the country and since then, are receiving no legal protection with consequent disastrous results. But for the liberal policies adopted by the local banks, even normal trade would have been difficult, if at all possible, under present conditions, as properties cannot be mortgaged or charged. Banks are financing pawnshops and merchants depending at best on deposit of title deeds as securities. This state of affairs is retarding the rehabilitation of the country and so it cannot be ended too soon.

It is obviously advantageous to work to a target date and, moreover, early preparation for the change-over is highly desirable.

Presumably, the Moratorium will have to be lifted with the termination of Military Administration. When that happens, all sorts of disputes will arise and it will be unwise to leave it entirely to the courts to settle such disputes, since litigation is always costly and takes time. If possible, the authorities should after careful investigation, make certain general rulings which have the effect of lightening the work of the courts and, at the same time, protect the interests of the majority especially those who have been scrupulous and steadfast. For instance, it should be possible to invalidate all sales of properties to enemy subjects and sales of trust properties for the purpose of paying

the so-called “voluntary contribution” to the enemy. A specially constituted commission will, I hope, be appointed immediately to deal with this as part of the preparations for the change-over. (Applause). (P. 90-91)

b) General-Occupation of properties by the services without prior requisitioning

TCT proposed that steps be taken to enforce the Supreme Allied Commander’s instructions that only the fewest possible buildings be requisitioned, in the face of housing shortage. He suggested action be taken to protect the interests of the house owners whose properties were occupied by the Military.

TCT: Sir, may I take this opportunity to express the appreciation and gratitude of the citizens of Malaya to our Supreme Allied Commander for his considerateness in giving instructions that only the fewest possible buildings should be requisitioned? It was indeed heartening to have such an important assurance from such a high source and it may be said that as a whole and theoretically, those instructions have been respected, for the Requisitioning Officer has been quite reasonable. In practice, however, like most orders, I fear our Supremo’s instructions are not being carried out as well as can humanly be expected. The Requisitioning Officer has a difficult task indeed. When the Allied forces landed in Singapore, they just went into occupation of any premises they found unoccupied and to their liking. In most cases, no formal requisition was ever made. Most of the owners of those properties confidently assumed that since men in uniform are occupying their houses, it must be legal and eventually payment of the proper rents will be made to them. Other owners who were more prudent and enlightened took the precaution of reporting the occupation of their premises by the Services to the Requisitioning Authority asking for formal confirmation. Anyway, it was only recently that requisitioning orders were served on most of the owners to

regularise the occupation of their properties and payments designated “Advance of rents without prejudice to final settlement” were made to some of the owners.

In quite a few cases, a house had been successively occupied and vacated by several units during the last few months and, as the official records are incomplete, owners are now expected to prove their claims. Sometimes, a property is vacated without prior warning to the owner with the result that when the owner came to discover it, the fittings and even some of the doors and windows had been looted. In another instance, the Services remained in occupation of the house after it had been de-requisitioned and continued to be in occupation in spite of a written promise by a Brigadier to release the house by an extended date. Again, one wonders if the Military is making a full use of the houses they have requisitioned. Is it necessary and economic to house troops in modern family bungalows and are most of the houses being filled to their capacity?

Sir, it is obvious that the civil population is suffering considerable hardship because of the housing shortage and steps should be taken to enforce the Supremo’s instructions that only the fewest possible buildings should be requisitioned. In cases of insufficiency of evidence, I suggest that the Services should be instructed to pay rent on mere proof that the house was in a habitable condition and on a statutory declaration by the owner that he had not let or attempted to let the house because he had reason to believe that it was being used or reserved for use by the Military. Owners should also be compensated for damages to their property through looting due to failure of the authorities to give due notice of the vacation of their houses. (Applause). (P. 97-98)

c) General- Shipping space for passengers to and from India

TCT highlighted the plight of the stranded evacuees in India and illustrated two cases

in which ships left India with few paying passengers when they could have been used to ferry more of the evacuees.

TCT: Sir, like Mr. JUMABHOY, I feel very diffident about talking on this subject again. It has already been discussed on more than one occasion- in fact, at all the previous meetings. But, Sir, the importance of this subject is assuming overwhelming proportions and if you will bear with me, Sir, I should like to give you a very brief outline of how the people view all these failures to bring the evacuees back in good time.

To begin with, I shall have to take you back to the days of 1941, when Penang was evacuated. Unfortunately, most of the non-Europeans including the Volunteers were left behind. There was a hue and cry and, as a result, His Excellency the Governor appointed a Passage Priority Committee. The Military authorities were blamed for not evacuating the country as it should, giving everybody an equitable chance. Then came the evacuation of Singapore- that is, the evacuation of women and children. His Excellency Sir SHENTON THOMAS was most eager to see that equal opportunities were given to all women and children to evacuate this country. He appointed a Passage Priority Committee with Mr. Justice AITKEN as Chairman, and I happened to be one of the members of that committee. Again, in that case, although we tried our very best, it so happened that on the 30th January we found that, again, most of the non-European women and children were left behind.

Coming back to this repatriation question, I must reveal that you have taken, from the very beginning, a very great personal interest. In fact, I would like to recall that when you were in Delhi, as soon as Japan surrendered, I cabled you as President of the Malayan Association and you immediately replied, agreeing to the appointment of a Repatriation Committee to go to Malaya and make preparations for the return of the evacuees. I would also add that you also

suggested that small and frequent parties of fifty people would be the best course. All that shows how sympathetic and eager you are to get the evacuees back to this homeland which they have not seen for three and a half years. A Christmas has passed and a New Year has passed and now comes the Chinese New Year. Many of these evacuees are still waiting to be re-united to their families and they cannot help feeling more aggrieved when they think that some of the ex-internees and prisoners of war from this country have actually been able to return to England and are once more back in this country.

Again, recently we drew attention to the fact that a very big ship, the "Winchester Castle," came to Malaya almost practically empty. I was told- I may have been misinformed- that the blame was laid at the doors of the Ministry of Transport. It seems very queer that a ship of that dimension should be able to leave a big port like Bombay without the knowledge of the authorities if they are sincerely vigilant and really determined to put the evacuees on it. In fact, I have spoken to two of the passengers who came back on that ship and both of them told me that they were advised of the sailing of the ship as long as four days before the actual sailing. In one case, the information was given to her- it was a lady- by none other than the S.T.O. in Bombay.

Yet another ship is on its way, the "Indrapura." We have been informed that seventy-seven evacuees are on that ship, and again, it seems that only those who have been able to pay for their own passages are able to come back.

This state of affairs is definitely very depressing and the seriousness of the position can best be appreciated, Sir, if you will consider it in the light of what has happened in the past. (P. 98-99)

d) Trade and supplies- Free trade

TCT called for minimal control and

interference with the freedom of trade to aid the rehabilitation of Malaya. He cited cases of impediments, such as the delay in authorising the resumption of transactional communications with Malaya and the absence of foreign exchange in Malaya for approved imports until later, which retarded Malaya's rehabilitation. He asked that more weight be attached to the recommendations of the senior officers of the BMA by the Imperial Government to facilitate Malaya's progress towards self-government.

TCT: Sir, Free Trade made this Colony what it was prior to the catastrophe of 1942 and free trade is what it needs most to regain its prosperity. That is so obvious that the amplification is unnecessary. But though it is to be hoped that in due course we shall be able to shake off more and more of the fetters on our trade, we must for the present be realistic and accept tolerantly restrictions considered necessary to safeguard the interests of the Empire as a whole and to ensure that all nations get their fair share of the limited supplies of consumer goods available. At the same time, I hope you will agree Sir, that control and interference with the freedom of the trade of this country should be kept to a minimum and should only last as long as may be absolutely necessary. It is therefore what I regard as impediments retarding the rehabilitation of the country that we may usefully discuss this morning. Actually that was what I called my theme when I wrote to the Clerk of the Council.

The chief impediment, in my opinion, was what I would call remote control. I say "was" in view of your explanations last evening that a high Treasury Official is now on the staff of the Supreme Allied Commander and may be expected to help us overcome some of our obstacles without reference to London. We do realise that in matters of finance, it is not only necessary but also the duty of this far-flung part of the Empire to keep in tune with the whole but we do hope that, although we may be small

geographically and acquiescent by nature as compared to other components of the Empire, no less consideration will be given to our rights and our hardships. We are greatly cheered by the assurance given by our distinguished visitor, Mr. DAVIES, yesterday when he said that Members of Parliament well realise that the Colonies must be treated rather differently in 1946 than in 1941. The Colonial Office is also, I believe, all sympathetic and alive to our changed outlook but, judging from the treatment meted to us in certain instances in the past few months, I fear that some of the other Government Departments seem rather too ready to make this Colony the goat whenever it suits their purpose.

The fixing of the price of rubber arbitrarily at 36 cents per lb. and the reservation of 10 cents per lb. as handling charges is one outstanding instance of the lack of regard of the opinion of the people of this Colony. All quarters have protested vehemently against this ever since it was made known, but our pleadings appear to fall on deaf ears. No matter what may be said, the fact remains that none but smallholders who are forced to tap their rubber to subsist, can manage to produce rubber under present conditions at 36 cents per lb. The smallholder will tap his rubber at any price because he has no choice. He was tapping his rubber and, in fact, bled his tree even more profusely when the price of rubber was only at 6 cents per lb. It is neither helping America nor Great Britain to keep the price of rubber down to 36 cents per lb. now for America and England will not get the maximum rubber and foreign exchange this country can yield and which they each need so badly. The price of rubber must be raised temporarily even if Government should have to subsidise it. I say "temporarily" for eventually it must and will find its own level in order to compete with synthetic rubber. The rubber industry, like a motor car, must start on its first gear especially bogged down as it is by the unprecedented inflation now afflicting this country.

Then again, let me point out that it took the Trading with the Enemy Department of His Majesty's Government nearly two and a half months to make up its mind that this country had indeed been liberated and is again under the British Flag. As soon as I arrived back in Malaya, which was about the middle of September last, I reminded the Controller of Finance that the overseas assets of banks and companies incorporated in the Straits Settlements were frozen as Malaya was still regarded as enemy territory technically. He immediately sent a signal to London to confirm that the liberating forces were already well and securely established in Malaya and recommended that the restrictions on firms in this country be immediately removed. London took little notice of our entreaties for the Controller of Finance had to send many more signals before the Trading with the Enemy Department finally relented and condescended towards the end of November to authorise "resumption of transactional communications with all liberated territories." Of course, during those two and half months, all companies which were unfortunate enough to have been registered in Malaya were deprived of the use of their much-needed reserves overseas and were accordingly handicapped thereby.

Again, in the matter of foreign exchange, Hongkong was allowed to sell U.S. dollars against approved imports of goods from the United States as from the beginning of December whereas only since this month has foreign exchange been made available in Malaya for approved imports. We all know how necessary it is for us to be careful with our foreign exchange but, at the same time, considering that the country is struggling in the grips of an unprecedented inflation, one that is far worse than in any other liberated British territories in the East including Hong Kong it is not unreasonable to expect that relief in the way of releasing some foreign exchange for the importation of urgently needed goods not obtainable within the

empire, would have been extended to us sooner if not at the same time as others. Moreover, as this country is one of the leading dollar arsenals of the Empire, surely it should be amongst the first to qualify for some foreign exchange to accelerate its rehabilitation.

Lastly, let me recall that family remittances to China has only been permitted last week. Here again, I must explain that you and your officers were convinced from the outset that such remittances should be allowed but it took over three months to persuade the Home Authorities to agree to it. In fact, I believe the matter is still far from settled as further discussions are still taking place in London regarding future remittances.

All these impediments have retarded the rehabilitation of the country. They seem quite unnecessary and, therefore, all the more deplorable.

I have taken much of the time of this Council to outline the above illustrations as they have and will continue to create dissatisfaction in the minds of the people of this country. Infused with doctrines such as freedom, democracy, and the right of self-determination so freely disseminated by the United Nations, the people naturally do not want to be coddled. They expect that those entrusted with the Administration of the country would be armed with adequate discretionary powers to deal with them, that more weight would be attached to the recommendations of senior officers of this Administration, who are always cautious and conservative, and that even if they cannot have self-government yet, at least their views on all matters affecting them will be sought and considered. According to yesterday's "Malaya Tribune," the White Paper outlining the Constitutional Reforms for Malaya explains that "the new organisation will not only make for a speedier and more efficient administration which post-war conditions, particularly in Malaya, demand but also enable it as a

united country to move more rapidly through broad-based institutions in which the whole community can join towards responsible self-government." The Imperial Government has again promised us eventual self-government and we therefore naturally aspire to it. If we are to become independent some day, let us now be given a chance to learn to walk to begin with.

Sir, I feel sure that all the Unofficials around this table endorse these humble submissions of mine and I therefore hope that you will be so kind as to transmit them to His Majesty's Government (Applause). (P. 114-115)

e) Trade and supplies- Damage to civilian property caused by the military

TCT called for reminders to be sent to the forces in Singapore to be more careful in their use of requisitioned properties to prevent further damages to the premises.

TCT: Sir, very considerable damage to civilian property has been caused by the forces due partly to misuse of the requisitioned premises but largely to the thoughtlessness and destructive nature of some members of the forces. Native troops unaccustomed to living in style are lodged in expensively built properties with disastrous consequences to these properties.

Beautiful marble and highly glazed tiled floors and well polished teak flooring are scratched scored by nail-studded heavy military boots and well turfed lawns and carefully laid gardens are scorched, neglected and overrun with truck tracks.

However, it is the wanton damage which is even more painful. Unoccupied houses are entered and sometimes broken into, and good wooden doors, windows, floor boards and wall panels are ruthlessly torn out to be used as firewood. It must be conceded that some of the houses were already in need of repairs.

It may be that the troops have been so well trained in the art of total warfare that failing to realise that they are re-occupying British territory and not invading enemy territory, they have merely given vent to their second nature. But whatever maybe the impelling causes, I hope you will, Sir, cause reminders to be sent to all forces stationed in or visiting Singapore to remind them that this is British territory and, therefore, should be accorded protection and should be looked upon as if it is a corner of their homeland, and not treated as if it is their gymnasium to keep them in fighting trim. It may also be well to enjoin the Military to be more careful in their use of requisitioned property. I have not pleaded for compensation for such damages as it will not be easy to prove such damages had been really caused by members of the Services. My suggestions therefore are directed towards preventing further damage. (Applause). (P. 126-127)

f) Legal matters- Property found in Japanese possession alleged to be booty and claimed by the Military

TCT called for stolen goods to be returned to their rightful owners as it was against the law to retain stolen property. He queried the outcome of the proceeds of sales of goods sold as booty by the Military and implied that such proceeds be turned over to the Custodian of Property from whom they might be recovered by their rightful owners.

TCT: Sir, it has been reported that the Military Authorities have and are treating property or goods found in the possession of Japanese and seized by them as booty. One wonders if it is realised that when the Japanese invaded this country, their forces ruthlessly appropriated cars, bicycles, furniture, and, in fact everything of any value or use which they happened to fancy. They entirely disregarded all rights of ownership and knew no moral codes. Furthermore, international laws were also treated with contempt and ignored. It must also be remembered that during the three and a half years they were here, they imported little, if

anything, into this country so that almost everything they had, was robbed from the population. They may have made a pretence of buying some of the goods but as the money they paid has since proved to be worthless, even that has become a fake. Anyway, furniture and fittings and other household effects were never paid for by the Japanese and it is to be hoped that the Military will not claim those in houses they took over from the Japanese, as booty. Many of those houses and their contents belong to owners who were absent from the Colony and were treated as enemies by the Japanese and it will be most unfair if the Military should now step in to dispossess them of what may be left by the Japanese. Likewise, many cars were captured from the enemy, which really belonged to local civilians. It is to be hoped that the Military will return these to the Controller of Transport and that, as the records of the Registry of Vehicles are fortunately intact, efforts will be made to return such cars to their respective owners eventually. As a layman I will not attempt to probe into the exact legal position but the facts are that the citizens of this Colony were robbed by the Japanese and, in common law, goods recovered from robbers have to be returned to their rightful owners. To retain stolen property is to be a receiver of stolen goods, which is criminal.

Sir, in conclusion, may we know what happens to the proceeds of sales of goods sold as booty by the Army? Are such realisations turned over to the War Office? I am curious because I understand there is a dump in Macpherson Road which the Army is claiming as booty. Comprised in the dump are a few thousand "Crocodile" brand changkols which are British made and so obviously could not have been imported from Japan. Should not the proceeds of sale of such goods be paid over to the Custodian of Property from whom they may be recovered by the lawful owners, if and when they can prove their claim? (Applause). (P. 131)

	<p><u>g) Collaboration</u> TCT called upon the BMA to clarify to the public its policy with regard to investigation into allegations of collaborators.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Sir, may I have your permission to ask you to make clear the policy of the your Administration with regard to the investigation into allegations of collaboration and the trial of collaborators. Speaking from memory, I think Brigadier WILLAN, according to some of the newspapers, at one of his press conferences stated that it was intended to pursue the investigation into alleged acts of collaboration only up to the 1st of February next. It seems that could not be the case. Since that appeared in the papers, many of the citizens of Singapore have been rather confused over what is actually the intention of the Administration. It would be appreciated if you could make the position clear. (P. 135)</p>
<p>5. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 2.5.1946</p>	<p><u>Rent Assessment Board (Additional Powers) Bill</u> TCT called for the scope of the proposed legislation to be restricted such that the right of application was limited to ex-internees and prisoners-of-war, and also the ejection of those persons who managed to get into their premises by Japanese influence. He also suggested that a representative body be set up to hear applications for reinstatement.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Sir, with Council's permission I should like to offer some comment on this Bill. I have been asked to make certain representations against this Bill. The previous speaker has more or less covered the points which I was going to touch upon, but I would like to deal with the matter from a slightly different angle.</p> <p>Under the same section referred to by the last speaker, that is section 3, any tenant who abandoned his premises in 1942 without terminating his tenancy – it was, of course, not possible to terminate one's</p>

tenancy at the time – will now be able to apply to the Rent Board for an order to put him back in possession.

I would like to refer to the provision in the next Bill. I think the two are in a way related. Under section 2(a) of the proposed Courts (Restriction of Civil Jurisdiction) Ordinance, such a tenant will be absolved from the claim for arrears of rent accumulated since the last payment made by him. The relief under section 2(a) of the proposed Courts (Restriction of Civil Jurisdiction) Ordinance will therefore have the effect of removing the one and only deterrent against such a tenant from applying to be reinstated in his former premises.

During the last 3½ years of the Japanese Occupation, with some exceptions, all who were unfortunate enough to have been left behind in occupied territories suffered terribly, whether they were interned or not. Therefore, although the legislation may seem necessary and equitable in cases of ex-internees, prisoners-of-war and persons who have been deprived of their premises through Japanese influence, it may be unwise to extend the benefit of this legislation to other persons who abandoned their premises – that is those who were free and those who had left the country.

It is true that the Rent Board will be vested with full discretion in this matter. On the other hand, the threat to the present occupiers will hang over their heads like the sword of Damocles. The combined effect of the two proposed Ordinances will probably encourage every old tenant to file an application and this, it is feared, may result in some social unrest.

Will Government, therefore, consider the desirability of tempering the effect of the proposed legislation by restricting its scope so that the number of persons who will have to endure the uncertainty of whether they may be driven from their homes will be limited to those who have gone into

	<p>possession of premises by means of coercion and to those who are unfortunate enough to occupy houses formerly tenanted by ex-internees and prisoners-of-war?</p> <p><u>The Governor:</u> What do you propose? Limiting its scope or?</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> To limit the right of application to ex-internees and POW, and the ejection of those persons who manage to get into their premises by Japanese influence.</p> <p>My reason is that a considerable number of persons were evicted from their own premises by the Japanese and were forced by circumstances to move into new places. Such people deserve just as much sympathy, especially because they have expended very large sums of money in repairing and improving the premises they are occupying. Therefore, it is not right that all who have moved into new premises should, without discrimination, be subject to the threat of being ejected from their premises.</p> <p>On the question of wide powers given to the Rent Board, I should like to suggest that, in view of the wide powers which will be conferred on the Rent Board, a more representative body consisting of at least five members should sit to hear applications for reinstatement. In cases like these, they will not be merely fixing rent. They will be driving someone from a house in order to give it to somebody else. I think this point deserves consideration. (P.4-5)</p>
<p>6. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 4.7.1946</p>	<p><u>Protected Places Bill</u></p> <p>TCT asked that the proposed precautions to distinguish the Protected Places be made known to the public.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Your Excellency, while welcoming this legislation as a desirable step towards restoring law and order, may I ask you, Sir, to make known to the public the proposed precautions that are to be taken to make these Protected Places readily</p>

	<p>distinguishable by the average member of the public? These precautions have already been outlined by the General Officer Commanding at a private session of the Council, but it will be helpful if they can be repeated here. (P.2)</p>
<p>7. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 13.3.1947</p>	<p><u>Singapore Harbour Board (Temporary Powers of Sale) Bill</u></p> <p>In response to public fears that the increased powers of the Harbour Board might lead to abuse, TCT informed that the Chairman of the Harbour Board had given his assurance that every endeavour would be made to trace all interested parties. He suggested that complete sales lists also be sent to each of the three leading Chambers of Commerce in Singapore.</p> <p><u>TCT</u>: Your Excellency, may I be permitted to make a few comments on this Bill? As the Honourable the Attorney-General has stated, this Bill seeks to confer very wide powers on the Harbour Board and it has naturally caused widespread fears that these powers might be arbitrarily used. I have been in communication with the Chairman of the Harbour Board and I am glad to say that he has assured me in a letter that every endeavour will be made to trace all interested parties so far as it may be practicable. One step that he has very kindly agreed to take is to send complete sales lists to all leading Banks, and I would suggest that such lists be also sent to each of the three leading Chambers of Commerce in this town. If this is done, I think the interests of all concerned should be fairly well safeguarded whilst the Harbour Board will be enabled to get the docks cleared and thus prevent congestion. (P.3)</p>
<p>8. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 27.3.1947</p>	<p><u>The Merchant Shipping Ordinance, Cap. 150- The Merchant Shipping (Fire Appliances-Boats) Rules, 1947</u></p> <p>TCT raised his objections to the approval of these rules, citing insufficient grounds for passing these regulations.</p> <p><u>TCT</u>: Sir, I feel it my bounden duty to urge</p>

that these Rules be not approved. As I have indicated in circulation, I am opposed to these Rules which arose out of a suggestion by the Singapore Twakow Owners Association that petrol-driven boats should be prohibited as before the war from berthing in the Singapore River, because one of them caught fire some months ago and craft moored nearby were threatened. Government found that they were actually never prohibited from berthing in the Singapore River, but nevertheless decided to investigate the possibility of legislating to make these boat owners equip their boats with fire extinguishers. The regulations before us would require one fire extinguisher to be provided in each of those boats not exceeding 40 feet in length, and two in the case of those that are more than 40 feet in length. The costs of fire extinguishers are comparatively small in these present days of high prices, but nevertheless I think the principle of the proposal is objectionable. The mere fact that one boat had caught fire and had nearly endangered some other boats nearby is not, in itself, sufficient grounds for passing these regulations. Actually, so far as I can see from the records, there have been no attempts to ascertain how many fires have occurred on these petrol-driven boats. It may as well be suggested that terrace houses should also be required to have fire extinguishers, as when one of them is on fire, the adjoining houses are endangered. It would also be equally logical to suggest that motor cars should be provided with fire extinguishers, as during the last two months I have personally witnessed two motor cars burning furiously on the public roads of Singapore. I feel sure, Sir, that if similar legislation affecting land-owners or motor car owners had been brought up, it would have met with the strongest possible protest and opposition from the public.

Another point I would like to make, Sir, in that so far as is known, in no other part of the world is there such a provision and there is no evidence to show that conditions in

	<p>this part of the world are any different from those of other parts of the world. Perhaps the only difference is that the engines of the local boats may be older and therefore more likely to explode and burst into flames.</p> <p>You will remember, Sir, that Mr Lee Kong Chian, President of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, had also recorded his opposition to this proposal. Sir, I hope I have made out a case to convince you that these Rules should not be passed. It has often been alleged that members of this Council are not quite representative of the public and it will be of advantage if on this occasion when no representation has been made to us by the people affected, we do nevertheless see that nothing is enforced against them which we are not prepared to enforce against any other more influential section of the community. (P. 2-3)</p>
<p>9. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 19.6.1947</p>	<p>In response to the hasty transfer of two posts in the Official Assignee's Office to the Colonial Legal Service, TCT called for qualified Straits Settlement Legal Service officers to be admitted to the Colonial Legal Service first, or some other temporary arrangements to benefit the present holders.</p> <p><u>TCT</u>: Sir, in the unavoidable absence of the Honourable Mr C.C. TAN who, as we know, is suffering a bereavement, I feel that I must say, as a Member of this Council, that the replies reveal a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. It is known that there are even now in the Official Assignee's Office members of the Straits Settlements Legal Service who are qualified to join the Colonial Legal Service. Although it is many months since this question has been raised, the position seems to be still, as stated in paragraph 3, simply "receiving urgent consideration". Instead of transferring these two posts in the Official Assignee's Office to the Colonial Legal Service with such haste, it would certainly have been more satisfactory if the S.S.L.S. officers, who are qualified, had been admitted to the Colonial Legal Service first, or alternatively, some temporary</p>

	<p>arrangements should have been made so that the present holders could be benefited by the higher scheme that the change of these posts is intended to give. (P.3)</p>
<p>10. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 3.7.1947</p>	<p><u>The Singapore Legislative Council Elections Bill</u></p> <p>TCT objected to Part V of the Bill which conferred a privilege on certain associations and bodies to elect three members of the Legislative Council, adding that it conferred an unnecessary class privilege on the mercantile community which comprised only a small section of the population.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Your Excellency, with your permission I should like to associate myself with the previous speaker in welcoming this Bill as a most desirable step in the right direction. Some are, however, inclined to think that we have not gone nearly far enough, but I venture to suggest, Sir, that it is at least a good beginning and I think His Majesty's Government is to be congratulated on making a move at such an early state without waiting for a demand for the people. But there is something in this Bill which I still feel is repugnant to all ideas of democracy. I refer to Part V which confers a privilege on certain associations and bodies to elect three members of the Legislative Council. The bodies on whom this privilege is to be conferred represent, in fact, a very small proportion of the population. The Singapore Chamber of Commerce is reputed to have a membership of 150. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce has a membership of 1,300, but only part of that number will be eligible to participate in the election, and the Indian Chamber of Commerce has a membership of little over 280. It seems to me, Sir, that this Bill in the respect is conferring an unnecessary class privilege on the mercantile community. It is true that the commerce of this country is its life-line, but, on the other hand, I do not know if there is any other constitution which confers that special privilege on a small section of its population. Moreover, looking at section 93, it would seem that it is intended to allow</p>

	<p>members of those associations double votes. It has been suggested in some quarters that this may be to ensure that an Indian and a European will in any case have a seat on the Council. If that was the underlying motive, then I submit that that objective is already safeguarded by the increase in the number of Governor's nominees from two to four. I therefore venture to request that my objection to that part of this Bill be recorded. (Applause).</p>
<p>11. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 4.9.1947</p>	<p>TCT argued for better and closer co-ordination between the three administrations, which would contribute to greater administrative efficiency.</p> <p><u>TCT</u>: Your Excellency, I would like, if I may, to second the Honourable Mr. FERGUSSON's motion. In doing so, I would like to stress the practical handicaps of the present set-up of three administrations with efficient co-ordination. There is a certain amount of co-ordination in that the Governors often meet in conference, but, with all due respect, I cannot help thinking that that is not quite adequate. The Malayan Union and Singapore are geographically and economically one unit and even though they may be separated politically, in practice they will continue to be one as before. During the last eighteen months we have again and again experienced the necessity of making joint decisions in all matters of importance. In many matters we have had to defer our decisions because we had to consult the Malayan Union. It is hardly necessary for me to give illustrations as besides questions of Currency, Immigration and Taxation, simple issues such as the formation of a Censors Appeal Board had to be decided in consultation with the Malayan Union Government, with the results that due to lack of closer co-ordination, prolonged and unnecessary delays have resulted. Therefore I think better and closer co-ordination between the three administrations will not only result in economic, but also be conducive to greater administrative efficiency. (Applause). (P. 4-5)</p>

<p>12. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 18.9.1947</p>	<p><u>Elections and Registration of Voters</u> TCT endorsed the comments of Mr. C.C. Tan that the Government should not interfere in the controversy surrounding the question of whether the people should register for a vote.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Your Excellency, I would like to endorse the remarks of the Honourable Mr. C.C. TAN. It is quite obvious that, after all, this attempt to boycott the elections is being made by only one section of the community. On the other hand, there are many other sections which have decided that they should at least register themselves as electors. They consider that if there is to be a boycott, it is inadvisable to call it at this time. The boycott, if at all, should be made later on, after registration when if the voters find that the nominated candidates are not suitable, they can decide not to use their votes. Anyway, I understand that the thinking public feels very strongly that Government should not get involved in this controversy.</p>
<p>13. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 9.10.1947</p>	<p>TCT enquired when the report of the Salaries Commission would be ready, and highlighted the problem of government dilatoriness in reaching its decisions. He also called for government control of the prices of local cinema admission.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Your Excellency, may I ask when the report of the Salaries Commission will be available? That Commission completed its deliberations quite some time ago and one wonders why it has not yet submitted its recommendations. The salaried community, including those employed in semi-governmental bodies and large commercial firms, has been anxiously awaiting the findings and recommendations of that Commission, and have so far shown commendable patience. Sir, I would urge that their forbearance must not be overtaxed. I hope the Commission has not withheld its report because a section of the Commission has to condeuct [conduct] a</p>

	<p>similar enquiry in Borneo. If so, I think the salaried Community of Singapore and the Malayan Union will be justified in feeling that they have been treated unfairly. Dissatisfaction over the question of back pay, etc., is due to a large extent to the dilatoriness of Government in coming to its decision and Government should avoid making the same mistake again.</p> <p>Sir, I have been suggesting repeatedly ever since the B.M.A. days that the prices of admission to cinemas should be controlled and on each occasion I have been courteously assured that consideration will be given to my suggestion; but so far nothing has happened. I am now raising this question once more because Government had suddenly and without taking the advice of this Council decided that it must cut down the ration of petrol in order, it was claimed, to conserve dollar exchange. As is well known, a sizeable percentage of the collections of the cinemas of Malaya has to be paid by way of renewal for the films and, as a good many of the films exhibited are American, a large sum of American dollars is thus drained out of the country. Sir, the people of Malaya are not satisfied that they should thus lose so unnecessarily so much dollar exchange. If they can have the choice, they would prefer if necessary to do without some American films than be forced to make sacrifices on this and that in order to save the cents while the dollars flown away.</p> <p>Moreover, the admission prices of local cinemas are unreasonably high when compared to those in other parts of the world. Cinemas in these modern days cannot be regarded as luxuries and therefore high prices of admission contribute towards raising the cost of living. I would therefore respectfully submit that Government has had enough time to think over this matter and should get moving even though it is confronted with rich and powerful interests. (Applause).</p>
14. Colony of Singapore,	TCT objected to the policy of strong class

<p>Advisory Council, Thurs, 30.10.1947</p>	<p>distinction in the Singapore General Hospital and suggested that public funds, instead of being used to provide luxuries for the well-off, be used to provide more accommodation for more people.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Your Excellency, it was reported in one of the papers recently that the Government Senior Executive Engineer in an interview stated that –</p> <p>“The third class ward 21 of the Singapore General Hospital would be converted into a first and second class ward. The first class ward will have separate rooms with bathrooms attached. The other half of the ward will be given over to second class patients who will occupy rooms with four beds in each.”</p> <p>If the report is not inaccurate it would seem that the first class patients will enjoy the luxury of an attached bathroom, while the second class patients are to be crammed four into a room. I respectfully submit that this is not in keeping with present day ideas of democracy. In any case public funds should not be used to provide luxuries for people, simply because they are able and willing to pay for them, especially if such luxuries are to be provided at the expense of a less prosperous class of the community. I respectfully submit that the same money might be used to provide more accommodation for more people. I would therefore ask Your Excellency to be so good as to indicate if this policy of strong class distinction has been approved by Government.</p>
<p>15. Colony of Singapore, Advisory Council, Thurs, 27.11.1947</p>	<p><u>The Income Tax Bill</u> TCT spoke against the introduction of income tax in the Colony of Singapore under the prevailing, viz abnormal conditions.</p> <p><u>TCT:</u> Your Excellency, after listening to the two eloquent speeches I do feel rather diffident to try and keep pace with the standard already set. To my mind the issue before this Council is simply whether it is</p>

necessary or advisable for income tax to be introduced in this Colony to meet our estimated necessary expenditure in 1948 for maintaining as well as extending our services, bearing in mind the poor purchasing value of money, which is obviously only temporary, and remembering that conditions are still far from normal and that even if we have the money we still cannot get all our needs at reasonable cost.

As one who was privileged to sit on the Finance and Revenue Committee and the Select Committee, which made a preliminary examination of the Colony's draft estimates last week, I regret I have come to the conclusion that it is neither necessary nor advisable to introduce income tax in this Colony at this stage.

It is true that our draft estimates reveal a deficit of about \$30,000,000; but as my friend, the Honourable Mr. FERGUSSON, has analysed so lucidly the cause of it, I need only emphasise that several of the items enumerated by him are really contingent liabilities and of the remaining items, it is more than likely that a large portion will not have to be met in 1948. That being so, it will be more prudent to rely on short-term borrowing to meet the extraordinary and probable expenditure than to introduce income tax at this stage. As regards the possibility of raising a short-term loan, I would venture to repeat my assertion in the Finance and Revenue Committee Meeting that I can foresee little difficulty in raising an additional \$20 million, or even \$30 million if necessary, on a short-term basis at 1% interest. This will, of course, be only necessary if the Malayan Union should by then not have repaid the \$84 million over-contributed by the Colony to the Malaya (Unallocated) Account. I submit therefore that the need, if any, to introduce income tax is not urgent.

As regards the advisability of introducing income tax now or later, I respectfully submit that Government should first of all stop all

leakages and bestir some of its departments to exercise greater economy. The public should not be asked to provide more revenue to be poured down the gutter. To mention but two illustrations: The Finance and Revenue Committee have found that in 18 months of trading the Joint Supply Board had lost \$95 million, of which \$19 million will fall on Singapore. To this amount has to be added \$6 million representing expenditure on other than Joint Supplies and another \$7 million to allow for a possible backlog in Crown Agents' payments, making a total loss of \$32 million to be borne by Singapore alone. The Finance and Revenue Committee was astounded when it discovered these colossal losses, estimated at 40% of the pan-Malayan turnover of \$310 million, and I think the taxpayer will be well justified if he refuses to allow himself to be further bled until he knows that his sacrifice will not be frittered away similarly. There are other lesser items of wastage such as the high cost of dredging Singapore River, to stop which, I am sorry to say, there appears to have been undue delay. Early in 1948 [?], the Unofficials had complained of the high cost of disposal of dredging and although the Select Committee of 1946 suggested that new equipment be acquired it is only in this year's estimate that provision is sought for replacing the old dredge with a more economical unit and to order fourteen self-propelled Hopper barges.

I would also like to say, Sir, that while I still adhere to the opinion of the Finance and Revenue Committee that in principle the most equitable form of raising further revenue under normal conditions is income tax, I maintain that the conditions at present are abnormal and that income tax if introduced will in effect prove to be inequitable. In support of this view I would draw attention to the following considerations:-

- (1) Most goods are still in short supply and consequently in the absence of competition and effective price control

the consumer has no alternative but to pay any price for his wants. While this state of affairs exists income tax will undoubtedly be passed on to the consumer by a further increase in the margin of profit with the result that there will be widespread demands for further increases in their remuneration by the salaried class.

(2) A substantial high cost of living allowance is still being paid by Government as well as all respectable employers. If the payment of such allowance is justified – and I am sure it must have been justified before employers would have agreed to pay – it means that the working man has hardly any margin of savings these days. It is well known that in spite of such allowances most of the salaried class, including senior Government officials and heads of firms enjoying four-figured incomes, are still finding it necessary to dip into their reserves.

I therefore submit that if income tax is introduced before conditions regain normality the salaried class will either have a dip into their reserves, in which case what is intended to be a tax on income will become a tax on capital; alternatively the salaried class will have to clamour, and with full justification, for an increase in their allowance to meet the levy. In the case of those employed in commerce the extra cost of meeting such demands will be passed on to the consumer. If the demands of the Government servants are to be conceded, obviously more revenue will be needed to meet Government's increased liabilities to its employees and the net result will be that only a small section of the population will be bearing most of the burden of income tax under those circumstances will not be equitable.

I hope, Sir, I have managed to show that although when times are normal income tax may be an equitable tax, under the existing

	<p>circumstances it will prove to be just the reverse. In conclusion, I must else advise you, Sir, that both the Committees of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and of the Singapore Ratepayers' Association at meetings held on Friday and Saturday last have declared themselves strongly opposed to the present proposal to introduce income tax.</p> <p>Before I resume my seat, may I with your indulgence take this opportunity to refer to the paragraph regarding the Governor-General in the Finance and Revenue Committee's Report? As a member of that Committee I feel it needs clarification. As you know, Sir, that Report was drawn up in great haste and so members had little time to finalise it with the usual care. I am afraid that in condensing the views of that Committee into a short paragraph emphasis has unfortunately been laid on the expense of the office whereas the Committee was really critical of the fact that the functions and powers of the Governor-General were restricted with the result that the Colony did not get the full value for its share of the expenditure. For instance, it was thought that many of the questions requiring the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies might have been referred to the Governor-General with advantage, thus saving much time and, in many instances, considerable expense as well. After all, we are fortunate to have a former Secretary of State for the Colonies as our Governor-General and, being on the spot, he can be expected to give us his decisions more expeditiously and with due regard to local conditions. I thank you, Sir. (Applause).</p>
<p>16. Singapore Advisory Council, 45th Public Session, Fri, 19.3.1948</p>	<p><u>Report of Proceedings of the Finance Committee</u> TCT expressed his support for the proposal to pay an advance equivalent to four-fifths of a month's salary to Government employees. He also requested for more time for the council members to consider the proposed motions.</p>

TCT: Your Excellency, all of us who are aware of the financial hardships which have been endured by the salaried section of the community, and in particular the clerical fraternity, since the liberation must welcome this move to give them early relief. It could not have come too soon. It is also appreciated that important reservations have been made in the motion now under consideration, with a view to giving effect to only part of the recommendations in the Trusted Report.

However, as Your Excellency may no doubt be aware, drafts of these proposed resolutions, together with the lengthy appendices, only reached me and, I believe, other Unofficials, on the afternoon of Wednesday last. This is not a complaint as I do well know how hard my Honourable Friend the Colonial Secretary and all his staff have been working on this matter. Nevertheless, I am afraid that I have not been able, within the time available, to examine carefully the implications of these proposals.

Moreover, I would have liked to ascertain the reactions of the interested parties before taking any decision on a question of this importance.

Then, there is also the fact that the elected Legislative Council will be established within twelve days, and it seems to me that this Council should, if possible, be careful to do nothing that will forestall that elected Legislative Council.

However, assuming that it is the wish of this Council to take a decision on this matter and not to leave it to the Legislative Council, I would suggest that consideration of these motions be deferred to a further session of this Council to be held not later than Tuesday next, by which time I hope the Members of this Council will be fortified by the advantage of having the advice of all concerned; I am assuming, of course, Sir, that the matter is extremely urgent. I feel sure that postponement of our final decision

	<p>by four days after this matter has been delayed so long can do no harm. The Honourable the Colonial Secretary mentioned last a proposal to pay an advance equivalent to four-fifths of a month's salary to Government employees. I would like to support, Sir, this last-mentioned proposal to alleviate the hardship of Government employees immediately, if it is possible for this Council to authorize that advance whilst reserving consideration of the other resolutions. (Applause). (P.14)</p>
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